EMTA news
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editorial

About accessibility

It is widely agreed that economic development should go hand in hand with social progress. This should be true in the field of public transport as well. Unfortunately, reality is often different. Our public transport networks have been devised to carry as many passengers as possible. Therefore, they are thought for "normal people", that is to say fit persons, of average height and weight, able to move as they wish. But what happens in the case of very young, elderly, or disabled people ? What happens when one travels with big luggage, heavy purchases, a pram or a bicycle ?

Endless staircases, few if not any seats where to wait at bus stops or metro stations, buses with no space for luggage or wheelchairs and with exhausting high steps, dangerous gaps between platforms and trains, anti-fraud gates at metro stations impossible to pass through with any bulky package... Such is too often the plight of public transport customers. It is important to notice that the private car often provides a better answer to these special needs.

Surveys conducted in several European countries show that nearly one third of the population suffers from a permanent or temporary handicap (travelling with packages is a form of temporary handicap). It is therefore fundamental that public transport authorities and operators take this issue into account, for which technical solutions exist and have been successfully tested in several cities: low floor buses, ramps to get in the vehicles, lifts and special gates in stations, space for wheelchairs in vehicles, devices for blind people information and security, etc.

The resolution of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport on accessibility of transport shows that governments are beginning to pay attention to these needs. But the situation will only really improve with a mix of regulation, such as the one currently discussed in Brussels on low floor buses, dedication of local authorities to this objective of social justice, willingness of operators to invest in adapted rolling stock and infrastructures, and lastly capacity of customer groups to lobby so as to raise the awareness on the need to improve accessibility of public transport.

Stéphane Lecler,
Secretary General of EMTA

News from Europe

● European Ministers of Transport in favour of sustainable and accessible urban transport

The European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) approved last May a resolution stating that the trends currently observed in travel patterns and land development in Europe pose a threat to the urban environment and to the health of the inhabitants of cities and suburbs. This is the conclusion drawn from a survey of 160 cities carried out by ECMT. The survey shows that it has been so far very difficult to translate words into action in this area. Therefore, ECMT asks national administrations to act as catalysts in promoting the adoption of sustainable transport practices at local level.

Another resolution was adopted, stressing the need for governments to introduce measures aimed at improving the accessibility of all modes of transport, and among them public transport, for people with reduced mobility and the elderly.

● The European Commission wants speed limiters on lorries and buses

The European Commission adopted on June 14th a report concluding that all passenger vehicles with more than 8 passenger seats and all goods vehicles over 3.5 tonnes should have speed limitation devices. The report of the Commission shows that this measure would bring significant improvements to both road safety and pollution levels.

● News from the companies

• Paris public transport company **RATP**, which was granted by a law the right to operate services outside the French capital city last December, has started to compete in tendering procedures to operate other urban services, usually in joint-venture with local companies (Trieste, Genova, Clermont-Ferrand, Singapour). RATP, whose revenues reached 2.7 bio Euros in 2000, aims to have 25% of its turnover outside its core region.

• **Bombardier Transportation** became the largest manufacturer of rail systems with the purchase of Adtranz, a subsidiary of Daimler Chrysler created in 1996. The new company has a turnover of 6 billion Euros, in front of Alstom (4,4 bio Euros) and Siemens (3,5 bio Euros).

• **Via GTI** and **Cariane**, two subsidiaries of the French National Railways SNCF operating public transport networks in several European countries, merged under the name of **Keolis**. The new company had a total turnover of 1,5 bio Euros in 2000.

● New members and new President for EMTA

EMTA Members met in Prague last April at the invitation of ROPID, the Prague transit authority. Two new members joined the association :

- the Helsinki Metropolitan Area Council (YTV),
- the association of Italian cities for sustainable mobility and the development of transport.

Mr. Georges Dobias, who retired from STIF (Paris public transport authority) last March, resigned from the Presidency of EMTA. STIF will be replaced by Consorcio de Transportes de Madrid as Chairman of EMTA.

News from the cities

● Towards a strategic land use and transportation body in Dublin

A consultation paper published in March by the Irish Government proposes to establish a new institution responsible for strategic land use and transport planning, regulation of the public transport market and allocation of State finance for transport in the Greater Dublin Area. Organisations and individuals were invited to comment on these proposals. These comments are now being considered by the Government.

