

editorial

Reversing trends...

Reversing such heavy trends as the pre-eminence of private car for passenger trips is a difficult and time-consuming challenge, which asks for some comprehensive, coherent and sustained policies. This ambitious, albeit necessary objective, won't be met without using all levers available. Fare policy is one of them. This is why the recent decision of the European Parliament, asking for more efficient charging of transport infrastructures, is worth noticing. One of the main impediments to the development of public transport lies indeed in their high cost for public authorities, whereas private car is usually regarded as less expensive or even profitable for public money thanks to the various taxes charged both on vehicles and on petrol. The position reached by the European Parliament is based on the fact that, in most cases, external costs generated by the use of cars (damage on the environment, noise, accidents) aren't paid by car drivers but by society as a whole.

But, as many surveys show, fare policies won't be enough to break the dependency of many people on cars. It will also be necessary for public transport systems to be strongly upgraded. Availability, reliability, safety, comfort, quality of interchange: the truth is that private car usually offers a much better service than public transport. This is why all professionals - public authorities and operators in the first place - will have to unite their efforts to reduce quickly the lag of attractiveness of public transport systems in comparison to private car.

In this context, the launch of the second phase of the benchmarking initiative of the citizens's network by the European Commission is good news. Comparison of the performances of public networks, of transport modes, and of transport operators, is a crucial tool for public transport authorities. Only through this knowledge will they be able to provide the best service possible to the citizens and make the best use of public money, which they are accountable for.

Stéphane Lecler,
Secretary General of EMTA

News from Europe

● European Parliament resolution on transport infrastructure charging

The European Parliament adopted in January a resolution on transport infrastructure charging prepared by the Euro MP Paolo Costa, Mayor of Venice. This resolution asks the Commission to propose a new methodology to better enforce the principles of "user pays" and "polluter pays" in the field of transport. The new methodology would enable Member States or local authorities to implement a system of transport infrastructure charging taking into account all the costs generated by the different infrastructures, including external costs (safety, environment). The main objective of transport infrastructure charging is to eliminate distortions of competition between modes of transport thanks to a more efficient price structure. The resolution insists that this new methodology, which should move in the direction of environmental sustainability, should avoid dual taxation and should be implemented gradually, in an easily understandable and attractive way to users and the public.

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

● Benchmarking of the citizens' network

The European Commission launched in February the second phase of its benchmarking initiative, which aims at comparing the transport networks and the mobility conditions in the European cities. Some 50 cities, including cities of candidate countries, are involved in this one-year project, which will focus on some key components of the attractiveness and efficiency of public transport services (intermodality-interchange, ITS, quality management, demands of different user groups, accessibility, clean vehicles, awareness-raising, value for money of public transport, the impact of tendering, tourism and public transport, congestion charging).

<http://www.eltis.org>

The European Commission prepares new reforms for the rail sector

Now that the second rail package has been approved by the Council of Ministers and the Parliament, the Commission is already working on the next series of measures (rail package III), which will aim at opening national freight services and passenger services between the main European cities to competition. This package shall be released by the Commission before the end of 2001 and approved in 2002 by the Council and the Parliament.

● EMTA Workshop on contracts (November 2000)

The proceedings of the workshop organised by EMTA on the issue of contracts between public transport authorities and operators in Rome last November are available. They can be obtained in english, french and spanish.

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News from the cities

● Dublin Transportation Office launches five new Quality Bus Corridors

Over 100,000 bus users across Dublin will shortly see a reduction in their journey time of up to 40% and a reduction in waiting time between buses during peak hours to less than 3 minutes. The benefits will flow from the launch of 5 new Quality Bus Corridors (QBC's). The new QBC's, running to and from the city centre, will increase the total length of the QBC from 40 km to the present 100 km. QBC's are special lanes restricted to all traffic except buses, taxis, emergency vehicles and cyclists. The corridor is effective from 7 am to 7 pm Monday to Saturday. QBC's provide significant dedicated road space and traffic signal priority for buses. Enhancements are also provided for cyclists and pedestrians. QBC's are provided for by the Dublin Local Authorities and funded by the Dublin Transportation Office.

Dublin Bus has also introduced Autofare, an exact fare system on all buses, which enables journey times to be faster because less time is spent issuing tickets and change.

QBC's have a proven record of attracting new people to use the bus. Up to two thirds of new bus customers on QBC routes were previously car commuters.

