

Position paper

**Urban transport:
Supporting mobility,
partnering growth,
sustaining quality of life**

February 2008

German Transport Forum

Our mission

“Mobility for Germany“ – in a functional, customer-driven, environment-friendly and integrated transport system

What we do

We represent the common interests of the transport industry in Germany in the political domain, the media and society.

We support measures to further mobility and improve underlying conditions as essential prerequisites for growth and employment.

We create a “shop window“ to promote exports of the transport industry’s products and services and thereby help entrench its world lead.

Our aims

- Universal recognition of the crucial importance of mobility and the transport industry.
- Efficient and developable transport infrastructure
- Intelligent networked transport systems allowing full utilisation of synergy potential and of the specific strengths of individual transport providers
- Fair competitive conditions for all modes of transport – national and international
- Customer-oriented, integrated mobility solutions

Our activities

We provide the right platform for purposeful debate on core transport issues between customers, transport providers, business, science and government.

We further opinion-forming on current transport issues through critical and constructive comment, at round-table and other events, through press and PR activities

We cooperate with political decision-makers as well as with national and international federations of the road, rail, air transport, maritime and inland shipping industries – national and international.



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A. Summary

EU green paper focuses on local transport policy

On 25 September 2007, the European Commission adopted the Green Paper "Towards a new culture for urban mobility" (EU COM (2007) 551). The Paper describes the *challenges* of maintaining a successful local transport policy and suggests *possible solutions*. The Commission highlights important issues, such as the financing and operation of public transport as well as urban logistics, quality standards, barrier-free access to transport and inner-city restrictive measures like urban road charging schemes. An Action Plan with concrete, mandatory measures on urban mobility is to follow the Green Paper in autumn 2008.

The German Transport Forum supports the Green Paper's fundamental objectives of increasing the awareness of urban transport among citizens and politicians and creating a network of best practices. *But to avoid excessive intervention in urban mobility, local issues must alone be decided at local level.*

Urban transport is a matter for local competencies

Every care must be taken to ensure that the subsidiarity principle is in no way eroded, i.e. decisions must be taken at the level at which the extent and consequences of specific measures can best be assessed. *On urban mobility issues, this will normally be the respective local authority.* On no account should local authorities be subjected against their will to conditions that incur considerable expense. The transport industry must ensure that its entrepreneurial initiatives are not stifled.

Clear division of responsibilities between EU, member-states and industry

In its function as representative platform of the entire transport industry, the German Transport Forum has compiled a catalogue of measures in this position paper, with which the proposed aims of a sustainable mobility culture can be achieved, while maintaining the quality of life. With the EU Commission's Green Paper in mind, the Transport Forum has intentionally defined diverse *areas of responsibility* in order to point out which measures should be taken at a *European level, which by the member states and which by industry:*

- The European Union is urged to create *general guidelines and a basic guidance framework* for urban transport, to publicise best practices and set up networks.
- Local authorities must in accordance with the *subsidiarity principle* decide on-site *which measures* support their aims in urban transport – and how or whether these are compatible with financial resources. Individual transport, commercial transport and public transport must be given equal consideration for the purpose of integrating their operations. *Financial and administrative* backing must be forthcoming from the member-states.
- Existing *entrepreneurial initiatives* emanating from industry in urban transport must be utilised, best practices supported and expanded.
- The *individual responsibility of citizens* must be strengthened. That presupposes the need for adequate infrastructure for individual transport as well as attractive services in public transport. Only in that way will individuals obtain alternatives and sensible options for their transport needs.

B. Mobility culture with expertise and perceptiveness

Responsibility of local authorities for urban transport

With the *subsidiarity principle*, the EU Commission and member-states have signed up to the maxim of strengthening *the responsibility and competence of subordinate levels*, like cities and communities, in view of their closeness to the citizen, and restricting intervention at higher levels through such instruments as EU legislation. Exceptions are envisaged when action cannot be taken effectively on matters that exceed the capacity available at lower levels.

The subsidiarity principle is as such designed to ensure that measures are always decided and taken at the level, which demonstrates the greatest competence and is more familiar with the issues involved and the facts. That applies very pertinently to urban transport.

Diversity of city types requires customised measures

As cities in Europe are so vastly different in respect of

- living environment and life styles,
- transport and urban development concepts,
- buildings, infrastructure and public transport facilities,
- financial resources,
- political and administrative structure,
- city and surrounding region,

a *European* urban transport policy could not do justice to the requirements of *individual* communities – there is no such thing as a uniform "European City" but a great variety that needs to be preserved. A uniform European mobility culture is utopian.

Urban mobility policy and related measures must, therefore, be left principally to the level at which they are implemented: in the cities and local communities.