Its missions would be :
- preparation and regular review of an integrated long term (15 to 20 year) land use and transportation strategy for the metropolitan area
- adoption of a medium term (5 to 7 year) transport implementation programme and short term (2 to 3 year) action plans
- monitoring the implementation of the strategy, programme and plans, with appropriate performance indicators
- using its enforcement powers to ensure that the implementing agencies (local authorities, public transport providers, Railway Procurement Agency, etc.) act in a way which is consistent with its strategy and deliver on the implementation programme
- allocating finance from the Government to transport services through public service contracts
- carrying out works itself when it considers it more convenient, expeditious or economical to do so
- promoting an integrated public transport network, regulating fares and encouraging increased public transport use

This strategic body would be governed by an Executive Board and would have a Council of local authorities, social partners and the Irish Government. The objective is to have a Bill creating this new body prepared next Autumn.

http://www.dto.ie

● "Don't choke London" campaign

The Mayor of London launched in June the "Don't choke London" campaign, part of a British national campaign aimed at raising public awareness of the problems of congestion and pollution caused by the current unsustainable growth in road traffic. Stressing the fact that "London is one of the world's busiest capitals. It is also one of the most congested", Ken Livingstone presented the policies carried out so as to foster alternative modes of transport. As well as almost 1000 miles of signed cycle routes, simplified bus fares and the recent reduction in the price of One Day and 7 day Bus Passes, London businesses are also contributing to this policy by moving over to Green Commuter Plans and encouraging employees to reduce their car use.

http://www.transportforlondon.gov.uk

● Public transport development projects in Helsinki metropolitan area

The Helsinki metropolitan area is the only major-sized city conurbation in Finland with almost one million inhabitants. In 2000, 315 million passengers used its public transport services.

During the period 2000-2004, public authorities will invest heavily in public transport infrastructure: 100 mio € for railways, 40 mio € for bus routes, 85 mio € for network terminals, 10 mio € for tramways, 6 mio € for information, 14 mio € for park and ride facilities and 35 mio € for the travel card.

Main projects will include:

• new rail services

In 2002, the City Rail link from Helsinki to north-west suburbs will be inaugurated.

• new quality bus routes

A new cross-town bus link with special vehicles running at very frequent intervals and operating on own lanes with specially equipped stops and information system will start its operations in 2002.

• electronic ticketing

A travel card project is under way. The present cardboard tickets will be replaced by electronic contactless smart cards. The first implementation phase began in December 1999. The distribution of travel cards to passengers will begin in the autumn of 2001.

http://www.ytv.fi

● Paris: increased patronage and first results of contracts signed with transport operators in 2000

Traffic increased strongly in public transport in the Ile-de-France Region in 2000 (+4,7% for RATP and +5,5% for SNCF), accelerating a trend witnessed since 1995. With 2.6 billion trips, RATP had its highest traffic since it was created in 1948. For SNCF, traffic level was close to that of the beginning of the 1990's with 10 billion passenger-km.

RATP received from STIF a bonus of 9.14 mio Euros for the good quality of its services in 2000 (92% of the maximum bonus possible) while SNCF was awarded a fine of 1.9 mio Euros for its bad results in terms of regularity of trains in the region.

http://www.stif-idf.fr

● Towards a third underground line in Rome

The new Line C of Rome underground is an ambitious project which aims both to improve the supply of public transport in the Italian capital city and to foster projects of urban renewal all along the route with a redesign of public spaces, an improvement of the environment (squares, gardens) and a reorganisation of surface public transport .

The line – 32km long with 42 stations – will cross the whole city like a backbone following a north-west / south-east direction and will serve some of the main monuments (Vatican city, Coliseum, Basilica San Giovanni). It will provide two interchanges with underground line A and one with line B, two with the regional railways and two with urban tramways. Trains will carry 1,200 persons every 3 minutes, at a commercial speed of 35 km/h (including stops at stations). Regularity and security will be monitored by the ATP system, which will manage the minimum distance between trains.

The route, wholly underground, will be built under the archaeological layer, at a depth varying from 20 to 35 metres. It will consist in two single-track tubes. The first section (7.5km and 9 stations between San Giovanni and Alessandrino) will cost 0.92 billion €, and will be funded by the Italian State (60%) and the Municipality of Rome (40%).

http://www.comune.roma.it/dipVII

● "S-Bahn Vision" in Zurich

Railway traffic increased strongly in the 1990's in the Canton of Zurich (+30% for all services and +100% on the line to the airport).

In this context, the Canton authorities asked ZVV, Zurich public transport authority, to devise a new concept of S-Bahn (regional railways) services. The resulting "S-Bahn Vision", whose motto is "direct and fast", was devised by ZVV in co-operation with the Swiss National Railways SBB so as to attract at least 25% more customers. This will be achieved thanks to :
- faster lines connecting communities in the canton of Zurich with the centres
- higher frequencies with 15 minute intervals for services connecting large communities and communities close to the city of Zurich
- direct services between the main housing and job areas

This will need doubling of some tracks as well as extensions of the network on the corridor Zurich-Winterthur. The most urgent of these works will be completed by 2006. The new Zurich station, which shall open in 2012, will allow the next steps to achieve the goals of the S-Bahn-Vision.

http://www.zvv.ch

Analysis

How integrate tariffs and transport conditions? The Prague experience

Prague Integrated Transport (PIT) system was established in 1996 after two years of preparations. It provides a co-ordinated transport service offer of individual transport operators (co-ordinated timetables) and a single transfer tariff enabling passengers to make their trips using a single ticket. PIT system includes metro lines, tram and bus routes, urban and suburban rail segments in Prague region and suburban bus routes.

