



# European Commission Communication on the Urban Mobility Package – Polis position paper

---

November 2014

## INTRODUCTION

Polis welcomes the urban mobility package. The European Union has a strong role to play with regards urban mobility, by **enabling cities** to implement the policy measures of their choice as efficiently as possible, by **anticipating future challenges** linked to urban mobility and by **helping to bridge the urban mobility gap**.

In order to achieve this, an **integrated approach** at European level is needed. Urban mobility should be recognised as a topic of interest beyond the remit of the transport policies but also for other policies of reference. This should ensure a **greater coherence between the policies** and **more efficient implementation** at local level of urban mobility policies. More coordination between European environment, climate, research and innovation, industry, energy, health and transport policies is needed, in as far as these have a direct impact on urban and regional transport. It is therefore necessary that the European Union creates **internal tools and mechanisms to ensure a strong and systematic coordination** between all policies of relevance for urban mobility. The fact that urban mobility has an impact on environment, climate, research and innovation, energy, health and transport policies should be recognized in the portfolio of competences of DG Move.

The **key tool to achieve an integrated approach is Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans**. Polis therefore strongly welcomes the fact that the Communication encourages SUMP, in particular the fact that the annex on SUMP outlines a definition of the tool is a very important step in facilitating its EU- wide uptake. Polis welcomes the fact that the Communication outlines that the EC would support national, regional and local authorities to develop and implement SUMP, including financially. European funding should be directly linked to the development of SUMP.

In addition, the development of a sustainable urban mobility should build on a careful assessment of the present and future performance of the urban transport system. This implies developing **common indicators** to better understand and identify future challenges for urban mobility, to measure systems performance and to measure impact of public policies for sustainable urban mobility. This **set of indicators should enable better monitoring of the implementation of SUMP**.

Polis strongly encourages the efforts to **leverage action across all levels of government**, which we believe is the spirit of the Communication and welcome the Commission's proposal to host a Member States Expert Group on Urban Mobility to harness this leverage capacity. Cities and regional transport authorities should be included. Polis also encourages the EC to adopt a **horizontal integrated approach** as well to ensure better coordination between the different areas that touch upon urban mobility issues. This would help towards **achieving European goals and targets** as listed in EC's Communication and staff working documents as well as better anticipate the future challenges of urban mobility.

## EU ACTION

The European Commission can play a key role in developing recommendations on critical policy areas to improve urban mobility by making it more sustainable and resource efficient. In this respect, **“resource efficient” as stated in the Communications title, should be understood in the broadest context possible**, i.e. not only in relation to energy efficiency but also based on a good understanding of local particularities, existing network and infrastructure to optimize their use, and financial viability. This is all the more relevant in the current difficult economic climate.

Secondly, Polis strongly welcomes the overarching goal set out in the Communication to ensure a shift towards more sustainable modes of urban mobility, such as walking, cycling, public transport and new patterns for care use and ownership. Modal shift, i.e. a shift away from “reliance on conventionally-fuelled cars” is a central goal but should be coupled with the additional goal of a **reduction of numbers of cars in circulation in cities in real terms**. This goal can be linked to a number of key policy areas and targets set out in the Communication: safety, reducing emissions, improving health both through increased physical activity and less pollution, more balanced use of urban space, etc.

### 1. Three core activities

**The European Union has real added value in promoting best practice, experience and cooperation** support dissemination of good practice and provide funding for urban mobility projects. It can promote the implementation on a voluntary basis of SUMP as governance and planning tools and it can encourage Member States to better take into account urban transport and its ramifications in their policy objectives.

**Supporting R&D to deliver solutions for urban mobility challenges**, notably thanks to funding through Research Framework Programmes. The European Union has a key role to play in promoting and supporting the role of research in the area of urban mobility, to better understand and foster the deployment of technology (ITS and clean vehicles) and of innovative policies and measures. In this respect, **CIVITAS is a crucial European funded programme**. With regards the EC’s ambition to develop a Single market for innovative urban transport solutions, e.g. by developing common standards and technical specifications or by facilitating joint and clean procurement, it is nevertheless relevant to stress that new technologies and solutions should answer the demands and needs of cities as well as those of the market.

The European Union should provide **targeted financial support**: European funding programs should be used as an incentive for sustainable urban mobility plans, encouraging and funding their development, but avoiding discrimination between countries with different national legislations.

### 2. Key indicators in a urban mobility scoreboard

We need **common indicators to better understand and measure the performance of passenger and freight transport**. Polis would welcome recommendations on indicators to collect data in order to better understand the situation across cities as well as to make it possible to do a **comparative analysis over time** of the impact of public policy in bringing forth sustainable urban mobility and measure system performances.

