



Opinion of Energie-Cités
In response to the Green Paper
"Towards a new culture for urban mobility" (COM/2007/551 final)

Energie-Cités welcomes the Green Paper on Urban Transport entitled "Towards a new culture for urban mobility" and thus focusing long awaited attention on urban traffic that is responsible for 40% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 70% of pollutants deriving from road transport¹. In the context of petrol prices exceeding the psychological threshold of \$100 a barrel, urban mobility and transport has to be reconsidered entirely. Our current urban development model, with sprawling cities, has been based on a "nearly free" petrol price and this period is over.

Therefore, it is crucial to direct European attention on this burning local issue with severe global consequences. But does the Green Paper go far enough? Are the proposals it sets out aligned with the EU's "3x20" objectives² and - unrevised - will they meet the challenges related to energy and climate that the EU and its citizens will have to face before 2020 and beyond? Bearing in mind current transport trends, we cannot but answer No.

1. Alignment with the EU Energy and Climate Objectives

On 23rd January 2008, the European Commission presented a Climate Change and Energy package. It is based on the **historical decisions taken by the European Council** of Heads of State and Government of March 2007.

In order to reach the EU's "3x20" objective on time, significant shifts in our political orientations are needed at all levels - European, national, regional and local - and in all areas, especially in the transport sector.

All society's stakeholders, especially local authorities - whose crucial role is often underestimated - must commit themselves to these objectives. Local authorities are indeed those responsible for renovating urban areas, developing new districts, managing land use, planning and organising mobility policies and transport – all domains that are strongly linked with issues treated in the Green Paper.

Any European policy must be aligned with the EU Energy and Climate Objectives. Does the Green Paper match these objectives? We think no.

2. Local examples pave the way

On 29th January 2008, the European Commission together with Mayors of Cities officially launched in Brussels the "Covenant of Mayors" initiative. This is a voluntary-based commitment of Mayors to meet – and exceed – the EU's "3x20" objectives.

It is widely known that transport issues are the most critical in terms of influencing lifestyle and habits of citizens. Proven local initiatives in the transport sector already exist within European Local Authorities and Energie-Cités' members. They are paving the way of a sustainable future.

The preparation and implementation of urban mobility plans is obligatory in certain Member States (e.g. in France for all local authorities having more than 100,000 inhabitants). Some cities develop plans on a voluntary basis to improve quality of life and/or to comply with EU standards to protect human health (e.g. air quality).

Urban mobility planning requires an integrated, long-term vision to plan financial requirements for infrastructure and vehicles, to design incentive schemes, to promote high quality public transport, safe cycling and walking and

¹ COM 2007/551 final

² By 2020, the EU should reduce its GHG emissions by **20%**; increase its energy efficiency by **20%**; achieve **20%** share of renewable energy in overall EU energy consumption, including 10% share of biofuels within total vehicle fuel consumption

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to coordinate with land-use planning at the appropriate administrative levels. Tailor made solutions adapted to local conditions need to be identified based on broad consultation with local stakeholders and citizens. Urban mobility plans should favor safety and security, access to goods and services, as well as limiting air pollution, noise, GHG emissions and energy consumption – regarding passenger and freight transportation in an integrated system.

However, European Local Authorities should go now a step further by developing integrated territorial energy and climate plans - compatible with EU energy consumption and production targets addressing all sectors.

*The Green Paper states that Local Authorities are encouraged to draft Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans with specific measures that will contribute to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption at the local level. **But no provision is made in a more global context to embrace the « factor 4 » by the drafting of integrated territorial energy and climate Plans, an indispensable condition for policy coherence...***

3. Urban Mobility, Urban Sprawl and Quality of Life

Accessibility to services, leisure and work is vital and determines directly quality of life of citizens. However due to sprawling cities³ accessibility to these facilities can be limited or request an increased need to travel – often using less sustainable, individual solutions (private car), increasing emissions as well as fuel poverty among many families.

Urban transport has also a direct impact on citizens’ quality of life due to its environmental and health consequences (air pollution, noise, GHG emissions) as well as socio-economic effects (fuel prices, commuting and congestion, poverty).

