

## **Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment: Working Group on Sustainable Urban Transport**

This group had two meetings, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of the January in Paris and on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April in Brussels.

The first meeting was used to discuss the terms of reference prepared in partnership between DG Environment and the chair of the group. It was acted that each expert of the group will product a paper of his own view about the finalised terms of reference and the key barriers to adopting best practice in sustainable urban transport and the measures needed to overcome them.

During the second meeting, the experts presented their papers; after discussion on this basis, the group discussed about barriers and made propositions for action of DG Environment.

The identified barriers by the group are:

- Knowledge on how to make transport systems more sustainable exists: it is the lack of will to implement them that is the key obstacle;
- A lack of monitoring of transport schemes makes it difficult to question their true value as opposed to their anticipated value (post project evaluation);
- A lack of output based targets (e.g. a reduction of traffic accidents) make it difficult to structure meaningful transport management solutions but these must be set at the local level (a serious mistake to impose standard targets for all cities).
- There are many tools to managing transport in urban areas (over 60 have been identified) but municipalities will not be familiar with them. Understanding of how they should be used in conjunction with each other is minimal.
- No common definitions for basic terms for transport data (e.g. a 'trip', 'road death');
- Contradictions in the Commission's policies regarding transport.

### **Measures**

For the proposals, the issue of subsidiary and the role of the commission were discussed: the transport policy depends on the municipalities, so the Commission has to have carrot to encourage them in the chosen way.

- Mobility management;
  - There is legal requirement in France for mobility plans ; a general European obligation to make municipal authorities responsible for transport management would need financial encouragements by the commission ;
  - Creating a strong legal framework at the European level to support mobility management measures;
  - Creating a clear link between funding mechanisms and mobility management, even making the former conditional on the latter;
- The need to combine land use planning and traffic/transport planning so that one informs the other;
- A serious role for the bicycle in short journeys (1 to 1.5km);
- The need to link safety concerns and environmental concerns as the two need never be in conflict as they share the same goals.

- Promote best practice initiatives and innovation such as the CIVITAS programme and active dissemination but include practical information on the process such as the time-scales involved etc;
- The Thematic Strategy should set out a clear vision to underpin the work on sustainable urban transport systems;
- Guidance on decision making for transport projects;
- Provide municipalities with support on transport management projects;
- Develop common indicators for transport (drawing on the recent European Transport Ministers' work for instance) cities should apply these core indicators, and complete them with their own indicators that take into account their local circumstances ;
- Evaluation, perhaps by 5 stars, of each municipality's transport system (bench marking) based on the indicators, linking it to financial incentives. Publicity and awards should be made to the best performers and those making the most progress;
- Link existing Commission policies (e.g. air quality, noise) to traffic management;
- There should be ex ante and ex post evaluations of all transport related publicly funded projects at the city level to determine whether they have contributed to making the city's transport system more sustainable. The Member States should set in place an appraisal method for this purpose.

In discussion, it was stressed that the Thematic Strategy should not seek to blame municipalities for all transport problems. Many urban authorities had made good progress in dealing with a difficult problem. However, cities do compete with each other and unless an obligation is imposed to consider sustainable urban transport measures, it is unlikely to take place routinely throughout Europe.

The group has planned two other meetings, one on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June and one on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September.

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