

editorial

What do transport authorities expect from the European Union ?

Important events are taking place in Brussels these days, which might have great consequences for the future of mobility in our cities.

First, the European Commission has released its White Paper on the European transport policy for 2010. The assessment of the current situation is correct: too many deaths on the roads, too much congestion stifling the urban areas, too long travelling times, too many nuisances to the quality of life, too much damage to nature, too low quality of public transport systems.

To improve the situation, metropolitan transport authorities expect a lot from the European Union:

- *first a clear statement of the objectives, which should be ambitious. Europe has to show the world that there is a way of combining economic dynamism, social justice, quality of life and a protected environment;*
- *a stronger harmonisation of the rules concerning driving times, interoperability of rail systems, minimum accessibility of public transport, fairer charging of road infrastructures;*
- *some financial support to key public transport projects and ambitious local initiatives;*
- *a strong highlight of best practices.*

The White Paper does contain some interesting proposals. But can we really be optimistic when the chapter on Urban transport was only granted 4 pages in the 123-page White Paper and when the money devoted by the EU to transport policies only reaches 1% of its overall budget (vs 50% for agriculture) ? It is high time for our decision makers to take into account the fact that more than 75% of the European people live in cities.

The second key event is the recent vote of the European Parliament on the project of new Regulation on public service requirements in passenger transport. EMTA member authorities are satisfied that the Parliament has amended the proposal in a more reasonable perspective (length of contracts and of the transition period, removal of some useless exemptions from competition) but they think that the project could still be improved (see position statement of EMTA). They also insist on the necessity that this text can be adopted soon, since nothing is worse for transport authorities than the current absence of certainty concerning the future legal framework of transport services.

*Stéphane Lecler,
Secretary General of EMTA*

News from Europe

● The European Parliament votes on the project of new Regulation on public transport services

The European Parliament adopted on November 14th at a large majority (317 against 224) the report of its Transport Committee on the project of new Regulation on public service requirements in passenger transport. This report amended the project released by the Commission in July 2000 by granting more freedom of choice to local authorities, more protection for the employees and fewer exemptions from the rule of competition when authorities choose competition. In this new version, competent authorities have the right to provide services themselves or through their own undertakings without competition. But, according to the principle of reciprocity, companies which are granted services without competition can't participate in any tendering procedure elsewhere. The Parliament has also removed several exemptions from competition (for heavy rail services and integrated services). Only metro and tramway services can, in some specific cases, be awarded directly. The maximum length of public service contracts has been raised to 8 years for bus services and 15 years for rail services and the period of transition has been fixed to 8 years. The text will have to be approved in the same terms by the Council of Ministers of Transport to enter into force.

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/>

● The European Commission proposes to encourage alternative fuels for transport

The Commission adopted last month two proposals of new Directives so as to foster the use of alternative fuels, which should reach in 2020 a minimum level of 15% of all fuels sold in the EU. The European Union is indeed committed to an 8% reduction of its greenhouse gases emissions by 2010 and the promotion of alternative fuels in the field of transport is a key measure to meet this ambitious objective. The strategy of the Commission consists in promoting biofuels in the short term, natural gas in the medium term, and hydrogen and fuel cells in the long term. Each of these fuels could represent at least 5% of the total consumption of fuel in transport within 2020.

Concerning biofuels (i.e. fuels derived from agricultural resources, like ethanol), the Commission proposes to:

- establish a minimum level of consumption (starting at 2% in 2005 and reaching 5,75% in 2010)
- and enable Member States to reduce excise duties by up to 50% on biofuels used for transport – except for public transport and taxis which could benefit from a total exemption of taxes on biofuels.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport

● € 2,780 m for the Trans-European Transport Network

The European Commission adopted in September the Multiannual Programme for the funding of the Trans-European Transport Network over the period 2001-2006. The whole programme will amount to € 2,780 m, two thirds of which devoted to the rail sector:

- € 1,300 m to the 11 infrastructure projects endorsed by the 1994 Essen Council
- € 550 m to the Galileo project
- € 640 m to railway bottlenecks and cross-border projects
- € 280 m to Intelligent Transport Systems projects for the road and air sectors

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/energy_transport

● EMTA News

- The proceedings of the workshop organised in November with ATM in Barcelona on the issue "What transport authorities for the European metropolitan areas ?" will soon be available.
- EMTA Members adopted a common position on the project of new European regulation, which is available on EMTA's website.
- Three public transport authorities of European large cities have become new members of EMTA: Oslo (Sporveier), Vilnius (MECS), Warsaw (ZTM).

