

Message to M. Brian Simpson

President of the Transport and Tourism, Committee at the European Parliament

Key messages:

- ✓ The focus of transport authorities is more and more centred on the user needs. Quality is the way to attract more people in the transport network. Quality is key to passenger satisfaction.
- ✓ ITS application to travel information have been partially but successfully conducted. It is time to unleash the potential and work on continuing interoperable solutions all along the transport chain
- ✓ A dedicated funding scheme for Urban-suburban mobility would allow to accelerate the take up of new technologies and the spread of innovation. It would also help ensure stable funding on a mid to long term period so as to allow sound infrastructure planning.

*
* *

EMTA is a network for exchange of experience, it is also is the European voice of Public Transport Authorities to the European Union institutions. All members are local authorities in charge of a service of general interest namely the urban transport service, with a commitment to the public. Over 16 European countries, the 29 Public Transport Authorities care daily for 95 million daily passengers.

EMTA is a 12 years old one of a kind European association in the transport sector whose activity is only financed by its membership.

Among achievements are the building of common knowledge in urban transport Europe-wide, the publication of series of information and communication documents such as the Barometer, several surveys and topic briefs, the quarterly newsletter and a series of position papers addressed to European institutions, a developing co-operation with DG-MOVE as well as an on-going close relationship with international well known actors such as UITP and International Transport Forum (ITF).

EMTA has been recently asked by DG-MOVE, to provide 3 delegates on the ITS Experts Platform to be soon installed.

The metropolitan transport systems vary in their organisation and surroundings across Europe, however they share the same objective: they aim at supporting economic growth of the area and favour the competitiveness of European regions, while achieving societal goals.

To reach this objective, Public Transport Authorities develop a strategy that includes:

- ✓ To have strong and capable metropolitan transport authorities (public transport integrated transport authorities)
- ✓ To place the urban transport travellers at the heart of transport policies
- ✓ To Coordinate and integrate policies and measures through Mobility Plans a flexible tool that allows comprehensive strategy, monitoring of progress and evaluation against sustainable mobility targets. They also represent an effective decision support tool.
- ✓ To use contractual relationships to achieve goals including mechanisms aimed at enhancing the quality of transport services.
- ✓ To secure funding schemes to ensure delivering of mid to long-term policies.

*
* *

Strong and capable metropolitan transport authorities are the first step for a sustainable local transport policy.

The setting up of transport authorities with enlarged competencies -Integrated Transport Authority- that go in line with the EU transport policy objectives notably the wider vision of Urban Mobility at metropolitan level embracing new aspects of mobility requirements beyond the traditional city transport services, should be encouraged.

Transport authorities as public bodies made up of joint local authorities enjoy a high level of consensus building. They are also legitimate to organise large consultation and engage with local population so as to better plan the transport services actually needed with the suitable measures and policies.

The Regulation 1370/2007 that frames the opening to competition of road and rail passenger transport services however calls for an evolution in the organisation of transport authorities with a stronger role in coordination and integration of all transports services.

Therefore, the collaboration of Transport Authorities, the dissemination of results, the circulation of best practices are necessary to raise the level of knowledge Europe-wide. There exist and particularly across EMTA network a corpus of empirical evidence as a result of experiments to build on. Transfer of knowledge also can spare time and costs, as is evidenced in the CAPRICE¹ project.

¹ CAPRICE is a European project funded under Interreg IVC programme with the aim of exchanging experience and transferring knowledge among western and eastern transport authorities.

The focus of transport authorities is more and more centred on the user needs.

Clearly the modal shift from private car to public transport cannot be achieved without a strong emphasis on quality in the transport services. Quality is the way to attract more people in the transport network. Quality is key to passenger satisfaction. Passenger needs become a driver for the Transport Authority policy. In this respect, advanced technology and notably ITS technology provide wide opportunities.

Travel information has become a must and is instrumental to a change of behaviour from private car to public transport. Advanced technologies are key to the delivery of real time information, enlightening on the spot choices. Orientation and routing, as well as journey planners have become necessary.

Integrated ticketing and remote payment are also slowly becoming "the norm" for travellers. Combined intermodal tickets, cross border information and reservation are new services to explore and experiment.

Safety and security, are also crucial to public transport attractiveness. Higher development of existing technologies enabling wider take up and further research should be rapidly encouraged.

As said before, trials have been undertaken in different places to implement ITS applications to urban transport notably in the travel information². The results prove that knowledge is increasing but solutions are still partial and often non-compatible due to a lack of Europe-wide coordination. It is time now to unleash the potential and work on interoperability and continuing of services for the sake of the travellers.

In order to coordinate and integrate policies and measures, local Mobility Plans are very efficient tools.

Mobility-Plans are the way forward to higher integrated transport policy in metropolitan areas³. They are based on the strong coordination of local decision-making bodies in charge of diverse aspects of mobility management and services, on the building of consensus with all stakeholders, on the search for better balance between all modes.

Efficient connections, enhanced intermodality (connections between all sorts of modes short and long distance), careful lay-out of interchanges, along with interoperability of ITS systems, higher level of travel information, good integration of network services seamless tickets etc... are sub-strategies that participate into the metropolitan mobility system and make it work as a whole. The integration of all these aspects are reinforced through the local mobility plans.

² The EU-Spirit project lead by VBB Berlin Brandenburg- See EMTA News #41 ; the CAPRICE project.

³ see EMTA Brief 2 April 09

The local Mobility Plans also aim at participating into the decarbonisation of the transport sector which refers to an efficient combination and better use of all modes (motorised and non-motorised). However beyond the scope of the local Mobility Plan, there is a need for the improvement of the links between long-distance and urban-suburban transport modes. Clearly TEN-T schemes should not be separated from urban mobility.

Among the most important prerogatives in the hands of Public Transport Authorities are the use of contracts to achieve the pre-determined goals.

In this respect, the Regulation EC-1370/2007 on Public service obligations gives a new legal frame to contractual relationships between Transport Authorities and operators of transport services. It is a little early these days to have an evaluation of the implementation of such regulation. However it is hoped that it will encourage the take up of mechanisms such as incentives / disincentives in the contracts in order to raise quality in the transport services. Raising the quality of transport services being a pro-active way to achieve passengers rights as well.

Capable Integrated Transport Authorities place the transport user at the heart of their transport policy and develop strong relationships with operators to ensure a better quality of service. They nevertheless are in need of securing funding schemes to ensure the delivery of mid to long-term policies.

Mobility is a right for the citizens and a public service for Transport Authorities to undertake, therefore it will always require the support of public funding, however the increasing need for mobility in growing metropolitan areas and the shortening of public monies create an unbalanced situation.

A dedicated funding scheme for Urban-suburban mobility would allow to accelerate the take up of new technologies and the spread of innovation. It would help modernizing bus fleets and rolling stock and improve rapidly transport services quality so as to achieve targets of decarbonisation by influencing modal shift. It would also help ensure stable funding on a mid to long term period so as to allow sound infrastructure planning.

A European dedicated fund like or part of TEN-T funding scheme could achieve such objectives.

*
* *