

URBAN MOBILITY “GETTING AROUND TOWN”

A SOCIALIST GROUP POSITION PAPER



PSE

Socialist Group in the
European Parliament

In times of climate change, rising energy prices and other difficulties we need to get new perspectives on how we live and how we move. Today most of us live in cities and we move around in cars but we have become increasingly aware that if we want to address the issue of global warming we have to change our habits. This brochure deals with what we call urban mobility. Urban mobility covers a range of issues in the fields of transport, environment, social and economic development, city and town planning, employment and housing and focuses on how to set clear goals for reducing urban traffic pollution, congestion, noises and road accidents. The Socialists in Europe are well aware of these problems and are working to solve them. This special leaflet gives a concentrated version of how we can improve our urban environment – our ideas on urban mobility.



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The European Commission published a Green Paper on Urban Transport and an action plan on urban mobility is now awaited. The Socialist Group in the European Parliament welcomes this initiative. Europe's overall sustainability and its ability to address such issues as climate change, energy efficiency and demographic change, will entirely depend on whether its big urban centres are able to address these challenges effectively. A sustainable Europe is only possible with sustainable cities. In this Manifesto, the **Socialist Group** in the European Parliament has outlined its political priorities on urban mobility.

*The EU should promote an **integrated, long-term approach to urban mobility**. Urban mobility is a complex matter that touches on many fields. Authorities in the fields of transport, environment, economic and social development, city and town planning, employment, and housing, must therefore work together with social organisations and businesses to develop a comprehensive approach towards urban mobility. All levels of government should be included in this process. Local, regional, national and EU levels of government should cooperate. **The EU should be an important partner and facilitator, naturally respecting the principle of "subsidiarity" (where decisions should be made at the most local level possible), and promoting very close cooperation where needed.***

*Europe should set out **clear goals** for remedying the main problems related to urban mobility. A **clear agenda** should be developed **to reduce traffic pollution, congestion, noise and road accidents**. Private car use should be avoided. Cities should adopt an integrated intermodal and/or co-modal policy that puts walking, cycling and public transport first, ahead of other modes of transport.*

To reach the goals set out in this agenda, each city should draw up a long-term **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan**. These plans would also take into account the mobility needs of the elderly, the disabled and the socially vulnerable. Access to mobility for all should be one of the basic principles to be considered.

This requires, first and foremost, thorough research: every city should examine the specific mobility needs of vulnerable citizens and act on them. The EU's role is to exchange best practice in this field and, if appropriate, take legislative initiatives to make sure that everyone is able to move around regardless of factors such as their age, health or income level.

In addition, a strategy on distribution of goods and services in cities should be included in the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. Smart planning of urban logistics is one of the key factors that would make such plans work.

Compatible data-collection and benchmarking on urban mobility is essential to allow authorities all over Europe to compare private car use, public transport use, walking, cycling, planning, energy efficiency and other environmental, social and economic parameters that are needed to develop policies. The Socialist Group calls for reasonable networking and exchange of good practices on urban mobility.

To avoid additional red tape and bureaucracy for its cities, the EU should draw as much information as possible from existing sources and structures, such as the European Environmental Agency in Copenhagen and the Statistical Office of the European Communities. The information on urban mobility should be brought together in **an efficient way**, such as a **“European Platform for Urban Mobility”** to allow citizens and policymakers easy access to this vital information.

Europe should **step up its efforts to introduce technological solutions** for cleaner and more sustainable urban transport. One of the main objectives should be to create, at last, a real market for clean and quiet vehicles and intelligent transport systems, so that existing innovations are adopted on a broad scale. Existing efforts to stimulate research and development in this field should be continued and reinforced.

The Socialist Group calls for a **creative multi-channel approach to financing urban mobility**. This approach should be based on the optimization of existing EU financial resources and legal instruments to facilitate investment in sustainable urban transport, and draw from funds that have proven to be effective, such as the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Funds. A specific fund could be dedicated to urban mobility, but the EU should avoid creating new financial structures to promote and facilitate cooperation and the sharing of good practices in the field of urban mobility.

To increase efficiency in decision-making, there should be **urban mobility liaison officers** in all parts of the European Commission which deal with legislation affecting urban mobility, for example transport, environment and regional policy.

As it did for rail and air transport, the EU should guarantee **passengers' rights in public transport**, and it may also legislate on **quality standards in public transport and passengers' rights for the disabled**.