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News from the cities

● More night services in Barcelona

Addressing a strong demand of the population, ATM, the public transport authority of the metropolitan area of Barcelona, has approved the introduction of new night bus services, that complement the already existing network in Barcelona and surrounding municipalities, called "Nitbús". This project consists in harmonising the closing period of all heavy and light rail services in the metropolitan area at midnight, and to replace them during the night by 17 bus routes. These bus services, which are part of the Integrated Fare System designed by ATM, have a frequency of at least one service per hour and per direction and all start at Plaça de Catalunya in the centre of Barcelona.

<http://www.atm-transmet.es>

● New services for public transport users in Frankfurt

● new concept of night bus services

VGF, the operating company of public transport networks in Frankfurt, has reshaped the night bus services in the Frankfurt metropolitan area. 8 routes are now operated on Friday and Saturday nights (as well as for other special occasions such as New Year's Eve). All buses leave every half hour between 1.30 and 3.30 from a single stop (Konstablerwache) in the city centre so as to provide easy connections.

Since July, night buses can be used with normal public transport tickets and passes and some new services are provided:

- after 8 p.m., anyone can get off the bus outside the official stops. One just has to inform the bus driver of the wished place;
- night bus and taxi: it is possible to ask the night bus driver while getting on the bus to book a taxi which will wait for the passenger at a given stop.

● car-sharing and public transport hand in hand

Car-sharing is an alternative to the ownership of a private car. It is both cheaper since the fixed costs of owning a car are shared between several people and more convenient since one only has the car at one's disposal when one really needs it.

Frankfurt public transport users with a yearly RMV pass have had access to car-sharing at cheap conditions since April 2000. They can benefit from reduced fares both for the "entrance fees" to the system (membership of the car-sharing organisation) and for the costs of renting the vehicle. Cars must be booked in advance by telephone or via the internet, and can be borrowed from 11 stations in the Frankfurt metropolitan area (3 more will soon be available).

This special offer is the result of a co-operation between the regional transport authority RMV, the Frankfurt public transport operating

company, and the Stadtmobil Rhein-Main carsharing company.

<http://www.rmv.de>

● More services and cheaper fares for London river services

The Mayor of London decided last May to cut fares of river services by 1/3 for passengers with a valid One Day (or longer) Travelcard.

This initiative is part of a broader strategy aimed at putting the river Thames at the heart of a modern transport system for the British capital. This policy is carried out by London River Services (LRS), which is part of Transport for London. LRS's duty is to own and maintain river piers, determine the consistency and the level of fares of river services, and lastly award licences to companies wishing to operate such services. More than 10 routes are currently operated by several companies. River services are operated on a commercial basis and don't receive financial support from LRS, which charges boat operators for accessing its piers.

<http://www.transportforlondon.gov.uk>

● Towards more competition in public transport in the Netherlands

The Passenger Transport Act 2000 has set up a new institutional framework for public transport services in the country. The purpose of this reform is to attract more customers at a lower cost for public money. This will be achieved through tendering of urban and regional transport services by the 35 local transport authorities created in 1998. In a first step (2003), at least 35% of the turnover of urban and regional transport will have to be tendered. An evaluation will be carried out in 2004 by the Ministry of Transport and if the results are positive, the process will go on, with the aim of having tendered 100% of urban and regional transport services by 2006.

<http://www.minvenw.nl>

● Helsinki: introduction of the Smart Card

The introduction of the new Contactless Smart Cards for public transport began in the Helsinki metropolitan area in October. The first passengers received their cards in the post after filling out an application form and paying the card fee. Then they had to go to one of numerous card loading points and pay for whatever travel period they wanted, from 14 to 366 days. It will also soon be possible to load "ready cash" into the card and use it to pay for fares.

Card reader units have been installed on all the region's 1,700 buses, over a hundred trams and the same number of trains, and at all 16 metro stations and 4 local ferry terminals.

The aim is to attract 15,000 Smart Card users before the end of the year 2001. These users will test how well the whole system works.

Before the Smart Card is put into wider circulation, over 4,000 people working with the system must complete their Smart Card training so as to be able to use the system correctly and deal with any problems that may arise. Adequate customer support also has to be arranged

The aim is to have several hundred thousand Smart Cards in circulation by the end of 2002. That means distributing some 30,000 new cards a month, mostly by mail.

