



**European Committee
of the Regions**

COTER-VII-003

4th Commission meeting, 10 July 2020

WORKING DOCUMENT

Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget

Challenges for public transport in cities and metropolitan regions

Rapporteur: **Adam STRUZIŁ (PL/EPP)**
President of Mazovia

Urban Mobility

Transport systems are essential for the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the European Union and connections between urban centres. A future transport industry with smart and sustainable solutions for mobility along with smart systems for managing them that are adapted to sustainable development goals will be key for the economic competitiveness of the EU. Urban transport systems offer opportunities for both urban and national economies to operate effectively. Transport should ensure that everyone's expectations and needs are met in relation to their professional activity, private lives and other individual needs and enable them to travel to destinations related to specific activities. The method, time and ease of movement directly influence how quality of life in an urban centre is assessed.

Decarbonisation of transport

It is urgently necessary to decarbonise transport. Addressing these challenges and possible solutions will be essential for delivering the ambitious decarbonisation objectives of the EU Green Deal.

Clean public transport

Simplifying public procurement for clean vehicles removes the first barrier against minimising CO₂ emissions in cities. The European Commission and national governments must also finance the transition to clean transport and therefore must look for sources of sufficient budgetary resources to support regional implementation of clean vehicles and alternative fuels infrastructure.

The role of local and regional authorities in shaping transport policy and increasing mobility

Local and regional authorities are well placed to develop and implement solutions that foster clean technology in transport through early adoption of clean vehicles and transport technologies. However, in most EU countries it is not yet mandatory for environmental aspects to be key criteria in public procurement. Local and regional authorities, as providers of public transport services of general economic interest, need to be closely involved in a multi-level governance approach towards the greening of transport.

Co-financing at European level

The Cohesion Fund has a unique role to play in this regard. It is a tool to deliver on sustainable transport from which the allocation of resources for co-financing urban mobility in 2014-2020 was EUR 32 billion.

Furthermore, the significance of the European Regional Development Fund, an important source of funding for public transport infrastructure for many EU regions, should be underlined.

These funds are often used to implement smaller-scale investment projects at local level. Under no circumstance can funding for public transport from both funds be reduced in the next financial framework.

The possibilities for strengthening investment in sustainable mobility, for example through the Connecting Europe Facility, should be explored. It is also important to increase mobility through investment in infrastructure that improves access to urban nodes and nodes in the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

The current problem: The COVID-19 crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a huge impact on public transport in terms of health, safety and financial loss. During the outbreak, public transport has required specific safety conditions to protect against transmission from sources of contagion due to the high number of users and limited space. Public transport has become a less attractive option and has seen a corresponding drop in user numbers, not only due to health risks, but also because of general lockdown conditions in most countries. Trust in public transport needs to be restored, funding needs to be secured and public transport needs to be prepared for a stable future.

At the same time, the pandemic has strongly shifted focus onto deploying and developing remote services, which are based on the use of transport services to meet the needs of people no longer able to meet their own needs in the usual way, and onto making sure that medical services in particular are accessible. The situation is forcing local and regional authorities to look for modern online mobility management solutions that demonstrate an optimal level of interoperability in communication with customers – while taking into account limitations for people with disabilities – and with other stakeholder groups. Authorities must also consider smart solutions for access to mobility, decreasing the impoverishment and social exclusion of their citizens.