The Socialist Group also supports the idea of **company mobility plans**. Companies have to design plans to get their employees to work in the fastest, the most sustainable and the most secure way possible, both for users and companies.

How can we improve urban transport to achieve the objectives of fighting climate change and the goals of the Lisbon Strategy?

What are the main problems?

Europe is a highly urbanised continent. More than 60 per cent of European citizens live in cities, and cities generate almost 85 per cent of the EU's gross domestic product. Most of these cities were built and designed before the private car and modern traffic, and before urbanisation processes gained momentum. The high degree of urbanisation and increased car use and ownership by ever more affluent citizens are causing major problems:

- Most cities suffer from **congestion**. It is estimated that about 100 billion euros a year (about 1 per cent of the EU's GDP) is lost to congestion. Road traffic is estimated to increase by 36 per cent between 2000 and 2020¹, so the problem of congestion is only set to intensify.
- Cities suffer the most from **pollution**. Urban traffic causes 40 per cent of all CO₂ emissions and 70 per cent of other emissions from transport, causing smog and other pollution-related problems. Traffic is also a significant source of **noise**, which can be detrimental to citizens' health.

¹ Figures from the European Environmental Agency.

- **Safety** is another big problem: one in three fatal road accidents occur in urban areas. The EU has already reduced the number of road accident victims to about 43,000 a year, but this is still not in line with the objective of halving the number of fatalities by 2010 to 25,000, as outlined in the Commission's 2001 White Paper on Transport².

Problems related to urban mobility thereby form an obstacle to the Lisbon Agenda objectives of economic growth and job creation. **Moreover, cities are a major contributor to climate change, and they are key players in EU strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.** Consequently, many public health and safety risks could be reduced with an effective urban mobility policy.

One of the main problems in urban mobility is the **private car**. Although most European cities have intricate public transport systems that allow people to easily move from one point to another, many still drive their car to work or to move around. The car is by far the dominant urban mode of transport, providing for about 75 per cent of kilometres travelled in EU conurbations. Cars cause so much congestion that, in some European cities, average traffic speeds at peak times are lower than in the days of the horse-drawn carriage. Increased car use has caused safety and environmental problems, as well as a downward spiral of under-investment in public transport.

The problem of **urban freight transport** is also underestimated. Approximately 40 per cent of all vehicles other than passenger cars are service-related. A good deal of those vehicles are used for distribution of goods in the cities.

Some cities have solved these problems in a very effective way, creating more jobs, healthier living conditions and a more agreeable urban environment. These good practices must be shared with other European cities. The European Union should promote and facilitate these creative solutions along with the sharing of good practices.

How can we develop a custom-made comprehensive EU approach towards urban mobility?

The main objectives of the Socialist Group in this area are as follows:

- **Reduce congestion** and improve mobility to foster growth and jobs in line with the Lisbon Agenda
- **Combat pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, noise and other environmental problems** that are caused by urban traffic, in line with the Gothenburg Agreement, the EU's Climate Change Action Plan and other initiatives. Growth of urban transport should be decoupled from its negative environmental impact
- **Improve road safety** and prevent fatalities
- **Improve mobility for more vulnerable people** and improve quality of life for city dwellers

By March 2008, the Commission had consulted all stakeholders. The European Parliament drew up an own-initiative report as a reaction to the Commission's Green Paper. The Socialist Group used this opportunity to set an agenda on urban mobility with a view to the action plan on urban mobility which the Commission aimed to launch in late 2008.

In the absence of a Commission Action Plan, the Socialist Group in the Transport Committee has moved forward and appointed a rapporteur for an urban mobility Action Plan.



What is the overall role of regions, towns/communes and the EU in the process?

As urban mobility is a very complicated matter covering a wide range of policy areas, it would make sense to **list what can be done by the EU and what cannot**. The Socialist Group thinks Europe has a role to play in those areas where Member States benefit from working together in the framework of the EU. On the other hand, when it is clear that problems can be solved in a better way on a local level, the principle of subsidiarity should be applied.