Next year will be a transition stage during which the present cardboard tickets and the new Smart Cards will be used side by side, after which the Smart Card will be used for over a million journeys a day in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

The whole Smart Card system will finally be handed over by the suppliers to the transport authorities next year. The main supplier is Eterra Oy and the Smart Card is a Buscom card made by GEMplus.

<http://www.ytv.fi>

● Paris: introduction of electronic ticketing

The electronic, contactless, smartcard system called NAVIGO, which will replace the current magnetic tickets used on all public transport systems of the Ile-de-France region (11 million inhabitants), was first introduced in October.

This new ticketing system will enable:

- to provide users with an easier, smoother and more reliable process thanks to the absence of contact,
- to increase the capacity of storage of data thanks to its microcheap,
- to raise the loyalty of public transport customers thanks to the development of targeted marketing tools linked to the personalisation of tickets.

The generalisation of NAVIGO will be staggered over a three-year period, so as to equip the whole fleet of vehicles with the necessary devices of control (about 7,500 buses !) and to check that the new product is accepted by users. The first stage (2001 and 2002), during which all heavy and light rail stations will be equipped with the NAVIGO control devices, will concern about 1 million travellers with yearly passes (owners of the yearly Intégrale pass and of the Imagine "R" yearly pass for students and school children). The second stage (2003), during which all the buses will be equipped, will concern all the owners of the weekly and monthly carte Orange passes (2,5 million people).

www.stif-idf.fr

● Improved accessibility to public transport for disabled and blind people in Prague

In co-operation with ROPID, Prague public transport authority, and the Union of the Disabled of the Czech Republic, the operator

Prague Public Transit Co.Inc (DP) and 11 private bus operators are gradually improving the accessibility of public transport networks of the Czech capital city, with a special focus on the needs of blind people.

• metro

22 out of the existing 50 stations provide easy access to platforms. A specific solution has been developed in the Rajska zahrada (line B) station, with platforms at different height levels for each direction. Concerning blind people, orientation in 40 stations is made easier by special acoustic beacons informing them of the entrance to the passenger processing area. Handrails at stations can also be equipped with information in Braille.

• tramways and buses

Between 1996 and 2001, all vehicles were equipped with special receivers, enabling blind people to activate an external announcement informing them about the route number and destination of the approaching tram. The same equipment gives the driver an acoustic information of the intention of a blind passenger to get on the vehicle.

Automatic announcement of stops onboard vehicles helps passengers to orientate themselves along the route.

Low-floor trams were first introduced in 1996, with a ramp at the second door enabling access of a wheelchair, which then has a reserved position onboard. Lastly, specific types of platforms are designed at selected stops so as to enable easy access to vehicles.

In 2000, Prague Public Transit Co. Inc. had 175 low-floor buses. Apart from regular routes, the company operates two special bus routes designed for people with impaired mobility, connecting four suburban housing estates with the city centre. These routes are operated by four modified buses equipped with hydraulic elevated platforms to load wheelchairs. Each bus has a driver and a ramp assistant.

<http://www.dp-praha.cz>

● Berlin : Park and Ride information available on the internet

The metropolitan region of Berlin-Brandenburg had only 8,300 Park and Ride (P+R) lots available in 1998, much less than other large metropolitan regions. That's why VBB, the public transport authority of Berlin and Brandenburg is developing a comprehensive policy to improve the situation.

Given that information is a key tool to increase the awareness about P+R and that more and more people use the internet, VBB's website now provides some detailed information about all the P+R facilities of the region: precise location, number of parking lots, opening times, cost of parking, description of public transport services nearby and their frequency, etc.

This new service is the result of a project of co-operation between VBB and the German car maker BMW, whose website [parkinfo.com](http://www.parkinfo.com) displays some information about car parks in all the German cities.

<http://www.vbbonline.de>

Analysis

Should the public transport authority have a role as far as marketing is concerned ? What future for the brand of the former single operating company ? Presentation of the case of Stockholm.

SL, which used to be the name of the single public transport operating company in Stockholm before the development of tendering procedures, is probably one of the most well-known brands in Stockholm and has during a long time been built up to what it is today. A brand is only partly formed by its graphical design and its expression in different forms of mass communication. The strength of a brand is to an even greater extent determined by the way in which the company and its representatives act in their relationship with customers.