Subsidiarity principle precludes a variety of European measures

Many of the proposals in the Green Paper *contravene the subsidiarity principle* and must, therefore, be rejected a priori as European measures. Some examples are instanced in the following:

- *No hard and fast solutions* for urban mobility should be cemented at European level. The reference in the Green Paper - e.g. to metro systems as best practice, ways of regulating pedestrian zones and cycling paths or infrastructure standards – lead in the wrong direction. They would impose a potential cost burden on local authorities and ultimately lead to higher mobility costs for customers.
- *Capacity problems* in urban transport infrastructure should be resolved with *local expertise and common sense*. The concept of road pricing is not a suitable, universal solution of urban transport problems. Its promotion in the Green Paper as a potential source of income calls in question the financial responsibility of all political levels for local transport facilities.

- *Passenger rights in local transport* fall within the competence of local authorities, since the setting up of transport systems as well as the interests of local customers need to be taken into account. Solutions here should be sought on a voluntary basis in close consultation between local authorities and transport companies and be tailored to local circumstances.
- The *inclusion of external costs and life-cycle costs* in contracts awarded by public authorities ought not be prescribed at the European level. Local communities must themselves decide from their own financial situation which measures are required to implement their sustainability objectives.
- *Every condition imposed at European level* represents a cost risk and can jeopardise the investment assets – even of public companies. In the awarding of public contracts, companies and local authorities must, therefore, have a free hand in deciding the best way of arriving at a sustainable offer *on-site* and of determining appropriate transition strategies.

European guidelines but no over-regulation

The cities and local authorities do not need detailed legal directives from Brussels, but a *framework for information and orientation and a network* for exchanging best practices. A European urban mobility policy must support this division of responsibilities.

C. Europe: Setting up a framework, creating networks

The EU is responsible for networking, it generates ideas and acts as moderator

Throughout Europe, increasing passenger and freight traffic in city centres is posing similar challenges. Consequently, the *set of measures* proposed in the EU Green Paper and its advocacy of a *consultation process and debate* on the efficacy of such measures are to be welcomed. But measures, that restrict the freedom of choice of communities must be rejected.

Europe will best fulfil the role of *idea generator* and *facilitator*, ascribed to it in the Green Paper, by focusing on action in the following areas.

1. Transparent information

Collecting, comparing and making examples of good practice readily available

Among the 27 individual EU member-states, there is a huge potential of *examples of good practice* of addressing diverse traffic problems. To avert good solutions for identical problems being re-invented in each country, it is imperative to make the collective experience in the member-states available to all. The compilation and processing of that information, aided by input from the member-states, is best achieved by the EU. But this must be guided by the principle of transparency, i.e. *without any additional bureaucratisation* – such as the setting up a new European monitoring agency for urban transport.

Measures:

- furthering and disseminating best practices,
- organising explanatory and information campaigns on specific issues,
- arranging conferences,
- promoting dialogue between European cities, supporting scientific and entrepreneurial networks of mobility,
- monitoring traffic development with scientific and statistical data from Eurostat.

Strengthening research and know-how transfer, supporting incentive systems

2. Giving incentives, backing research and development

Know-how is not only locally applicable, it is universal. There is thus good reason to compile *know-how*, *expand it and exchange it*. European research and development can especially generate added-value to national research programmes, if the generated know-how can be applied widely and across borders.

Economic incentives should be provided to ensure that research findings are implemented. These incentives must not contravene European competition law or the ban on subsidies. For that, the EU must put the appropriate framework in place.

Measures:

- Furtherance of technological development through research programmes, e.g. e-Safety or the i2010 initiative,
- Creation of legal framework to facilitate provision of economic and especially fiscal incentives to spur introduction of new technologies through the EU and member-states.

Furthering standards and mutual recognition

3. Harmonisation of standards, networking of authorities

The transport market is European, not least following the liberalisation of rail traffic. To ensure that regulations on national standards do not impede the open, single market, national provisions, especially if they implement European directives, must be *mutually recognised*. Development of *European standards* should be encouraged.

Measures:

- Set limits, standards and norms for emissions,
- harmonise signposting and guidance systems,
- increasingly network national authorities and their databases so that prosecution of criminal offences is effective, creation off a central European agency to register all vehicles is, on the other hand, not necessary.

- foster mutual recognition, Europe-wide, of access requirements for green zones and similar systems, and ensure that these are both technology-neutral and furnish incentives for vehicle fleet renewal,
- evaluate and document on a European scale the impact of national measures, e.g. the establishment of green zones,
- evaluate regularly the efficiency of European measures and, where necessary, adapt them.

Target European financial instruments on best practices

4. Focus financing, avoid indiscriminate funding

A *solid financial base* is required to improve mobility in cities. According to planning, the EU structural and cohesion funds have allocated roughly 8 billion euros for urban transport in the period 2007-2013.¹ That works out to about 5.7 million euros yearly for each of the 50 or so large cities² in Europe.

