EUROCITIES STATEMENT ON THE URBAN DIMENSION OF THE EU TRANSPORT POLICY

The EU has taken a step in the right direction towards a more sustainable and liveable Europe by putting a new emphasis on the urban dimension of the EU transport strategy over the past few years. This has emerged with the recognition of the central role of cities in developing and implementing urban mobility solutions in the Green Paper on Urban Mobility, the Urban Mobility Action Plan and the revised White Paper on Transport.

In the context of the current European Commission's review of the Urban Mobility Action Plan and the implementation of the revised White Paper, we would like to reiterate some general principles and also provide our position on specific policies:

GENERAL PRINCIPLES: THE URBAN DIMENSION OF THE EU TRANSPORT STRATEGY

➢ An EU strategy supporting cities

All EU actions should support and enable efforts at the local level, rather than impose one-size-fits-all or top-down solutions. The EU has the potential to add value in many areas, but it needs to take into account the complexity, dynamism and variety of the urban environment. It is vital that action at the EU level does not restrict the flexibility of cities to design, implement or indeed adapt urban mobility tools according to local circumstances.

As to whether a new Urban Mobility Action Plan is needed, we remain open-minded. What is important is that we avoid confusion between different European Commission initiatives, given the comprehensive coverage of urban issues in the revised Transport White Paper. Cities must be fully consulted as White Paper commitments are implemented, including on those issues which, even if not directly aimed at cities, may have significant consequences for urban mobility.

➢ More environmentally-friendly and space-efficient forms of transport in urban areas

The priority for cities and for EU urban mobility policy should remain a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, walking and cycling in urban areas.

Cars are a principal contributor to congestion, noise and road casualties in cities. Cars also take up more urban space than pedestrians, cyclists and, in particular, train and light-rail passengers. The more we accommodate cars in our cities, the more challenging it is for our cities to retain a human scale and a dense, attractive, vibrant and liveable environment. As a

general objective, urban intelligent transport systems (ITS) should also help promote a modal shift for more sustainable cities in the future.

➢ **An integrated approach for urban mobility planning**

Any EU strategy on urban mobility should reflect the fact that mobility is more than just transport, and that it requires an integrated approach. Cities have set ambitious objectives for improved quality of life for citizens, tackling climate change and making better use of energy, improving economic performance and ensuring social needs are taken into account. These challenges can only be met through a combined and concerted effort of all policy areas from transport to health, from education and employment to land-use planning and housing, and with active stakeholder involvement.

URBAN MOBILITY POLICIES AND THE EU ADDED VALUE

We welcome the recognition of urban transport in the EU transport chain. At the same time, as cities, we are concerned that EU-wide rules may hamper our ability to develop and deliver transport solutions in a flexible way. We would therefore like to make the following recommendations:

1. Local strategies for sustainable urban mobility and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs)

For cities, the key tool enabling cities to achieve a significant modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport is an integrated long-term strategy, which should be developed and implemented in the form of a SUMP. Such plans may exist as independent documents, or may be part of wider urban development plans, as is often the case for larger cities. However, they must set a vision, goals and measures to achieve sustainable, effective and accessible mobility in the city. To develop and implement such plans effectively, cities must retain the flexibility to address local problems using the tools best adapted to their local situations.

➢ **No mandatory solution can be applied at the local level in terms of urban mobility planning – cities need flexibility**

We would not support mandatory rules or plans, which could stifle innovation in cities. Cities need flexibility and solutions that are tailored to their specific needs. The EU should nevertheless work to facilitate the development and implementation of SUMPs, and we welcome the funding made available for practical methods of doing this, for example through the development of quality frameworks. Of course, the detailed content and focus of any SUMP must be left to cities to decide.

➢ **The EU can add value as follows:**

- ▪ Support R&D projects on urban mobility planning, including the issue of accessibility to transport infrastructure.
- ▪ Develop guidelines and recommendations and provide financial support for the development of SUMPs.

2. Access restrictions and urban pricing schemes

We must ensure that the EU takes city realities into account if we want urban transport to contribute to a higher quality of life for the 500 million people living in Europe.

Tackling congestion requires a range of measures, such as improving system management, pricing and capacity optimization and expansion. The appropriate policy mix will depend on the context within each individual city.

> ### No 'one-size-fits-all' access restrictions and pricing schemes

Different circumstances and governance structures in cities mean that the same access restrictions and pricing schemes will not work efficiently across all European cities. Mandatory criteria (e.g. on access, the assessment of impacts, certification, monitoring and evaluation) would be counter-productive.

