

UITP & ETF Joint Statement for COP26

Tackling climate action with public transport is one of the EU's largest economic opportunities of the 21st century.

Public transport keeps cities moving. Up to 2020, the sector counted almost 60 billion passenger journeys per year in Europe, with numbers on the rise. Imagine the traffic if all those trips were made in cars. Congestion already costs the European economy 1% of its GDP, €100 billion per year. Public transport is essential to reduce congestion and as such, it benefits those not using public transport, as their roads are emptier, and the climate benefits are profound – investments in public transport and getting more people to use it can cut emissions from the transport sector by over 50% in the next decade¹. This is the magic of public transport: it benefits those who use it and those who don't.

Public transport is key to a green and just recovery. It is clear that today's challenges will not be met without clear priority being given to public transport as a vital pillar for economic, social, and environmental recovery both in the short and long term. Public transport forms the backbone of transformative climate action in urban transport. It is the fastest and most cost-efficient way to decarbonise daily mobility. Unleashing the full benefits of public transport for decarbonisation will be key to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Investment in public transport will connect businesses, people, and communities to economic and social opportunities and significantly cut emissions from the transport sector in line with the Paris Agreement.

High quality urban public transport investments will create millions of jobs and represents value for money. About 2 million people are employed in the public transport sector in the EU at a local level i.e., 20% of the 10 million people employed in the overall transport industry. Importantly, public transport provides secure local jobs, which cannot be delocalised abroad. Moreover, every direct job in public transport is linked to four jobs in other sectors of the economy. Public transport companies also provide many different types of jobs, from less qualified to highly qualified profiles, and employ staff with very diverse backgrounds. Most companies champion in offering vocational training positions to huge numbers of young people.

¹ <https://thefutureispublictransport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/C40-The-Future-of-Public-Transport-Research.pdf>

Every €1 of value created from public transport is linked to a further value creation of €4 in the total economy. It does this by connecting people to their jobs, training and leisure activities, enabling the clustering of activities and business development, supporting tourism, stabilising property values, and helping to regenerate cities or deprived areas through transport connections.

Investment in public transport also creates 25% more jobs in the wider economy than the same level of investment in roads or highways would produce. By investing in more public transport-oriented cities, it will lock us into a low carbon and resilient economic development path that will make it easier and cheaper to decarbonise the transport sector in order to deliver on the Paris Agreement.

Public transport clearly has a lot to offer, delivering both on green job creation and sustainable economic development. Service improvements and access to public transport also facilitate the “levelling up” agenda, providing mobility for greater numbers of people so that they might access education or employment opportunities.

CLIMATE FINANCE. It does not have to cost more; we just need to make better investments. Investments in public transport represents the best value for money and will give us the greatest improvement in equitable access to mobility, generation of good quality jobs and reduced emissions. Financing the green transition should redirect public and private climate financial flows towards green investments like public transport. Strengthening collective transport is sadly not among COP’s goals, so ETF and UITP are calling upon the EU and Member States to raise this issue during the meeting and enhance their ambitions as part of the Paris Agreement 5-year cycle. Increased resources should be provided for network and infrastructure developments, and appropriate financing of day-to-day operations, including funding for quality jobs should be ensured.

All actors need to play their part. With the Paris Agreement, Parties recognised the importance of engaging all levels of government and various actors in addressing climate change as this will mobilise stronger and more ambitious climate action. We all have a role to play and that EU and international collaboration, including with and between public transport sector is critical in driving forward the transformation needed. When we boldly engage our collective multi-stakeholder know-how, vision and leadership, we multiply the positive impact of transport decarbonisation which can help to raise the levels of climate ambition.

That is why UITP and the ETF are committed to keep enhancing the capacity of the sector to deliver quality public transport infrastructures, vehicles and services. Our members will be the ones responsible for ensuring investments in the sector are of quality, which can help raise the level of ambition needed towards the Net Zero goals of the EU and the Paris Agreement.

In doing so, we can meet people's ever-growing aspirations for mobility regardless of their social status, gender, age and personal mobility, which has the potential to improve the lives and livelihoods of billions of people – their health, their environment and quality of life.

Signed on 19 October 2021 by UITP & ETF

For UITP



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