However, Europe has additionally a large number of smaller towns and cities – Germany alone has 188 cities with a population of more than 50,000. This highlights the *risk of dissipating the impact of European resources*. The EU must realise that the existing budget is not sufficient. There is a distinct discrepancy between the financial resources and the ambition of the European Commission to create a “new culture for urban mobility”. The financial burden will continue to weigh heavily on cities and local communities.

Measures:

- In order to avoid indiscriminate financing, the EU must focus its funding more sharply than hitherto on urban traffic and systematically foster projects that can serve as best practice,
- the EU must continue deploying European instruments to support the credit-financing of cities and local communities.

Cities and communities implement customised solutions on-site

D. Upholding subsidiarity: Consulting regional and local authorities, tailoring solutions

Cities *compete* between themselves and with their surrounding regions for (financially strong) inhabitants and companies. They, therefore, have an *inherent interest* in creating attractive locations, residential areas and living environments.

Measures to improve passenger and freight transport must *not over-tax* the capacity of a community and should, therefore, be proposed and implemented locally. That guarantees that solutions are *tailored to needs* and are developed with the necessary knowledge of local circumstances and potential.

In its role as service provider, the local authority is challenged to assume the *function of pacemaker*. The state must furnish financial and administrative support to cities committed to providing leadership and implementing the necessary measures.

¹ Cf. Green Paper COM (2007) 551, S.21

² ≥ 500,000 inhabitants

The areas in which regional and local authorities are required to act in respect of urban mobility are listed in the following.

1. Qualify staff, improve planning

Urban transport requires integrated solutions and competent administration

At the planning level, urban mobility must be furthered by *cross-divisional support for every transport mode*. When measures are implemented, they must be supported by cross-the-board backing from all areas – through cooperation between the urban planning and environmental departments, the transport department and economics department. This integrated approach to urban transport must, in turn, be backed up by ongoing and advanced staff training as well as appropriate structures within the local authority. In cities especially, it is essential that equitable consideration be given to the specific requirements of all users.

Measures:

- ongoing qualification of staff employed on planning and implementation in the public sector,
- development of new planning methods and instruments in close cooperation with industry and science, integrated approach to passenger *and* freight transport,
- furthering the integration of planning, environment, transport and economics departments, also for better assessment of the impact of major projects and coordination of transport and land use planning,
- better consideration of pedestrian, cycling and freight traffic in transport planning,
- clear definition of responsibilities and contact partners, especially for pedestrians, cyclists and freight traffic.

2. Being pacemaker, setting incentives

Strengthening leadership and pacemaker role

Cities should strengthen their *role as pacemakers*, i.e. implement *new environmental standards* instead of exempting public vehicle fleets from general norms. They thereby *incentivise* private industry and citizens into following their example.

Measures:

Local authorities must

- utilise new technologies in their vehicle fleets, and promote the spread of new technical standards by procuring new-generation vehicle types for public use,
- take emission standards and innovative technologies into account when awarding contracts, while keeping cost-benefit considerations in mind for the purpose of protecting investment assets and supporting the transition strategies of vehicle fleet operators,
- develop economic instruments to foster the broader spread of new technologies, e.g. by adapting the GVFG (local authority transport financing law) so as to further procurement of low-emission vehicles,
- initiate, as public employer, mobility management consulting for the staff.

Supporting the supply function of logistics and freight transport

3. Constructive support for logistics, sustain supply function

Urban freight transport is assuming growing importance in European cities. The courier-express parcels service is booming in conurbations, serving citizens and companies over the “last mile“ and becoming, as it were, a type of “collective freight transport” or distribution service.

To maintain the efficiency of the logistics chain in inner-city transport, and to enable freight transport to continue exercising its supply function, local authorities must furnish support through appropriate organisational and infrastructure measures. Cities and communities are challenged *not to hinder freight transport through excessive restrictive mandatory measures* but to integrate it equitably in the transport landscape and further its positive impact for citizens and the city.

Measures:

- Inclusion of urban logistics in infrastructure planning,
- appointment of contact partner or policy officer for freight transport,
- creation of consolidated delivery and loading zones,
- collection and provision of trade-relevant traffic situation data for the urban transport network (See 4.),
- support for navigation and route planning through provision of trade-relevant information on traffic hindrances, restrictions etc., so that the information can be processed by logistics services and map providers,
- backing logistics projects through cities as moderator,
- provision of convenient trans-shipment and storage facilities,
- constructive backing in the planning, construction and operation of logistics centres,
- support for so-called close-to-the citizen collation points (branches / parcel shops, packing stations, parcel boxes etc.).

Expand Information services and optimise networking

4. Optimising infrastructure utilisation, take account of user diversity

Optimising infrastructure utilisation, e.g. with telematics, facilitates speedy improvement of the transport situation *without, however, eliminating the need in many cases to dismantle bottlenecks in the medium term.*

A major challenge in urban transport is the constant diversity in user requirements, which has to be taken into account especially in linking public transport with individual passenger transport.