European efforts to provide and recommend comprehensive and workable definitions of key indicators such as accessibility or the energy efficiency of the urban mobility system would be most welcome.

**Accessibility** should allow to measure mobility by taking into account the accessibility to jobs and services for citizens considering the distance travelled, the time travelled and the cost incurred. The possibility to extend this concept of accessibility to goods could be usefully explored.

**Energy efficiency** should allow measuring the energy required for the movement of persons and goods, enabling not only to benchmark cities but also, at the micro level, to better work towards the optimization of the modal distribution of trips.

### 3. Deployment of clean vehicles

Looking into the deployment of technology for clean transport is a central part of reducing car emissions. The **European Union should strongly encourage the deployment of cleaner vehicles**, including electromobility, in order to achieve the goals it has set itself in the Communication. This involves several policy areas:

- ▶ **Tighter and more efficient vehicle emissions regulation:** support the introduction of Real Driving Emissions tests which guarantee vehicle performance by covering all driving events which drivers are regularly confronted with in real life (the New European Driving Cycle has failed to reflect real-world driving style)
- ▶ Support the **development and deployment of electromobility**
- ▶ Encourage the use of **innovative procurement practices** to support the deployment of clean vehicles, notably to achieve a critical mass of vehicle for cost-efficient developments by European industry. Proposals to facilitate procurement of clean vehicles used for urban logistics should be explored
- ▶ Enable the **systematic electronic identification of vehicles** in order to provide information about class, type and energy performance

## ELEMENTS OF CONTENT

### 1. Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans

SUMPs are given special attention in the document and the work of city networks like Polis in sharing experiences is recognized there<sup>1</sup>. Polis welcomes the fact that the Communication outlines that the EC would support national, regional and local authorities to develop and implement SUMPs also financially. The Communication also presents the main characteristics a SUMP is expected to have, highlighting that urban mobility is primarily about people. The Annex on SUMP to the Communication defines more clearly the concept where it is stated however that these should be taken as guiding principles only and not as binding.

Polis welcomes the fact that the Communication calls on member states to take stronger action in the realm of promoting the uptake of SUMPs. In particular, the fact that Member States should carry out an assessment of future performance of urban mobility in view of key EU policy goals and according to this assessment, review and amend the tools where necessary. Polis also welcomes the initiatives at European level to set up **a European Platform on Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans** to coordinate EU cooperation on developing the concept and tools further as well as to **provide a one-stop shop**; and **expand the present [www.mobilityplans.eu](http://www.mobilityplans.eu) website** into a virtual knowledge and competence centre.

<sup>1</sup> All the examples that are listed in the Communication, in the Annex or in the accompanying documents use Cities that are members of Polis, save 2.



## 2. Implementing innovative policies and measures

The tools to manage congestion and traffic outlined in the Communication – **ITS tools, Access Regulations and Road User charging and smarter urban logistics**, notably through delivery plans are most valuable.

Polis welcomes the recognition that more needs to be done in understanding **urban freight** and how it fits into SUMP. In particular, we encourage the dissemination of best practices – notably building on existing European funded project BESTFACT – the proposal by the EC to prepare with experts, guidance documents that provide practical assistance on how to improve urban logistics performance, e.g. by developing delivery and servicing plans, city logistics in access regulation schemes etc. The scope should be widened to data collection in the realm of urban freight, with the view of developing harmonized indicators across the EU. This should be a first step in ensuring that practical assistance to improve urban logistics performance.

With regards **Smarter access Regulations and Road User charging**, Polis strongly supports the proposal to foster an exchange with Member States and experts on urban access regulations in the EU, including their conceptual foundations, practical implementation, effectiveness and impacts; We welcome the fact that the Communication proposes to prepare, with stakeholders, non-binding guidance to help cities implement access regulation schemes effectively. This could notably be to ensure cities develop schemes that consult stakeholders (TIDE project). Furthermore, **parking policies** can also play an important role in demand management.

ITS and technology are one of the many factors driving innovation. Polis welcomes the goal of making urban areas benefit from the full **potential of ITS solutions** and recognizes the potential of ITS for innovative solutions in mobility in so far as it is used as a tool for efficient implementation of policies aiming at more sustainable and efficient urban mobility. Polis is supportive of the EC's efforts to overcome fragmentation, promoting non-discriminatory access to traffic and travel data (Open data), ensuring future interoperability of systems and formats. The EC should systematically consider the issue of costs of ITS deployment for local and transport authorities when defining its policy.