*The most important message in this respect is the call for **an integrated approach** which includes all levels of government. Cities should work together with regions, national authorities and the EU to solve the main problems of urban mobility. It is important that the EU institutions come up with **a clear listing of EU competences and initiatives in the field of urban mobility**. The EU could, for example, draw up a database of all current successful regional, city and local initiatives in this field to further facilitate the sharing of good practices.*

Furthermore, there is a need for rationalisation and better coordination of existing legislation. A lot of EU legislation that has an impact on urban mobility (e.g. the Air Quality Directives³, Treaty rules on competition, state aid and public procurement, the Environmental Noise Directive⁴) should be reviewed and, if appropriate, adapted to promote more sustainable urban transport.

³ Council Directive 96/62/EC, Council Directive 1999/30/EC, Directive 2000/69/EC, Directive 2002/3/EC, Directive 2004/107/EC a.o.

⁴ Directive 2002/49/EC.

*The Socialist Group therefore strongly supports the concept of **Sustainable Mobility Plans** that aim to reduce passenger car use and promote walking and cycling, the use of public transport, and efficient and sustainable distribution of goods and services in our cities. These plans need to be developed in cooperation with all relevant levels of government, and all stakeholders.*

How can we reduce dependency on private cars?

What about congestion charging (London/Stockholm) experiences?

The London experience has shown that effective charging schemes can drastically reduce the use of the private passenger car. In 2003 the British capital started the world's largest anti-congestion charging scheme, resulting in about 30 percent less congestion, and substantial improvement in the flow of weekday traffic. Substantial parts of the public have been highly supportive of this scheme but sadly the plans to expand it were abolished by Tory Mayor Boris Johnston.

The same goes for the Stockholm charging scheme. During the one-year trial in 2005 and 2006, the Swedish capital was able to reduce traffic by 10 to 15 per cent during rush hours, resulting in better traffic flow, significant reductions in CO₂ and other pollutant emissions, a shift towards more sustainable transport modes (4 percent increase in public transport use), and 5 to 10 percent fewer injuries and fatalities as a result of road accidents. Before the trials, citizens were very sceptical about the charging scheme. After the trial, a majority was supportive of the scheme.

In both cases, social democrats were the driving force in getting these measures passed.

However, when designing such anti-congestion schemes, care should be taken to avoid social exclusion. Schemes that give the most deprived citizens a mobility disadvantage over people that can easily make ends meet are unfair and should be redesigned. Also, the effect on local commerce of restricting cars or banning them altogether from city centres should be taken into account when designing Urban Green Zones or Clear Zones.



*The Socialist Group thinks such **good practices should be closely studied** and their impact reported in a comparable way, with a view to modelling these projects in other major cities.*

Should labelling schemes be envisaged?

One of the most important tools is the mandatory planning of **Urban Green Zones or Clear Zones**⁵ in cities of a certain size⁶. These are zones where private passenger cars and lorries are not allowed, or where they are subject to charging or other anti-congestion schemes, such as the pollution charging schemes that have been introduced in Stockholm, London, some German cities, or with the Eco-Pass in Milan⁷. The planning of green spaces to improve air quality for pedestrians, cyclists and citizens alike should be an important part of any mobility plan.

Labelling schemes could be a good way to exchange and reward good practices. Cities that apply good practices should be able to obtain a single, uniform and easily recognizable label that honours these initiatives. Cities that neglect urban mobility problems should be named and shamed. Europe should draw up a “white list” of cities with high urban mobility, and a “grey list” of cities with low urban mobility.

Should large-scale walking and cycling schemes be promoted and integrated into a mobility plan?

Cycling and walking are to be included in the mobility plans, as they are very effective in combating obesity and diseases linked to a lack of physical activity. Moreover, walking and cycling can be very valid alternatives to very short-distance trips by public transport. Every EU city should develop an **Urban Walking and Cycling Policy**.

⁵ Sometimes also referred to as LEZ or Low Emission Zones, see www.lowemissionzones.eu

⁶ e.g. cities above 100.000 inhabitants, as suggested for Sustainable Urban Transport Plans in the Hegyi report A6-0233/2006 .

⁷ Milan has introduced a 10 € per day charge for vehicles entering the city centre.



At this moment, little data is available about the use of the bicycle and pedestrians' movements in cities, but it is clear that promoting walking and cycling is an important policy option in the framework of a sustainable mobility plan. We can learn from Vélo'V⁸ in Lyon, for example, and similar initiatives in southern European cities.

What about freight transport?

Most experts on urban mobility, planning and development agree that urban logistics remains an underestimated element of urban planning in European cities. As mentioned, about four out of ten vehicles in the EU are used for distribution of goods or the delivery of services, and as most consumers are in cities, this creates large traffic flows that need to be managed.