In the Green Paper, the following are somewhat excluded from the analysis:

- **urban mobility determinants:** e.g. car based urban planning, cheap petrol and insufficient public control of land use, which favour urban sprawl and an even greater demand for transport.
- **notions of urban convenience/proximity** based on public services, shops, leisure areas, etc., that are sufficiently integrated in the habitat to enable access on foot, by bicycle or by public transport.

Sustainable urban mobility planning should thus start with thoughtful spatial and urban planning to reduce the need to travel: combining residential areas with commercial, social and work places and recreation facilities to limit the need for everyday mobility and commuting, and as a second step promote more sustainable transport modes like public transport, walking and cycling but also new forms of vehicle use and/or ownership and a less car-dependent lifestyle (e.g. car-sharing, car-pooling).

4. Promoting modal shift: inter-modal integration and better demand management

Stimulating modal shift from private cars to more sustainable modes of transport should be at the core of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. Successful strategies apply inter-modal integration of public transport with other transport modes such as walking, cycling and park & ride, high safety, affordable and accessible services.

Better demand management can contribute to a real modal shift based upon economic (dis)incentives or regulatory measures including zones with restricted access, road pricing and spatial planning.

Accompanied by support of information and communication technologies, “virtual mobility” through tele-services and tele-working facilities can also limit the need to travel.

5. Changing behaviors

Urban and transport planners have the means to influence travel behavior and modal choice through mobility management plans, parking policies, marketing, communication, education and awareness raising campaigns. Messages to promote a less car-dependent lifestyle and new forms of vehicle use (e.g. car-sharing and car-pooling) should be accompanied by organisational methods, measures and the development of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate walking and cycling as well as the use of public transport.

³ Urban Sprawl an ignored challenge – Study of the European Environment Agency – November 2006.

As so often, the role played by **technology** to resolve problems is overestimated (even if it is obvious that vehicle fuel consumption, CO₂ and pollutant emissions must be reduced as foreseen in the European Commission directive proposal adopted on 19/12/07). **The contribution made by aspects of town planning and organisational methods** aimed at promoting sustainable modes of transport and reducing congestion, along with an indispensable change of behaviour at all levels of decision-taking, **is not sufficiently taken into account** in the Green Paper.

6. EU support to promote compact cities and sustainable urban mobility

The EU should play the role of a catalyst, by integrating urban transport concerns into and removing barriers from sectoral EU policies, providing legal and financial frameworks, as appropriate, to encourage local decision makers to act. Energie-Cités suggests embracing the following measures at the European level:

- Encourage the development and implementation of *Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans*, including specific measures to reduce GHG emissions and energy consumption at the local level but *as part of integrated territorial energy and climate plans*
- Encourage the creation of *Mobility and Transport Authorities* responsible for organising mobility and transport at the most appropriate level (e.g. metropolitan area)
- *Promote cleaner vehicles and best-of-breed energy efficient technologies* via standardization, tax reductions or other financial incentives
- *Improve labeling schemes* to provide decision makers with easily comparable and cost-effective information (including externalities) on various technologies and public transport modes
- *Launch public awareness and education campaigns* and improve capacities of local decision makers and stakeholders in the urban mobility field (e.g. on organisational methods to tackle congestion, cleaner vehicles, financial and organisational planning, etc.)
- *Allocate more financial resources for facilitating exchange of experience* between local authorities via networking, study tours and twinning

7. Energie-Cités supports 500 European Local Authorities to prepare their energy and mobility future by:

- Aligning citizens' mobility needs with quality of life and environment: SMILE: <http://energie-cites.eu/-SMILE,126>
- Promoting Car-free days and sustainable urban mobility via the European Mobility Week: <http://www.mobilityweek-europe.org/>
- Setting benchmarks of pioneer cities and invite others to IMAGINE their energy future within a multidisciplinary approach: www.imagineyourenergyfuture.eu
- Reinforcing capacities of European Local Authorities and stimulate transfer of knowledge and experience via seminars, conferences and study tours, as well as a database containing 500 local good practices: www.energie-cites.eu

Energie-Cités represents more than 500 European Local Authorities and promotes local sustainable energy policies

www.energie-cites.eu