SL co-operates with five large traffic contractors within the different modes of transport. Since they now are the ones that to a large extent meet the customers, their behaviour influences SL's brand to a large degree. That is why a project was launched in 2000 so as to clarify the relationships between SL and its contractors.

• Responsibility for the entire journey, reliability and simplicity

During the work to establish a new foundation for SL's brand, several alternative strategies have been evaluated. It was eventually decided that SL is to be the primary brand of public transport in the Stockholm metropolitan area, with strategic and public responsibility. SL's mission is to be the guarantor of co-ordination and continuity. The contractors are to be secondary trademarks with operational/customer responsibility.

Stockholm residents should know that SL takes the responsibility for the entire trip and feel that all parts of the traffic system are simple and reliable.

• Five contractors who co-operate with SL

Everyone contributes to the shaping of the overall picture of public transport in the Stockholm region. It is important that the co-operation with the contractors is a true partnership, also in the brand issue, to ensure that Stockholm residents receive a clear-cut picture of SL.

Five companies operate services through contracts with SL:

- Busslink, a Swedish company which stems from the former SL Buss and which operates more than half of all SL's bus services.
- Citypendeln, owned by the French operating company Keolis, which is responsible for the commuter train services in the county of Stockholm.
- Connex Tunnelbanan, the company in charge of operating the metro, which is owned by the French company Connex.
- Linjebuss, owned by Connex, is responsible for bus services.
- Swebus, owned by the Norwegian company Concordia, which operates bus services for SL.

• What should SL stand for ?

Increased travelling by public transport is one of the objectives of SL's strategic plan. An additional 100,000 travellers on an ordinary weekday and a higher share of more satisfied and highly frequent travellers is the goal. In order to reach new customers and satisfy their needs, a number of important projects have been initiated. The first part of the projects aims at clarifying SL's role as traffic authority

and SL's relationships to the contractors. The goal is to make things easier for the customer. SL is to be the primary brand while the trademarks of the contractors are to be secondary.

More communication for regional trunk lines

SL is going to sharpen the marketing of the comfortable and fast regional trunk lines to provide potential travellers with more knowledge about these services and the comfort they offer.

Disturbance information – how will customer know what is happening ?

SL and SL's contractors are working together on this issue. A plan has been laid out for systematic improvements over the next few years.

Customer contract – what does SL promise the traveller ?

The Travel Warranty, to compensate for taking a taxi in larger disturbance situations, is a large and important part of a customer contract. The purpose of the customer contract is among other things to ensure that SL's customers have correct expectations regarding their SL trip.

New price structure – how much should it cost ?

SL is preparing a fare structure that should stimulate demand and secure earnings. The starting point for this project is that a new ticket system based on contactless cards will be introduced by 2003.

Incentives – how should the contractors be compensated ?

SL has chosen a step-wise method to develop the traffic agreements into incentive agreements in which also other variables than operated traffic will decide the amount of compensation to the contractor.

Great importance has been attached to co-ordination between the different projects. The common denominator for the projects is that they all deal with the issue of focusing on the needs of the traveller. Ultimately, they are about SL now taking the decisive step from a production-oriented organisation to a customer-oriented way of working.

<http://www.sl.se>

Focus

London: a comprehensive policy in favour of accessibility of public transport

TfL Access & Mobility was formerly the London Transport Unit for Disabled Passengers which was set up in 1984 to co-ordinate initiatives aimed at making public transport in London more accessible to people with disabilities. It is now part of Transport for London (TfL), the Mayor of London's new transport agency, which took over LT's responsibilities on 3 July 2000. TfL Access & Mobility works with engineers and designers to make buses and underground trains easier to use, with architects to improve facilities at bus and underground stations as they are modernised, and with operators to ensure that their staff are aware of the needs of disabled and elderly passengers. Representatives of disability organisations are consulted on all aspects of the design of new buses, trains and station facilities. TfL Access & Mobility is a focal point for the development of practical solutions to mobility problems, and provides passenger information in a range of alternative media, such as large print and cassette tape and through the use of a Textphone.

Low-Floor Buses

Following successful trials which began on five suburban routes in 1994, fully-accessible low-floor vehicles – including double-deckers – are now progressively being introduced on all mainstream bus services. Low-floor buses have “kneeling” suspension and step-free access, making it easier for everyone to get on board – especially older people and parents with pushchairs. New buses now entering service have a retractable ramp, at the second door if the bus has a dual-doorway layout, so that a wheelchair-user can travel in the designated space within the vehicle.