A good number of European cities already have some kind of freight transport policy in place, but they can learn from experiences such as the Lyon project on urban freight transport (A similar project exists in Barcelona). That French city introduced a new policy to standardise size, and road signalisation and rules of use of delivery areas (e.g. a 30 minute time limit for delivery stops, planned access restrictions to vehicles with lower emission standards). The project aims to reduce double parking in streets, a practice that hampers traffic flows and increases the safety risks for cyclists and other vulnerable road users.

*The Socialist Group therefore calls for the **inclusion of a chapter on urban logistics in the European Commission's action plan on urban mobility**⁹, with particular emphasis being put on the dissemination of best practices such as the Lyon example.*

⁸ Bicycle project started in Lyon (FR) that has been copied in other cities, especially in southern Europe.

⁹ See also PSE Member Inès Ayala Sender's report on "freight transport logistics in Europe, the key to sustainable mobility" A6-0286/2007.



How can we develop new financing systems within the EU?

Could the focus of the European Structural and Cohesion Funds be shifted from building roads to promoting sustainable transport systems?

Financing urban mobility is one of the key problems that need to be addressed. EU Member States' budgets are under pressure, leaving cities with little money to invest in urban mobility. The EU budget is also unlikely to leave room for major investment in urban transport in the years to come. Many cities do not have the necessary funding to buy new public transport vehicles or to invest in infrastructure and other projects.

*The Socialist Group therefore calls for a **creative multi-channel approach to financing urban mobility**. This approach should be **based on the optimization of existing EU financial resources**, and legal instruments to facilitate investment in sustainable urban transport:*

Some of the funds used for the **Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T)** should be spent on improving connections between our cities. Experience shows that the large TEN-projects that are underway now focus on removing bottlenecks on long-distance stretches of railway and inland waterway, but the problem in some cases is the connection between the TEN-T network and the cities. The Socialist Group calls for the extension of a high-speed rail network, as part of the extension of the current TEN-T 30 priority projects, in order to at least ensure connections between the capitals of all Member States concerned.



Some Member States already draw heavily from the **Structural Funds** and **Cohesion Funds** to accelerate investment in their transport systems. These funds are not sufficient to stimulate a rapid change in investment in urban transport. The EU should develop new policies to stimulate the use of the existing funds for urban mobility. The concept of a network of Demonstration Cities would be a good idea.

It is also important to stress the importance of funding research and development of new technologies that can contribute to more sustainable cities. This can be done under the **7th Framework Action Programme**.

The EU also has a clear role to play in creating a **framework for procurement and investment** in urban mobility. The Socialist Group supports further guidance on the Treaty rules on state aid, implementation of the new regulation on public service obligations in the public transport sector¹⁰, and other initiatives such as the Commission proposal on the procurement of clean vehicles¹¹. Public-Private Partnerships need particular attention. Joint procurement should also be stimulated.

The Socialist group also calls on the European Commission to encourage local authorities to provide **financial and non-financial incentives for business and private users to switch to low-emission means of transport**, and/or to renew existing fleets, or to upgrade them with available environmentally friendly technologies.

The role of the **European Investment Bank** in urban mobility should be studied. The EIB may play a crucial role in supporting investments in more sustainable transport modes and infrastructure (known as JESSICA).

Another option could be to dedicate a specific fund to urban mobility.

Special attention should be paid to the **situation of the cities in new Member States** that joined the EU in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. A good number of Eastern European cities have well developed public transport networks, but they have in many cases a lot to invest in renewal of rolling stock and infrastructure, and in development of walking, cycling and car policies. The EU should take this specific situation into account when attributing funds to urban mobility initiatives.

¹⁰ Regulation 1370/2007/EC.

¹¹ COM(2007)817.

How can a model for the internalisation of external costs be implemented in reality?

Amongst the key instruments for financing urban mobility are **charging systems**. The Socialist Group strongly **supports the principle of internalisation of external costs and the sharing of best practices in this field**. Special attention should be paid to the technical interoperability of such charging schemes, and cross-border enforcement should be facilitated¹². The Socialist Group supports the Commission's plans to develop a comprehensive calculation model for the internalization of external costs in all transport modes.

