

Sustainable urban mobility gaining ground

Cities are home to more than 70% of the EU population and generate about 85% of its GDP. As urban mobility relies heavily on conventionally fuelled private cars, cities suffocate from traffic congestion and pollution. Furthermore, urban CO₂ emissions account for about 23% of the EU total and reducing them is key for meeting the EU's emissions reduction targets – in the spotlight with the ongoing COP21 Paris climate conference. The sustainable mobility concept addresses urban issues as a whole, promoting a shift towards greener transport, to make cities more liveable.

The European Commission's approach

While [urban mobility](#) and transport management are the responsibility of urban, local and regional authorities, which lead most of the initiatives to improve urban mobility, the Commission supports these efforts by providing guidelines, sharing experience and finance. In 2009, it published an [action plan](#) proposing 20 initiatives for better urban mobility. Following an [independent review](#) of the action plan's outcomes, a special Eurobarometer [survey](#) on Europeans' attitudes towards urban mobility and a [public consultation](#), the Commission published a [communication](#) in 2013, 'Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility', with actions to be implemented both by the EU and the Member States, to reach out to towns and cities. Mobility and urban planning should be better coordinated through the use of sustainable urban mobility plans ([SUMP](#)s), where all action is part of a wider strategy. Plans are developed across individual policy areas and in cooperation with different levels of government. Typically, a plan includes measures for public transport, road transport, walking and [cycling](#), combining different transport modes, road safety, freight delivery, mobility management and intelligent transport systems ([ITS](#)).

Reinforcing and widening EU support

Besides the [European Structural and Investment funds](#), other sources of EU financing for urban mobility projects are available. The [Horizon 2020](#) programme will support smart and sustainable cities with [€232 million](#) in 2016-2017, the [Connecting Europe Facility](#) 2015 [call for grants](#) is also open to transport infrastructure projects in nodes of the trans-European transport core network, and possibilities exist under the European Fund for Strategic Investments ([EFSI](#)). In parallel, the Commission supports initiatives and platforms for sharing best practice (such as [CIVITAS](#), [ELTIS](#)) and promoting SUMPs. In 2015, it organised a [European mobility week](#), inviting all actors to 'do the right mix' of transport modes. The Council also indirectly supported urban mobility, when at an [informal meeting](#) in October – the first ever devoted to cycling – transport ministers adopted a [declaration](#) promoting cycling as a climate friendly transport mode.

The European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) has supported sustainable urban mobility on several occasions, recently for instance in its resolutions of [9 September 2015](#) on the implementation of the 2011 [White Paper on Transport](#) and of [14 October 2015](#), 'towards a new international climate agreement in Paris'. On 10 November 2015, the EP Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own initiative [report](#) (rapporteur: Karima Delli, Greens/EFA, France). It welcomes the Commission communication and supports the platforms for exchange of best practice. However, it expresses concerns about the top-down approach set out and instead, recommends a bottom-up approach. It invites authorities to consider the introduction of stricter speed limits in urban zones by 2020, reiterates the goals of the White Paper for phasing out traditionally fuelled cars in urban zones and recalls that the development of SUMPs should be an important element in deciding on EU financing for urban transport projects. It also asks for part of the revenue from road charging to be dedicated to improving sustainable urban mobility. The Committee's report is [scheduled](#) for debate at the December I plenary.