Conventional Buses

Most older buses still in use are designated to meet the Specifications of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), which is a statutory body set up under the 1985 Transport Act to advise the Government on transport policy as it affects the mobility of disabled people. Among other requirements, this lays down minimum standards for step heights and requires the use of colour-contrasted handrails, “bus stopping” signs and palm-press bell pushes which can be reached from a seated position.

Stationlink

This is a fully-accessible bus service for people who find cross-London train connections something of a challenge. Ramp-equipped low-floor buses run daily at hourly intervals between 8 am and 8 pm in each direction around a loop serving the National Rail terminals and Victoria Coach Station. All kinds of Travelcards are valid on Stationlink.

Airbus

Some fully-accessible air-conditioned double-deck buses link Central London with all four terminals at Heathrow.

Mobility Buses

Throughout suburban London, wheelchair-accessible Mobility Buses run on one or two days each week, linking residential areas and accessible shopping centres. Everyone is welcome to use these services-for which pre-booking is not required.

The London Underground

Plans are being made to create a network of approximately seventy Underground stations (out of a total of 275 stations) with step-free access to platform level within the next fifteen to twenty years. This is in addition to some stations which are already accessible. In recent years lifts have been installed at Hammersmith (District & Piccadilly lines), Hillingdon and Tottenham Hale stations, and there is a wheelchair-accessible stairlift at Hounslow West. Further lift installations are programmed in the near future for East Ham, Kilburn, West Brompton and West Ham stations.

The new extension of the Jubilee Line incorporates lift access at all stations.

TfL Access & Mobility assists London Underground in planning the refurbishment of stations and trains to improve conditions for passengers with sensory and/or mobility impairments. New trains on the Jubilee and Northern Lines feature specially-designed wheelchair or pushchair spaces and colour-contrasted handrails together with audible and visual information systems to announce the name of each station and the train destination.

Docklands Light Railway (DLR)

Originally opened in 1987 as London's first fully-accessible railway, the DLR links the City with a variety of destinations in East London.

Croydon Tramlink

This brand new light rail network in south London provides a fully-accessible service. The trams and the stops along each route have been carefully designed with the needs of mobility-impaired passengers in mind. Similar schemes are being considered for other parts of London.

Dial-a-Ride

Dial-a-Ride is a London-wide, door-to-door public transport service for disabled people who are unable, or find it difficult to use conventional buses and trains because of their disability. It was founded by users and continues to offer a user-controlled service. Dial-a-Ride is an organization of six separate companies which provide transport for people with disabilities across the whole of London. It is funded by Transport for London. Each of the six regional Dial-a-Ride Services is an independent company limited by guarantee, whose Board of Directors is elected by

the local Area Groups of users. The majority of Directors are themselves users of the service. Normally people join the Dial-a-Ride which covers the area in which they live.

People have to book their trips by ringing a special booking number or sending an email Monday to Friday from 9 am to 12.30 pm. Bookings are taken on a first-come first-served basis.

Dial-a-Ride buses operate throughout the day between 7.30 am to 11 pm, 365 days a year. Fares are based on the length of the journey and are similar to the bus fares: 60p (€ 0.97) for a trip up to 1 mile, 80p (€ 1.29) for a trip up to 3 miles, £1.00 (€ 1.61) for a trip up to 5 miles. Dial-a-Ride offers a cost-effective transport service which is closer to public transport than to taxi services. For an efficient use of resources, people will often be travelling with others in the vehicle.

Taxicard

The majority of London Borough Councils participate in the Taxicard Scheme, which provides their disabled residents with subsidised journeys in accessible taxis.

Disability Awareness Training

Many staff involved in providing London's public transport have received training in disability awareness provided by TfL Access & Mobility.

<http://www.transportforlondon.gov.uk>

E-mail: access&mobility@tfl.gov.uk

Agenda

● **18th Conference of GART (Association of French Transport Authorities): How break the dependence on automobile ?**
21-23 November 2001 – Bordeaux, France.
<http://www.gart.org>

● **POLIS Conference: Integrated Transport Management – the Way Ahead for Europe's Local Authorities**
29-30 November 2001 – Rome, Italy.
<http://www.polis-online.org>

● **Workshop on town planning, rail services and intermodality in French and German cities**
6-7 December 2001 – Bischoffsheim, France.
E-mail: Bischexp@e-i.com

● **6th International Conference on Automatic Fare Collection**
6-8 February 2002 – Bologna, Italy.
<http://www.uitp.com>

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