As part of the launch of the QBC's, Dublin Bus is undertaking a massive investment in bus services with an additional 58 buses on the new routes so as to increase capacity and bus frequency.

<http://www.dto.ie>

● Madrid: the Metro keeps growing

Madrid's Metro keeps growing. After the completion of the Extension Plan 1995-1999, which led to the construction of 55 km of underground network, the Community of Madrid is launching a new Extension Plan for 1999-2003 with 58 new km of underground lines.

This Plan has four main objectives:

- to create a new line 12, called Metrosur, around the metropolitan belt located to the south of the city of Madrid, 40.2km long
- to extend line 10, with a length of 7.1 km, in order to connect Madrid's Metro network to the new line Metrosur
- to extend line 8 from the airport by 5.9 km to the business centre of Madrid, arriving to a terminal station at Nuevos Ministerios. This station will be perfectly integrated with the public transport system and will have tickets and check in facilities for airport travellers

- to extend line 1 by 3.2 km, within a new urban development that will subsidize 37% of tunnel construction.

Works are right now underway, with 7 tunnelling machines used in every stretch under construction.

<http://www.ctm-madrid.es>

● Manchester: longer network and more capacity for Metrolink

• Royal Opening of Metrolink Extension

Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal formally opened the Metrolink extension between Manchester, Salford Quays and Eccles on 9th January 2001. The 6.4km project is the first on-street running extension to a light rail scheme to be built in the UK. The scheme, which cost £160m, includes many engineering features, including two major bridges to carry the tracks over the Bridgewater and Manchester Ship Canals together with two viaducts across Salford Quays and underpass on the approach to Eccles. The work took 2 1/2 years to complete and the majority of the funding came from the private sector.

• Metrolink vehicle extensions approved

The government has agreed to provide £7m towards the cost of extending part of the phase 1 fleet to increase capacity. Metrolink has proved so popular since it was opened in 1992, that the system is often very crowded at peak periods. GMPTe is also seeking to commission work to stretch 14 trams by the introduction of a new centre section. This would increase the capacity of each vehicle from the existing 210 passengers to 300.

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

● New UK Transport Act

The Transport Act was given the Royal Assent at the end of 2000 and so became part of UK law. The Act contains sections dealing with the privatisation of the National Air Traffic Control system, Local Transport and the UK railway system including the establishment of the Strategic Rail Authority. Amongst its provisions are powers for traffic authorities to introduce road user or workplace parking charges.

● Paris: Creation of a bus regional trunk network

The Urban Mobility Plan of the Ile-de-France Region, adopted in 2000, aims at reducing by 3% car traffic within 5 years in the French

Capital Region (-5% in Paris and the inner ring of suburbs and -2% in the outer suburbs). One way to meet this objective is to reorganise the bus routes on a regional scale so as to create a "trunk network". This network, called MOBILIEN will consist of about 70 strategic routes (out of 1,100 bus routes in the whole Ile-de-France Region) which will be complementary to the regional railways and tramways and which will offer a reliable and efficient service. The routes of the MOBILIEN network will be operated by several bus service operators.

The project will include four main features:

- restructuring of the supply of transport: direct itinerary, new location of bus stops, more service (from 5.30 a.m. until 0.30 a.m.), higher frequencies (waiting time under 10 minutes until 9 p.m.)
- priority schemes so as to increase the commercial speed of vehicles, which shall be higher than 18km/h, and to improve regularity: rights of ways and special roadworks to remove "black spots", traffic light priority schemes, stronger enforcement of the rights of way by policemen so as to maintain the performances even in the case of congestion
- strong attention to the quality of vehicles (comfort, accessibility, cleanliness)
- high quality of service including real-time information and high-quality bus stops.

All the MOBILIEN routes will be certified (French NF Service standard).

<http://www.stif-idf.fr>

● A strategic plan for the development of public transport in Stockholm

SL, the transport authority of the Stockholm metropolitan area, has devised a strategic plan for the coming 5 years. Its goal is to increase significantly the market share of public transport (target of +15% increase in traffic within 2005, up from a 40% modal share in 1998) and the satisfaction of passengers (from 58% in 1998 to 75% in 2004). To meet this objective, SL has developed the vision to provide the best public transportation in Europe. This will result in a strong focus on quality in the contracts signed between SL and transport operators. To increase its market share, SL will concentrate its efforts on some specific target groups (young adults, people currently using a car to travel into the city during the day and people using a car for local trips) and it will introduce a "contract with passengers", which is a commitment of SL to provide passengers with simple and fair trips.

