



Sustainable transport

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New urban mobility framework

REPLY TO EC PUBLIC CONSULTATION

September 2021

The European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI) is an international non-profit association that was officially founded in April 2003. It is the first attempt to unite the forces of the foremost multimodal transport research centres across Europe and to thereby promote the excellence of European transport research.

Today, it includes 28 major transport research institutes or universities from 19 European countries. Together, they account for more than 4,000 European scientific and research staff in the field of transport. ECTRI as the leading European research association for sustainable and multimodal mobility is committed to provide the scientifically based competence, knowledge and advice to move towards a green, safe, efficient, and inclusive transport for people and goods.

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1. Introduction

To help the EU build on its 2013 urban mobility package and meet its 2050 climate target, this EU New Urban Mobility initiative is meant to propose measures to encourage EU countries to develop urban transport systems that are safe, accessible, inclusive, affordable, smart, resilient and emission-free.

The initiative also means to address transport pollution and congestion, and draw lessons from COVID-19's effect on public transport to help with the transition to a climate-neutral economy and emission-free transport at local level.

The aim of the envisaged EC consultations is to seek information and feedback from the most relevant stakeholders and from the wider public in relation to the main directions of the planned EU Urban Mobility framework (NUMF). More specifically, the consultation look for feedback as to how the EU urban areas can:

- contribute to reducing transport greenhouse emissions and to other objectives of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy including its milestone to have 100 European cities carbon neutral by 2030;
- improve the quality of life of the EU urban population by addressing urban mobility challenges such as air pollution, congestion, noise, accessibility, road safety while promoting physical activity;
- increase the support to, and use of, the most sustainable transport modes (in particular public transport and active mobility) as well as zero-emission urban logistics.

The feedback period for this consultation is 1 July 2021 - 23 September 2021.

The European Conference of Transport Research Institutes (ECTRI) welcomes the opportunity offered to share feedbacks on the main issues related to the future urban transport systems. After having contributed to the EC consultation on the sustainable and smart mobility strategy¹ in September 2020 and to the NUMF roadmap² in May 2021, ECTRI would therefore like to provide herewith its further views on the different aspects raised in the questionnaire, from a research perspective.

We hope this will help to enrich the Communication that the European Commission is preparing on the EU Urban Mobility framework.

¹ ECTRI position paper "An innovative and socially balanced European transport policy and a consistent strategy for sustainable and smart mobility" – September 2020
https://www.ectri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2020-09_ECTRI-Position-Paper_Sust-Smart-Mobility-Strategy_Final.pdf

² ECTRI response to EU Urban Mobility framework roadmap – May 2021;
https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12916-Sustainable-transport-new-urban-mobility-framework/F2327703_en

2. Complementing feedback to the questionnaire

ECTRI is concerned that a new urban mobility strategy may build on a survey like the subject one. Its shallow nature will at best yield a snap-shot of a limited set of issues, which may be of anecdotal interest. The Commission's ambitious plans for mobility's contribution to societal targets and well-being of EU citizens however require a system approach, a more comprehensive view that takes into account that evolutions are taking place in several transportation modes.

Research and innovation, R&I, is a key player in this evolution. Its results and their implementation can complement the survey's patchwork of actions, which mainly focuses on individuals and their personal preferences as well as selected transport needs.

Affirming and encouraging R&I will not only result in development of effective customer-centered mobility solutions for people and goods, but also e.g., methods, tools and models to cope with the dynamics of technical/technology developments and emerging trends as well as to handle uncertainties. Research to understand human needs in today's diverse society and to predict transport users' behaviour is needed to ensure that developed mobility solutions are attractive, inclusive and will be accepted and used to enhance quality of life.

In addition it is essential to add peri-urban areas' needs to the urban concept. They are a source of and a reason for traffic. Thus, urban solutions need to include the needs of peri-urban areas and vice versa. The dependency of cars is very high, not least in these areas, and there is no sign in the survey that breaking this still growing tendency is going to be tackled.

For a more future-proof, integrated approach to sustainable urban mobility, freight transport, opportunities with automated and connected vehicles, alternative fuels/new energy need also to be taken into account and it has to be made sure to include research on new business models for logistics and passengers' mobility as well as innovative consumption and production models. Emerging micromobility modes and their integration with public transport have to be considered as well.

The Circular Economy challenge needs to be fostered in the integrated urban mobility and freight ecosystem through supporting research and innovation along the whole life-cycle of mobility services and products, focusing on internalizing environmental externalities in transport prices and through developing new business models for the sustainable deployment of solutions. Concepts of separated freight and passenger transport are not necessarily reflecting reality anymore, especially in urban areas. Plans for urban transport and deliveries have to use models that combine freight and passenger transport. In particular online sales result in new transport chains which do not end collectively at shops or outlets anymore, but just at the door of the end user.

Dynamic and integrated tools for transport policy and planning need to be encouraged and supported through collaborative living labs so that emerging and new mobility solutions could meet citizen's needs with zero emissions and zero negative externalities; these tools (e.g. dynamic SUMPS; policy and behavioural incentives) would help to achieve a more resilient transport system and will require multidisciplinary research (sustainable urban mobility policies and planning, data science, artificial intelligence, etc.). Testing of new solutions in test fields and living labs should be encouraged before deployment to evaluate the acceptance and integration in the existing environment. Inclusive mobility in urban environment should not be seen as an additional option, but as prevalent concept for mobility solutions. "Solution" is to be understood as services that go beyond vehicles and hardware, also taking into account aspects of routing, area of coverage, scheduling, information, ticketing, and how to get access to a service e.g. through an app.

Furthermore, evidence-based policy making research needs to be supported. Policy makers, service providers, and stakeholders should draw on the best available evidence from research and be aware of the consequences of their decisions and available options before making their decisions. When deploying, developing/testing/piloting new solutions objective evaluations are necessary. They should be independent and their results available, so that the findings may create evidence, on which policy making could be based.