• Integration of tariff and transport conditions

The first step in preparing integration was to elaborate a new integrated tariff applicable to the entire planned area. This tariff was based on fare zones, with a limited time validity of single tickets. Fare rates were based on urban tariff level.

The following scheme was implemented:

• Transfer of public bus lines to the regime of urban transport regulations and introduction of an integrated tariff to these lines, including unification of passenger processing system.

• Negotiation of validity of an integrated tariff on trains of Czèch Railways within the area covered by PIT system. Nevertheless, both railway transport regulations and tariff of Czech Railways remained in force, which means that there are concurrent tariffs.

The basis of the integration process was established through the introduction of a single tariff for all types of transport and of urban transport conditions to suburban bus lines which have been transferred to PIT system following negotiations with municipalities and district authorities as subsidy payers.

There are still differences in transport conditions for urban bus transport, intercity bus transport and railway transport which are set by legislation. However, this situation has been gradually improving as new transport legislation offers solutions of some problems or enables to solve them on a contractual basis.

Quality of transport co-ordination is also determined by a consistent approach to solving the problem of particular tariff and transport conditions. It is crucial not to weaken the effect of co-ordinated transport offer by unnecessary measures, such as e.g. different discounts, conditions for transportation of luggage, etc.

• Prague integrated transport tariff

Until 1996 urban public transport tariff had been based on a non-transfer principle. Only the introduction of a transfer tariff and a new advanced passenger processing system enabled to develop an integrated transport system in Prague and the surrounding region.

Current PIT Tariff is based on a transfer principle, time periods and zones. The Prague capital covers two fare zones and the surrounding region is divided into five external zones (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) which are 5 - 7 km wide. Division of the surrounding area into zones is designed to prefer railway transport and respect local transport relationships within acceptable economic bounds.

Basic fare enables to change mode and is valid for two fare zones for 60 min. or 90 min. in offpeak periods. Data about a particular commencement of validity period, identification of the initial fare zone and other identification codes are printed on tickets in validating machines.

Non-transfer tickets are designed for short-distance trips, allowing passengers to travel through one boundary of a fare zone. In surface, transport time validity is 15 minutes. On the metro it is extended to 30 minutes and passengers can use such tickets for a distance of no more than five stations with a possibility to change between metro lines.

Season tickets (monthly and quarterly) are divided into season tickets designed for the area of the capital and for external zones. “Flexible tickets” with an optional commencement of validity period have been gradually introduced.

Tickets for the area of the capital include short-term season tickets for 24 hours, 3 days, 7 days, 15 days as well as return and one-day tickets for users of P+R facilities with the aim to motivate private car users to use public transport.

Discounts are imposed either by the state (student discounts - 50%, children from 6 to 15 years - 50%, holders of cards issued to disabled persons) or by the city (pensioners - 50%, children from 6 to 15 years - 25% for season tickets). Although the scope and amount of discounts is set by the Ministry of Finance, such discounts are not compensated to transport operators by the state and they increase demands for loss coverage from resources of the city.
An in-depth audit of economic management of Prague Public Transit Co. Inc. recommended that discounts be funded by Social sector subsidies and not by Transport funds, which are only used to compensate for deficit of operations.

• Tariff Agreement

The Tariff Agreement is a document dealing with fares, distribution of revenues from fare and financial relationships between transport operators with respect to ticket inspection. The Agreement is negotiated between ROPID and all transport operators of Prague integrated transport (PIT).

Based on this Agreement, tickets of Prague Public Transit Co. Inc. are accepted as PIT tickets. Accordingly, any of the transport operators provides transport services within his contracted scope of performance to passengers having such tickets. At the same time, transport operators authorise Prague Public Transit Co. Inc. to print and distribute tickets used within PIT system. This authorisation aims to minimise costs of printing and distribution of tickets.

The most complex part of the Tariff Agreement is how to pay for transport performance (service) provided, i.e. distribution of revenues from fare among individual transport operators within PIT system, including Czech Railways.

The last important issue solved by the Tariff Agreement is funding of a joint PIT ticket inspection, performed by ticket inspectors of Prague Public Transit Co. Inc.

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Focus

The regional express network (RER), the main challenge of the 21st century for Brussels ?