<http://www.sl.se>

Analysis

Why measure the satisfaction of customers and how? The Zurich Public Survey

This new column of EMTA News will be devoted to the missions of public transport authorities through presentations of case studies highlighting the methodologies used. All contributions are welcome.

For this first "Analysis", we will go to Zurich to discover the way customer satisfaction is measured and taken into account by the public transport authority.

ZVV, the public transport authority of the Zurich metropolitan area, is responsible for the long-term transport planning, the strategic marketing, the financing and for setting the fares of the public transport networks in the largest Swiss urban area (1.2 million inhabitants in the Canton of Zurich). These networks, which include bus and trolleybus routes (1,600 km), tramways (100 km), suburban and cable railways, and lastly ship routes, are operated by 41 transport companies, ranging in size from the Swiss National Railway to small bus operators.

Since 1996, ZVV launches every other year a public survey, ZVV's understanding of customer satisfaction and the benefits for management and transport operators resulting from the surveys.

• Public survey: improving customer satisfaction and managing quality

The goals of the ZVV-survey are threefold:

- evaluating customer satisfaction with public transport
- evaluating the customer's judgement regarding specific fields and criteria in order to identify the relevant levers to improve the quality of the services offered
- evaluating the differences between regions, operators and customer-groups.

These three goals follow the assumption that the quality of service has a direct influence on public transport attractiveness in the market. If customers are generally satisfied with what they get, they tend to keep on buying the services and may even recommend them to others. But knowing that the customer is basically satisfied is not enough. A public survey has to point out shortcomings as precisely as possible. It has to sort the opinions according to customer-groups and service providers. On this base the most effective actions to enhance the satisfaction of a targeted customer-group can be defined.

To ensure customer satisfaction is one reason to perform surveys on a regular basis. Another reason is to provide transport operators

with benchmarking data that define their position in relation to colleagues and competitors. ZVV uses the results of the survey to define the specific goals with the service providers. As ZVV considers competition between service providers to be one of the tools to ensure effective and high-quality public transportation, the public survey takes an important role both in planning and management.

• Defining customer satisfaction

The customer's opinion on the quality of a product depends entirely on his or her expectations. A customer is satisfied when his or her expectations are fulfilled. Public surveys on customer satisfaction therefore don't measure the service-quality, they report if and how the customer's expectations are met. If customers' expectations have risen since the last survey, the service-quality will appear in a less favourable light even if nothing has been changed objectively. Thus customer satisfaction must always be seen in relation to possibly altered expectations. Ironically enough, an improvement like the introduction of a new type of tram on certain lines may cause a negative effect on the general customer satisfaction because the greater expectations provoked by the new technology can not be fulfilled by the older tramways still in use. Seen from that angle, customer satisfaction can at least to a certain degree also be defined by the way new standards are introduced.

• Defining the method

In the fall of 2000, ZVV launched its third customer survey. After the initial effort in 1996 and a more refined survey in 1998, the necessary tools are now developed and the relevant criteria are defined. Because of the changes introduced since the first survey, the results of the three surveys can't be compared without detailed knowledge. With the survey launched in 2000, a standard has been established and the future surveys will be compared directly.

Each question in the questionnaire concerns certain quality criteria that have been defined and confirmed by the customers over the last six years. These criteria are grouped in quality dimensions like "tickets and prices", "quality of the traffic system", "reliability" etc. that are in turn attributed to the operators in charge. The influence of these quality dimensions on customer satisfaction is determined through a statistical procedure that considers both the inputs on the quality dimensions and the general satisfaction that is determined separately. This abstract approach is necessary because customers don't provide reliable information on the influence of quality dimensions on the general satisfaction.

• Public surveys as management-tools

Well defined and established surveys produce data that are very useful if not imperative for management purposes. Part of any cost-effective management is to know where to invest in order to reach the most satisfying performance. Not every improvement of quality has the same effect on customer satisfaction. The survey results are an invaluable tool to help to do the right thing.

