

editorial

Is contracting in competition a way to attract more customers to public transport?

Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) work actively to create improved mobility.

Contracting public transport operations and services in competition means that the PTA

concentrates on network planning and procuring of services at the right quality level. Professional operators compete on equal conditions for the contracts to operate specified parts of the network or services.

The different roles of the PTA and the operator are clearly defined.

With competitive tendering, which is not the same thing as privatization, the PTAs and the operators use their skills in the areas where they are the professionals. The PTAs describe the service levels they want to offer to the customers. The operators compete for the contracts with their operating skills.

The operator with the best price and right quality wins the contract which includes incentives to attract more customers.

The objectives of the PTAs can be measured and fulfilled.

So far, the experience is substantially lower costs, increased traffic supply and more passengers. Now, focus is on quality to the customers.

The customers get improved mobility.

Society gets better service at a lower cost.

By attracting more people to public transport fewer trips are made by car. This benefits traffic safety, the environment and land use of our metropolitan areas.

Contracting in competition attracts more customers.



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News from Europe

● Project of European Regulation for public services in passenger transport

The European Commission adopted in July a draft regulation on public services in passenger transport, whose objective is to improve the performance and transparency of services through a controlled competition. The new framework proposed by the Commission aims at harmonising key aspects of the competitive procedures developed in the Member States and promoting legal certainty about the rights and duties of operators and authorities in line with Community law on state aids and exclusive rights. It shall also establish an explicit obligation for authorities to pursue adequate public transport services in order to protect quality, integration of services and interests of the employees. The text has been submitted to the European Council and Parliament for adoption.

● New European call for projects on Clean Urban Transport

In line with its new strategy for urban transport, the European Commission will launch in December 2000 a 'Co-ordinated Call on Clean Urban Transport', supported by the Key Actions "Sustainable Mobility and Intermodality" of the Growth Programme, and "Economic and Efficient Energy" of the Energie Programme (FP5).

This new programme aims at demonstrating and assessing the impacts of radical policy packages for clean urban transport. This means achieving a new balance between transport modes, fostering clean and energy efficient vehicles, and lastly managing the impacts of urban sprawl. 50 million Euros will be earmarked for this programme, which will focus on a limited number of pioneer cities implementing integrated policies (pricing strategies, ITS applications, access restrictions, combination of transport and land use, mobility management, awareness campaigns, new forms of car use, urban freight management).

● Workshop: "Contracts: a tool for transport authorities"

EMTA will organise a workshop on contracts between transport authorities and operators on 23 November in Rome. This workshop, which all transport professionals and experts can attend, will tackle topics such as quality and investment contracts. It will include presentations of contracts in many European cities.

News from the cities

● Major improvements of public transport networks in Athens

● Extension of the metro network

Two additional metro lines (Pentagono - Keramikos and Dafni - Sepolia) will be built and the existing one upgraded. Extensions will be inaugurated by October 2000, while further developments towards the west and the north part of Athens are under construction.

● Tramway and car-free zone in the centre

A tram line is being planned as an intermediate mode between the metro and the bus. It will serve the area created from the unification of several archaeological sites within the Central Area of Athens. This area will form a new traffic ban zone with a complete network of walk-ways.

● New priority schemes for buses

In order to increase the quality of bus services and thus the bus modal share, bus priority schemes including bus-lanes along most main routes and bus priority measures at key intersections will be implemented, with the emphasis given to contra-flow lanes.

● New rolling stock soon in service

The bus and trolley bus fleet in Athens is being completely renewed. By the end of 2000, 750 new buses and 200 trolley buses (duo mode) will be in operation. The renewal program will be completed by the end of 2001 with the purchase of 120 new metro cars for ISAP.

OASA is also going to acquire 295 Natural Gas buses, equipped with telematics (delivery due by the end of 2000). Real time information systems (in-vehicle and at a number of bus stops) will be introduced at the same time.

● A "fixed track strategy" for Greater Manchester

GMPTA has prepared a "fixed track" strategy to guide future investments into rail, Metrolink and intermediate systems including guided bus. The strategy will set out 5, 10 and 15 year investment horizons to secure a major increase in public transport patronage. A 5 year investment plan will be included in the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, the bid to government for resources over the period 2001-2006.

The strategy sets out plans for major improvements to service frequency and reliability as well as to rolling stock. It sets out aspirations to build two new railway

or Metrolink stations each year over the next 5 years. The "fixed track" strategy will also play a key role in guiding the negotiations on the franchising of the UK rail network.

● A new tram network for Barcelona

The modern tram is a response to the characteristics of the areas served:

- areas of average density, currently served by buses to a level approaching saturation point
- bus routes without a reserved platform, with a high level of traffic jams
- lineal routes with a significant demand, but which don't justify an underground line
- suburban routes with a need for connection with the subway but with a high internal mobility

● Structure of the Diagonal - Baix Llobregat Tram Tender

The tender has been organised with a BOT (Build, Operate and Transfer) format with a joint participation of public and private initiative both in the construction and the operating stages. Three offers were tendered by international consortiums formed by concession management companies, civil works and rail systems construction companies, public transport operators and financial institutions.

● Characteristics of the offer selected

- 16.8 km route with 35 stations
- capacity of vehicles: 218 passengers (72 seated)
- accessible to people with reduced mobility, bicycles, prams (low floor)
- expected patronage : 19.4m passengers/year
- start of operations: 1st semester 2003, operating period of 25 years
- total investment: 217.33m€, 71% by public funds, TIR: 9.95%
- technical fare: 8.4€/passenger, including capital depreciation (13 years) and operating costs
- public participation in the operating company: 20%

● A new organisation of public transport for London

London Regional Transport (LRT) came into being in 1984, when London Transport (LT) was transferred from the Greater London Council (GLC) back to central government.

In 1998, the British Government proposed to set up a Greater London Authority (GLA) consisting of an elected Mayor and a London Assembly taking over responsibility for strategic and transport planning. This meant that London Transport's functions would pass to Transport for London (TfL), a new executive body under the control of the GLA.

● Transport for London (TfL)

Since 3 July 2000, TfL has been responsible for implementing an integrated transport strategy for London and has inherited the London Transport activities (London Buses, Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station, London River Service, Croydon Tramlink, the Travel Information Call Centre, LT Museum and Lost Property). It will also be responsible for:

- taxi and private hire vehicle licensing
- traffic lights
- 550km network of strategic roads (5% of all roads in London)
- coordinating schemes for transport users with mobility problems
- improving conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and freight

TfL will also assume responsibility for London Underground on completion of the PPP (2001) and will have a strong voice in respect of London commuter rail services.

● Paris : Contracts signed between STP and transport operators

STP signed contracts with the main two public transport operators RATP and SNCF in July. These documents will modernise the financing of public transportation in the Ile-de-France Region and contribute to improving the quality of services.

RATP and SNCF will commit themselves on the level and the quality of the services provided. The former system, which consisted in paying automatically for their losses, will be replaced by this much more stimulating procedure, using "bonuses" or "fines" depending on the results achieved each year by the operators (based on objective indicators regarding regularity, cleanliness, information, etc).

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