The revision of the **Eurovignette Directive**¹³ on charging heavy goods vehicles for road transport, to include a model of internalization of external costs, has received great interest by the Socialist Group. A distinction should, however, be made between urban charging and non-urban charging. The Eurovignette Directive was designed mainly for non urban areas but also concerns cities. Extending the scope of this Directive to urban areas and imposing a model for calculating external costs could effectively limit the possibilities cities of applying more effective urban charging schemes to combat congestion, noise and pollution.

¹² e.g. most congestion schemes still exclude foreign cars.

¹³ Directive 2006/38/EC.

How can innovative policies and technologies be encouraged and interoperability achieved?

What about Intelligent Transport Systems- how can they be standardised?

Transport and navigation technology can contribute greatly to more sustainable and less congested cities. A lot of work has already been done, and the EU has contributed enormously to the development of intelligent transport systems. First of all, the EU supports research and development of Intelligent Transport Systems under the Seventh Framework Action Programme. Furthermore, the EU has several programmes for the promotion of clean and quiet technologies, such as the CUTE¹⁴ and CIVITAS¹⁵ projects.

These projects have generally yielded good results, and offered policy makers some good tools to reach some of the objectives listed in the current Green Paper on Urban Mobility and in the 2001 White Paper on Transport.

*It is, however, time to move these initiatives to the next level and **start implementing some of the technological solutions that have been developed under the various EU pilot projects.** The Socialist Group*

¹⁴ Demonstration programme for development of hydrogen vehicles for urban transport.

¹⁵ CIVITAS - cleaner and better transport in cities - stands for City-VITALity-Sustainability. With the CIVITAS Initiative, the EC aims to generate a "decisive breakthrough" by supporting and evaluating the implementation of ambitious integrated sustainable urban transport strategies that should make a real difference for the welfare of the European citizen. CIVITAS I started in early 2002 (within the 5th Framework Research Programme); CIVITAS II started in early 2005 (within the 6th Framework Research Programme). Within CIVITAS I (2002-2006) there are 19 cities clustered in 4 demonstration projects, whilst within CIVITAS II (2005-2009) 17 cities in 4 demonstration projects are taking part. These 36 cities all over Europe will be funded by the EU with 100 M € and the overall budget of the Initiative will be more than 300 M €.



supports the idea of a Civitas Plus programme, which would be significantly expanded to include more cities and more projects, and to reorient the programme towards implementation of technologies. This should lead to the “decisive breakthrough” of clean and quiet urban transport technologies.

Standardisation at EU level could also be of help to lower the threshold some Member States may face to the high cost of prototypes and lack of experience with innovative projects.

What about energy efficiency and eco-driving?

The PSE Group also urges the Commission to launch comprehensive initiatives on the use of the satellite navigation project Galileo and other relevant new projects for urban transport. It should also continue to exchange best practice in the implementation of successful solutions (e.g. LKW-Maut in Germany etc.), within the framework of public-private partnerships such as ERTICO, or via projects such as CIVITAS.

*An increasingly important element in the debate on Intelligent Transport Systems is **energy efficiency and transport efficiency.***

The transport sector is the largest single consumer of fossil fuels in the EU (it accounts for 71 per cent of total oil consumption; and 98 per cent of all energy used for transport is oil-based). The transport sector is thus heavily dependent on oil import from outside the EU. The Socialist Group supports any appropriate initiative the EU can take to reduce the use of fossil fuels. The Socialist Group also supports the Commission’s proposals to further reduce the emissions of new cars under the Euro VI proposal¹⁶, and the proposal on setting emission performance standards for new passenger cars as part of the Community’s integrated approach to reduce CO₂ emissions from light-duty vehicles¹⁷.

¹⁶ COM(2007)851.

¹⁷ COM(2007)0856.

Another important element of any good innovation policy in transport is **transport efficiency**. Intelligent Transport Systems and smart urban logistics (as well as motorways at sea) can greatly reduce the number of empty trucks and vans on urban roads.

*As a general principle, the Socialist Group calls on European, national, regional and local authorities to take immediate actions to increase **education and information campaigns** to make citizens more aware of their traffic behaviour, with a focus on safety and energy efficiency.*

Awareness of **energy efficiency can be incorporated into drivers' education in Europe**. It would be a good idea to include so-called "eco-driving" techniques in the tutorial programme of driving schools, both for professional and private drivers. Initiatives aimed at better transport planning, car-sharing and modal shift or co-modality towards more sustainable modes of transport are to be encouraged.