5 years after acceding to independence (1830), Belgium devised a dense rail network serving all the country.
Tens of private companies were awarded concessions to build the network, whose length reached 5,000 km in 1950. These private operators progressively disappeared because of financial problems, and the last ones were swallowed by the state-owned railway company in 1926, which then became the Société Nationale des Chemins de fer Belges (SNCB), and which still holds the monopoly of railway operations in Belgium.
The network then went through many cuts when the priority of public works was shifted to the building of a network of highways (between 1955 and 1985). It reached its lowest level in 1995 with only 3,368 km. Today, the progressive opening of new TGV lines and the planned re-opening of parts of the network will enable Belgium railways, which were once the densest network in the world, to reverse the trend of decline.

Brussels is located at the core of the national rail network, with 8 radial axes and 2 orbital ones. Up to 1952, two main stations (North and South Stations) brought passengers near the centre. People wishing to travel through the country had to change station (as is still the case in other capital cities) by foot (3 km) or by tramway. This ended with the inauguration of the North-South Junction in 1952, following a decision reached in 1909.

This interconnection was built with 6 lanes. Such a high capacity seemed too large to some people at the time when it was built, but it is today not enough to absorb a traffic representing 80% of national and international traffic going through Belgium. Three stations were built on this new line : one “Central station” located at 300 metres from the Grand Place and two local stations.

Since then, Brussels urban area has increased and now sprawls as far as 30 km away from the historical centre. The metropolitan area now has 1,800,000 inhabitants and among them 950,000 in the central area. More than 50% of jobs in this area are occupied by commuters. 180,000 cars go to the centre every day, bringing pollution and congestion to the very centre of the city.

The Urban Mobility Plan of Brussels adopted in 1998 (Plan Iris) plans an increase of the supply of services in this territory of 30 km from the city centre thanks to the creation of a regional express network (RER in French), on the French experience of RER and the German, Swiss and Austrian S-Bahn.

The objective is to raise the modal share of public transport from 34% to 41% in the central area of the city thanks to this project. This will need investments so as to find a solution to the saturation of the North-South Junction and to the lack of capacity on some routes.

In 1999, the Walloon, Flemish, Brussels and federal governments reached an agreement on the objectives and the programme of the RER project. A further step was reached in 2001: the federal government agreed to fund the extensions of railway infrastructures over 12 years, for a total investment of 2 bio Euros.

This project will mean the purchase of 500 2-level cars. The project also foresees the creation of a dozen new stations in the central part of the metropolitan area.

The first stage of increase of the capacity of railways was completed thanks to the works for the TGV towards Paris. The second stage shall be over in 2005 with the works for the TGV towards Germany. The third stage started recently with the renovation of the headquarters of the European Commission and will enable to create two new lanes in the Schuman station. These two lanes will be extended to the north with the building of a 2 km long north-south tunnel, which will serve the heart of the European area. Thanks to this new tunnel, part of the traffic in the North-South Junction will be bypassed, enabling also to reduce the patronage on the most frequented part of the underground.

Another fundamental step was achieved in 1998 with the shifting of the Airport station. This move enabled to raise the number of lanes in the station from 2 to 3 and to receive 300 m long train instead of 60 m before. SNCB plans to turn this terminus station into a normal station providing direct links with the main Belgian cities and at the same time direct RER services to the European area.

Though public transport modal share can be regarded as enviable in Brussels in comparison to other capital cities, the population has been expressing for a long time its wish to deal in a more appropriate way with the nuisances caused by the obvious excessive use of car traffic. The ambitious RER project will be able to solve most of the problems of congestion in the Brussels metropolitan area.
http://www.bruxelles.irisnet.be

Agenda

● **9th World Conference on Transport Research**
22-27 July 2001 - Seoul, Korea.
E-mail: m.browne@westminster.ac.uk

● **2001 European Transport Conference**
11-12 September 2001 - Cambridge, UK.
http://www.aetransport.co.uk

● **Velo-City 2001**
17-21 September 2001 - Edinburgh, Glasgow, UK.
http://www.velo-city2001.org

● **UITP Conference on Leisure Transport**
19-21 September 2001 - Bern, Switzerland.
E-mail: events@uitp.com

● **8th World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems, Transforming the Future**
30 September - 4 October 2001 - Sydney, Australia.
http://www.itsworldcongress.org

● **18th Electric Vehicle Symposium**
21-24 October 2001 - Berlin, Germany.
E-mail: kongresse@wtb.tu-berlin.de

● **UITP Conference on Marketing in Public Transport**
29-31 October 2001 - Barcelona, Spain.
E-mail: events@uitp.com

● **EMTA Workshop: What public transport authorities for the European metropolitan areas ?**
8 November 2001 – Barcelona, Spain.
E-mail: emta@emta.com

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