

GREEN PAPER ON URBAN TRANSPORT AND INLAND WATERWAYS

Planned EC Green Paper on Urban Transport

Urban freight, logistics and delivery services

Big challenges

Growing transport demand impacts on quality of life

Freight transport demand is expected to grow by 50% between 2000 and 2020. It has become clear that to absorb this growing freight transport demand, all transport modes are necessary. With some 80% of EU citizens living in an urban environment, cities will undergo a heavy impact, because citizens are consumers, creating a demand for more trade and goods. Ever raising congestion combined with higher levels of harmful emissions turn cities into unattractive places, contribute to climate change and undermines the health of populations. To absorb growing freight transport demand in a sustainable way, a sound mix of policy measures is necessary, to maintain cities as major engines of economic growth, easy to access and nice to live in, among which:

- integrated urban planning (mobility and sustainability check);
- transport demand policies (negative externality pricing and regulation);
- green incentives for innovation (grants and tax breaks);
- shift to congestion-free and carbon-low transport alternatives.

Some cities rediscover their waterways

How waterway transport can contribute to sustainable mobility

Many European cities have been founded along rivers and turned into prosperous places of trade and welfare. Today, the revival of waterway transport inspires a number of cities to optimally use this existing asset reaching deep into their heart to fight congestion and pollution. A set of successful examples:

- Since road access to the historical centre was restricted, the [beer boat](#) on the Utrecht canals successfully supplies cafés and restaurants replacing the heavy truck loads of the past.
- Île-de-France consumes 2.6 tonnes construction materials per inhabitant per year. 29% is carried in by barge. If this volume returned to the roads, it would spell trouble. The port of Paris therefore actively works on an attractive integration of port activities in city planning to keep goods flowing.
- With growing congestion, road transport increasingly fails in just-in-time deliveries putting the logistics schemes of customers under pressure. The [AMSbarge](#), a container crane ship, in Amsterdam provides all waterside companies in the wider port area with reliable deliveries.
- During the ringroad works in Antwerp, port and terminal operators decided to facilitate night shifts for inland waterway transport to avoid any traffic disruption of goods. Lots of companies discovered the benefits of using the waterway and remained clients after the works.
- Waste: [London](#) produces 4.4 million tonnes of municipal waste every year, of which only 18% is currently transported by river. This seemingly small percentage saves around 100,000 lorry movements per annum, reducing the environmental impact and congestion on London's roads.

Top 4 barriers to innovative urban freight projects and how to solve them **Turning waterways into an asset for carbon-low and congestion free cities**

1. Urban & mobility planning: no integrated visions and strategies yet

Waterside locations in cities are “in”. They are increasingly attractive for tourism, leisure and housing. Industrial and transport activities gradually disappear. Notwithstanding the boom in the services sector, the city economy still lives on goods (office equipment, housing, hospitality industry, waste) while citizens still consume (food, wear, furniture, electronics), but goods enter and leave the city by other ways. Clogged traffic arteries and raising pollution however now require new cross-discipline strategies and pro-active planning. Cities like [Paris](#) show this is perfectly possible by a shared use of the waterfront for both leisure and transport with innovative architecture and new job opportunities for low skilled workers.

2. Lack of public involvement and support for co-modal transport

Multi-modal transport solutions are by nature more complex than single mode transportation. A new project must have enough critical mass to start. Cities can leave everything to the market or decide to take an active role. As a neutral actor, they can bring interested partners together which otherwise would not meet spontaneously and help to reach critical mass for new projects. Such a catalyst role is a good means for cities to monitor and attain their own goals in terms of mobility, sustainability, welfare, social inclusion, etc. It's a win-win for both authorities and businesses.

3. Regulations and permits: an administrative labyrinth

To set up a multi-modal transshipment facility, businesses have to find their way through a time-consuming, complex and often costly labyrinth of planning, building and environmental regulations and permits. Confronted with 10 administrative barriers or more, many innovative and interesting projects stop. If interested in socioeconomic return of the project, urban authorities can guide and support businesses through the process and signpost red tape to the regional, national and European level with a message to streamline regulation without decreasing protection and safety levels.

4. Financing: kick-off support would be enough

Inadequate funding is another reason for start-up projects to fail. It is difficult to convince market parties to financially participate in unknown and untested freight solutions. By providing an early-stage grant or helping project partners to apply for EU funds, new concepts can prove their worth in the first 3 years.

What can the EU do?

Cities are in the driving seat for fostering sustainable urban transport and mobility, but the EU can provide valuable support to deliver effective action:

1. strengthening best practice exchange, demonstration, networking between urban authorities and stakeholders;
2. reducing red tape within the bottleneck exercise and action plan on freight logistics with regard to city logistics;
3. discouraging unsustainable transport solutions in EU state aid guidelines and funding programmes and encouraging integrated & sustainable transport solutions;
4. advertising funding opportunities: tools exist (state aid, EU programmes)
5. providing assistance with the set-up of strategies for integrated sustainable urban transport and land use planning (toolbox);
6. giving guidance on how to include transport in business CO2 reduction schemes;
7. increasing urban freight distribution and planning research.

Inland Navigation Europe (INE) is the European platform of national & regional waterway managers and promotion bureaux, established in 2000 with the support of the European Commission. INE sees major opportunities to contribute to long-term strategies for sustainable transportation by moving more goods by water in EU regions with accessible and navigable rivers and canals. To capture this business, INE members share their experience and know-how with enterprises ready to rethink their freight logistics. INE is a neutral platform without commercial interests.