How can better and more efficient legislation be promoted to remove legal and technical barriers?

The Green Paper on Urban Mobility offers a good opportunity to review existing legislation that has an impact on urban mobility. The main problem at the moment is that neither the Commission nor the Member States seem to have correct and standardized data on urban mobility on which to base policy.

*The Socialist Group supports the idea of a **European Platform on Urban Mobility or any other efficient way to collect and compare data on urban mobility** (e.g. statistics on congestion, car use, number of commuters and their origin, etc.). Such a Platform should, however, not be another agency that creates more red tape and bureaucracy, but rather an efficient means to bring together **statistics and knowledge from existing structures such as Eurostat and the European Environmental Agency**, to allow policy makers on all levels to access and use these data to develop policies.*

The Platform could, for example, also list existing legislation that can be or needs to be revised to promote sustainable urban mobility, and produce regular reports on urban mobility matters.

Another big problem that needs attention is the red tape associated policy-making within the European executive. The main problem seems to be that there is not enough cooperation between the different Directorates and Commissioners that prepare and launch proposals which have an effect on urban mobility.

*It would therefore be a good idea to appoint **urban mobility liaison officers in all DGs that deal with legislation affecting urban mobility**. These officers would be essential in such DGs as TREN, ENVI, and REGI, and would be in line with Commission's Better Regulation objectives.*

How can we create better and more customer-oriented public transport systems based on Integration, responding to environmental challenges?

How can public transport systems be an alternative to cars and how can we have good public transport systems?

*One of the main objectives of a good urban transport policy should be to **get people out of their cars and onto more sustainable modes of transport**. Here we could apply a policy that promotes walking, cycling and public transport first, and the private car as a last option (a "WCPC policy").*

To achieve this, each city urban mobility plan will need to contain a pedestrian and cycling policy, a good urban transport plan, and an integrated intermodal and/or co-modal policy that deals with problems such as parking spaces and connections to a city centre. It is important to emphasize here that this is mainly a task for city and regional bodies. The EU can facilitate the exchange of best practice here, via CIVITAS and/or a European Platform on Urban Transport or equivalent initiative.

*The EU, however, does have a role to play when it comes to some other essential aspects of public transport. As it did for rail and air transport, the EU should guarantee **passengers' rights in public transport**, and it may also legislate on **quality standards in public transport and on passenger rights for the disabled**.*

Another important element is **pricing policy**. Member States, local authorities and regions should be given the right tools to develop and implement an intelligent pricing policy that increases the attractiveness of public transport and other sustainable transport modes. This also requires an **integrated, co-modal or multi-modal ticketing policy**. If passengers need to buy a new ticket of a different type each time they change from train to metro, bus or tram, they are less likely to use these public transport modes. One-ticket systems, such as the Oyster Card in London¹⁸, should serve as an example. Thought should also be given to integrating parking charges, congestion charging, and bicycle sharing systems into such “smart card” systems. This would effectively facilitate multi-modal transport for the citizen.

How can urban transport promote social cohesion?

What are the needs of elderly people and young families who have no car and only limited resources?

It is easily forgotten, but mobility has a very important social dimension. The European population is ageing rapidly, and although the EU has reached an unprecedented level of affluence since World War II, many people still have great difficulty making ends meet at the end of each month, particularly the unemployed and single parents.

The demographic and social category of each citizen determines to a great extent his or her mobility needs. A lot of elderly people become isolated because they are less mobile. People who are unemployed or handicapped are more likely to be dependent on cheaper modes of transport, such as public transport. This may hamper social inclusion, as they are often less likely to meet other people or to find jobs.

*When drawing up an urban transport plan, cities should **take into account the mobility needs of the elderly, people with disabilities and the socially vulnerable (A Charter for a Sustainable European City, as has been drafted by the most recent German Presidency, could be included)**. This requires, first and foremost, thorough research: every city should examine the specific mobility needs of vulnerable citizens and act on them. The EU's role is to exchange best practice and, if appropriate, take legislative initiatives to safeguard the social inclusion of citizens through mobility.*

One important element of such a policy is to **guarantee mobility to the elderly and people with disabilities**. As the elderly make up a larger and larger portion of the population, and as people with disabilities represent 15 per cent of the EU population, it will become increasingly important to attract them to public transport by means of pricing policies and other instruments. Whenever possible, special transport services for people with disabilities and reduced mobility, such as door-to door services, should be guaranteed.