The survey data also give detailed insight into the quality of the different transport operators' performances. Being responsible for the strategic marketing and the financing of the public transport system in Zurich, ZVV defines specific goals with the main transport operators. These goals not only concern financial aspects but also quality criteria. Every transport operator receives the results of the customer survey concerning their fields of operation. After all, the customer's judgment is not general, but always very specific, because it very rarely touches more than one or two operators. For this reason it is important to discuss the results from the public surveys with the transport operators because it is most of all them who can make the difference in the public opinion on service quality.

<http://www.zvv.ch>

Focus

Public transport projects for the Athens 2004 Olympic Games

In view of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, several large projects are underway, aiming at securing public transport services of increased quality and reliability in the Athens Metropolitan Area.

• Creation of a tram network

The Ministry of Transport has decided to build a tram network connecting the City Center with the southern suburbs. Tram will satisfy the increased transport needs and contribute to the protection of the environment. The total length of the tramway will be 23.7 km and the maximum capacity 8,500 persons per hour and direction. The project is supervised by Tram S.A., a new company established for this purpose, as a subsidiary of Attiko Metro.

The two tramlines are expected to be in operation before the Olympic Games.



The project of tram network

• Public Transportation to the Athens International Airport (AIA)

The Grand Opening of the New Athens International Airport (AIA) is expected to take place end of March 2001.

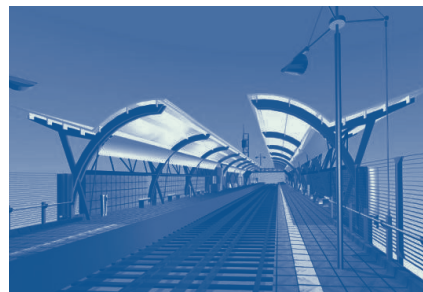
Express buses will be used to serve the passengers between the City Center and the new Airport. Two major bus services have been planned: Line 1 will cross the north east part of the Metropolitan Area and Line 2 will serve Piraeus and the Southern suburbs.

In the future, a new suburban rail line will connect the Athens-Piraeus Metropolitan Area and the Airport. It is expected to carry the majority of the traffic to/from the Airport with an estimated capacity of 5,000 persons per hour and direction. The Rail line will be 32 km long and constructed in the median lane along the newly constructed Attiki Odos Toll Road.

Responsible for the implementation of the Suburban Rail Project is ERGOSE, a subsidiary of the Hellenic Railways (OSE). The line is expected to start operation in 2004.

• Old Metro Line refurbishment and upgrading

The primary objective is to increase the transport capacity from 17,000 to 26,000 passengers per hour and direction. This will be achieved by increasing and renewing the rolling stock and improving the track and traffic signaling system. Major renovation works are in progress in order to improve the operability, appearance and attractiveness of the oldest metro line in the area (ISAP line 1). In addition, 120 new railcars will be delivered until November 2003.



• Bus and Trolleybus Fleet renewal

The renewal of the bus and trolleybus fleet is underway. By the end of 2003 a total fleet of 1,850 buses and 350 trolleys will be available to meet the needs for the Olympic Games. All vehicles will be air-

conditioned, environmental friendly (anti-polluting technology) and accessible by handicapped people (kneeling, low floor, 500 buses equipped with ramps). 295 buses will be powered by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

<http://www.oasa.gr>

Agenda

• EMTA Meeting

7th Meeting of the public transport authorities of the European metropolitan areas, 26-27 April 2001 - Prague, Czech Republic
E-mail : emta@emta.com

• European Green Week,

24-28 April 2001 - Brussels, Belgium
20-25 May 2001 - London, U.K.
Conference and exhibition organised by the European Commission to publicise the 6th Environment Action Programme 2000-2009.
E-mail: env-greenweek@cec.eu.int

• 54th UITP World Congress & City Transport Exhibition

20-25 May 2001 - London, U.K.
E-mail: events@uitp.com

• Conference ITS '01 Prague,

May 31 - June 1, 2001 - Prague, Czech Republic

• 5th International Meeting on Parking and Urban traffic,

14-15 June 2001 - Nice, France
Conference and exhibition on parking management and urban mobility.
Tel. (33-1) 42 46 88 30

• Bilbao 2001: Intelligent Transport Systems

20-23 June 2001 - Bilbao, Spain
Conference and exhibition on ITS in European cities.
E-mail: info@bilbao2001.net

• 9th World Conference on Transport Research

22-27 July 2001 - Seoul, Korea
E-mail: m.browne@westminster.ac.uk

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