> ### Legal barriers at national level

In some cases national legislation prevents cities from being as ambitious as they would like to be in solving the challenges: for example, some cities are prevented from using certain demand management tools like urban pricing schemes due to national frameworks. Further work is required to make the case to national authorities to allow the possibility of local road pricing schemes if appropriate, building on the arguments in the White Paper.

Given that cities are opposed to a legal framework at EU level in this area, we see the EU added-value as follows:

- Promotion of best practice, for example, on the public consultation required before the introduction of schemes; use of a common signifier to alert drivers that a scheme is in force; ensure vehicles are able to register and/or pay required fees remotely; making scheme information available in different languages.
- Development and promotion of standards for vehicle documentation (enabling cross-border recognition of vehicle age, size, weight, CO2 emissions and Euro standards), retrofit documentation (enabling cross-border recognition of retrofitted vehicles) and retrofit equipment.
- Improved information to users, for example on access restriction zones. This could be done via a central EU website/database, be available in multiple languages and provide an overview of all access restriction zones across Europe. It could even provide a link to individual city websites in order to process any registration or payment.
- Promotion of urban ITS with a stronger focus on achieving a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in cities (e.g. multimodal and just-in-time information, as opposed to in-car ITS).
- Establishing a dialogue between cities, EU institutions and other relevant stakeholders to discuss and improve the design and implementation of such schemes.

3. EU financial support for urban transport projects

As the Green Paper 'Towards a new culture for urban mobility' points out, cities are powerhouses of Europe's economy. Investment in urban public transport is a catalyst for wider economic regeneration and development, contributing directly to Europe's 2020 strategy. Improving connectivity can help improve access to jobs, education and other social and cultural amenities, and can contribute to increasing the prosperity of local communities.

➢ **EU financial support to urban mobility should focus on:**

- Promoting modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in urban areas.
- Developing integrated projects, including larger scale demonstration projects involving a range of measures that can have a significant impact.
- Research and demonstration projects for sustainable urban mobility, e.g. on cycling and walking.
- Urban links to trans-European transport networks (TEN-Ts).

➢ **The Smart Cities and Communities initiative should grant city governments a central role in the initiative's strategy and projects.**

City authorities are not simply facilitators for or customers of industry; they should be acknowledged as leaders and innovators in their own right. The nature and extent of the role of cities in the proposed consortia and lighthouse projects is still unclear at this stage. There must be, at the very least, an equal partnership between industry and cities. There should be clarity from the beginning on the working process of the consortia and the roles of all stakeholders. Maintaining a strong link to the demand side of production and consumption is essential as it will help ensure a citizen-driven approach, avoiding the risk of weak take-up sometimes associated with supply-led initiatives. Technological solutions and innovation should meet the needs of citizens.

4. Urban freight logistics

EU guidelines could help ensure better monitoring and management of urban freight flows, and stimulate companies to implement efficient urban logistics. In the past, restrictions and standardised measures for city logistics often undermined efficient urban freight transport.

Each city should have the flexibility to determine restrictions on weight or dimensions for trucks/delivery vehicles. While one large vehicle might be more polluting than a small one, if efficiently loaded, however, a large vehicle can also be cleaner and more space-efficient.

➢ **The EU can add value as follows:**

- Setting simple and concise best practice guidelines and recommendations to better monitor and manage urban freight flows.
- Providing EU guidance on how to encourage companies to use freight vehicles more efficiently.
- Development and exchange of best practice.
- Further development of urban ITS solutions for more efficient city freight transport
- Supporting R&D projects.

5. Other issues

➢ **Vehicle regulation:**

As part of an integrated approach at EU level, the EU legal framework for vehicles ought to be fully consistent with sustainable mobility.

- Regulation of emissions via euro and CO2 standards should be tightened to help improve air quality in cities and reduce carbon emissions.
- Regulation of vehicle design, in particular for HGVs, should be reviewed, with standards introduced for tyre and brake wear, e.g. promoting the take up of fuel efficient and quieter tyres.

➢ **Road safety:**

The EU campaign to reduce road deaths has been a great success. Nevertheless, the level of road deaths and serious injuries is still unacceptable and, in urban areas, efforts to increase cycling and walking may lead to higher absolute numbers of casualties.

- Further efforts and stretching EU targets should be adopted to reduce road casualties. For example, European institutions should promote a stronger road safety dimension in EU programmes
- Further funding should be made available, including support for the introduction of road safety measures alongside the promotion of walking and cycling, by making infrastructure and vehicles safer.

We hope that the forthcoming EU initiatives addressing urban mobility will reflect the recommendations we have developed over the past years and in this paper. Europe's major cities remain committed to working with European institutions to help steer Europe towards more sustainable urban mobility, with a better quality of life for all our citizens.