How can road safety in an urban environment be improved?

What about pedestrians and cyclists?

The European Commission set out an ambitious objective to reduce the number of road fatalities in the EU. The objective was to halve the number of deaths on EU roads between 2001 and 2010. Although the number of accidents declined by 17.5 per cent between 2001 and 2005, much still remains to be done¹⁹.

Pedestrians, especially those with reduced mobility, and cyclists remain the most vulnerable categories of road users in traffic accidents²⁰, but walking and cycling can be very valuable alternatives to the private passenger car and even public transport in cities. But as the Commission has pointed out in its Green Paper, reliable and comparative data on walking and cycling as a means of transportation in cities are very scarce.

*The PSE Group calls for **thorough research on walking and cycling in cities**, a task that can be attributed to a European Platform on Urban Mobility or equivalent body.*

Pedestrians and cyclists are confronted with a lot of problems in cities. They suffer the most from pollution, car traffic and safety risks, so a good cycling and walking policy is essential to every city. The EU should up its efforts through subsidising the exchange of best

¹⁹ The figures included in the Mid-Term Review of the Commission's White Paper on Transport (COM(2006)74) for 2005 show that about 41,600 people were killed on the roads, a fall (albeit too small) of 17.5 percent over 4 years. At the present rate, road deaths in the European Union in 2010 are likely to stand at 32,500, and the target of a maximum of 25,000 will probably not be achieved.

²⁰ 1,300,000 accidents a year cause more than 40,000 deaths and 1,700,000 injuries on the roads. The direct and indirect cost has been estimated at 160 billion euros, i.e. 2 percent of the EU's GNP. Certain groups of the population or categories of road user are particularly vulnerable: young people aged between 15 and 24 (10,000 killed each year), pedestrians (7,000) and cyclists (1,800).

practices through projects such as ByPad ('Bicycle Policy Audit')²¹, and it must continue to work with stakeholders to develop new initiatives (e.g. bike-sharing projects, urban planning guidelines, ...).

*Another important instrument to promote cycling and walking is to **harmonise highway codes in the EU**. Thought should be given to such policy options as uniform priority rules for pedestrians and cyclists.*

²¹ ByPad or Bicycle Policy Audit was developed by an international consortium of bicycle experts as part of an EU-funded project and aims to label cities that apply a good cycling policy. A ByPad audit has already been carried out by over 100 cities and regions in 22 countries, many of which have received the ByPad certificate.

How can urban planning contribute to a clean urban environment and take into account demographic considerations while reducing the number of cars on the road?

Urban planning is the key to developing our cities into sustainable and qualitative living environments for our citizens. Most European cities went through an intensive period of redesign and urban planning in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when the Industrial Revolution was at its peak. This planning included in many cases the construction of wide streets and boulevards. These roads were ideal for the development of car traffic in the decades after World War II. But the result is that all European cities are overwhelmed by car traffic nowadays, causing congestion, pollution and parking problems.

It will be virtually impossible to turn back the clock and plan our cities in a completely different way; we will have to deal with the urban planning heritage of our cities. The EU should examine, however, the role it can play in planning new developments in cities to avoid the emergence of congested sprawls.



*The PSE Group therefore supports the idea of **Mobility Impact Assessments**. EU environmental laws²² now oblige Member States to ask for an Environmental Impact Assessment each time infrastructure works or other important structural and land use changes are planned.*

One of the key problems when talking about land use and planning is the traffic flow between places where people live and places where they work. Commuter traffic can be reduced by more people working from home using a net connection to the office and mobile working, but at the end of the day, millions of citizens will still have to commute to and from their place of work on a daily basis.

*Also, the notion of **time use** is very important in organising our cities and improving quality of life. Urban mobility plans should take into account the rhythms of people's lives. It is not only the distance between the residence and the place of work which should be analysed, but also the differences in working times, in order to better sequence the time spent in the city.*

Problems that arise with commuter traffic are often a result of bad urban planning. Planning industrial sites next to an already congested highway only causes more congestion. Local and regional authorities should therefore oblige developers to look at the mobility aspect of their projects before going ahead with them.

*The Socialist Group also supports the idea of **Company Mobility Plans**. Companies have to design plans to get their employees to work in the fastest and most sustainable way possible.*

²² The most important law in this respect is Council Directive 85/337/EEC of 27 June 1985 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.







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