Measures:

- Foster dynamic traffic information and control systems,
- integrate urban networks more closely in traffic data collection and traffic information services,
- further improve networking of different transport modes (co-modality), for example, by introducing industry-wide information systems and developing door-to-door concepts,
- tailor facilities to specific needs of user groups, and acquire new customer groups for local public transport network.

5. Awaken awareness, support alternatives

Inform citizens and support attractive offers

Cities and communities must provide citizens with transport choices through *attractive offers*, which satisfy their individual mobility requirements.

It is, however, equally *important to inform* citizens about the choices and communicate the benefits of different modes depending on the transport purpose. This can encourage people into taking *sustainable transport decisions*.

Measures:

- multimodal mobility education in children's nurseries and schools,
- support car-sharing and carpooling,
- improve Park&Ride and Bike&Ride,
- encourage training in eco-driving,
- develop attractive paths for pedestrians and cyclists.

6. Strengthen local public transport, eliminate double burden

Increase efficiency of local public transport

Local public transport is already making a major contribution to efficient running of urban traffic and easing the burden on the environment in agglomerations. Utilisation of modern and more efficient vehicles, especially electrically powered local transport, reduces pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. By bundling traffic, public transport reduces the utilisation of space in our cities, makes traffic safer and prevents overloading of the transport network.

Strengthening public transport and integrating it better in transport chains contribute to achievement of the aims outlined in the Green Paper.

Measures:

- Further improve the speed, comfort and safety of local public transport,
- expand link-up between individual passenger transport and public transport,
- appraise inter-action between EU emissions trading system and other environment and energy policy instruments,
- dismantle double burden arising from energy taxes and costs of emissions trading in local public transport.

E. Industry: Expand entrepreneurial initiatives , support best practices

German industry is setting standards for Europe in urban transport

German industry is furthering urban mobility with a variety of initiatives and innovative products.

Gas-powered, hybrid, electro, fuel cell and hydrogen vehicles promise potential and are partly already in use. Transport companies in Germany have come up with exemplary offers, which are recognised internationally as *best practice*.

The companies exercise social responsibility especially in agglomerations, they engage in *mobility management* and take an active interest in the mobility requirements of their employees.

The *logistics services providers* are aware of bottlenecks in congested areas. They are evolving new solutions for collective delivery over the “last mile”, integrating low-emission or zero-emission vehicles in their fleets and reducing transport expense through optimised processes.

German *industry* will continue contributing to improvement of the urban transport situation within the scope of its possibilities.

Measures:

- Press ahead as employer with mobility management, create incentives and, e.g. support job tickets, car-sharing and cycling,
- as a transport company, help industry and its employees with mobility management and offer attractive solutions,
- improve training and awareness, e.g. by training professional vehicle drivers to practise eco-driving,
- push research and technological development with specific focus on urban transport,
- further develop technical solutions designed to increase fuel-efficiency in heavy-duty traffic,
- implement best practices in the company,
- develop zero-emission vehicles especially for particularly congested areas,

- examine and implement models for cooperation in the logistics business,
- route optimisation in close consultation with local authorities,
- communicate gains in efficiency and sustainability to customers and thereby increase their awareness of sustainable solutions.

F. Conclusion

Greater efficiency in urban transport requires the commitment of all actors

The *EU, its member-states and industry* must act within their possibilities to ensure that cities remain attractive residential and business locations. *Efficient urban transport can make a major contribution towards that end.* It stands for mobility and quality of life, it underpins the supply chain, and keeps work and home within reach.

In order to achieve the greatest benefits of urban mobility, the measures taken by all stakeholders must augment one another:

- > The *subsidiarity principle must be upheld* to ensure that cities and communities themselves decide with common-sense which measures support their objectives within the limits of their budgetary resources.
- > The European Union and its member-states must *stand alongside this process positively and set the necessary frameworks*, without eroding the competencies of local authorities.
- > *Industry will continue engaging actively in urban transport.* Transport companies and vehicle manufacturers especially will go to every length to ensure that Germany continues setting standards for urban mobility.
- > Industry will act wherever it finds a market – but every offer requires demand. The *citizens are, therefore, challenged to keep posted and examine the spectrum of mobility alternatives.* On the other hand, public transport must be measured against individual passenger transport and the individual needs of its customers.

Urban transport policy must take all three facets of sustainability into account

The political agenda is, also in respect of urban transport, positioned in a *classical triangle of sustainability* within three systems: economy, society and ecology. It is up to politics to balance the interests of all three of those systems, and to act not only ecologically for the benefit of citizens but also take account of the need to maintain employment (protect jobs) and the quality of life. *The measures of all actors outlined in this position paper make an important contribution towards that.*