



EU POLICY PRIORITIES FOR LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

A UITP PERSPECTIVE

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WHAT IS AT STAKE

Heatwaves, floods and other unexpected weather events raging throughout Europe in the recent past leave no room for denial on severe consequences of the unfolding global warming. Yet, global warming is nowadays not the only crisis that wrecks the continent – inflation is rising, energy prices hit the record high, and the COVID-19 pandemic is not yet over. This is why we must collectively shift from declarations to implementations of solutions that are both effective and resilient.

*These multiple crises have one thing in common – they set local public transport as one of the key mitigating solutions, aiming at **being the backbone of the entire urban and local mobility ecosystem**. In its new Urban Mobility Framework, the European Commission has already confirmed the critical role of public transport in ensuring the sustainability of the entire local mobility chain¹. Yet, this requires the European Commission to strengthen its position on modal shift from individual travel modes to collective passenger transport.*

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

BEING THE BACKBONE MEANS THAT PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS RECOGNISED AS A MODE PER SE

When discussing EU legislation, local public transport is often considered as a first and last mile, which complements a medium / long distance journey. In fact, local public transport is not an extension of long and medium distance travel. **Local public transport is a transport mode per se**. It is neither road, nor rail; it is inherently multimodal.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the stakeholder consultation for a mobility transition pathway.

BEING THE BACKBONE REQUIRES EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Local public transport authorities need to become multimodal transport authorities that manage complex relations between different mobility stakeholders by setting rules optimising the overall traffic flows and the use of urban space. Public authorities need the maximum flexibility and support in the organisation and provision of transport services, and promotion of active modes.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the EC Urban Mobility Framework.

¹ EC Communication (2021) 811 The New EU Urban Mobility Framework: "The Commission will reinforce its funding and policy support for public transport and will work with national and local administrations and all stakeholders to ensure that this form of transport remains the backbone of urban mobility"

BEING THE BACKBONE DEMANDS APPROPRIATE SERVICE CAPACITY

A steady transport capacity increase must be ensured as a matter of urgency, both in terms of **geographical coverage** and **increased frequencies** to accommodate growing travel demand. In urban and suburban setting, collective passenger transport by rail or road optimizes land-use and space allocation. Yet, further afield in **remote suburbs and rural areas**, and at late periods of the day, attractive transport alternatives are lacking, making car use indispensable. Therefore, UITP stands firm to promote a **basic guaranteed public transport offer**, including transport on demand services, that can ensure a proper access to economic and social opportunities for all.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the UITP Public Transport Benefits campaign.



BEING THE BACKBONE WILL MEAN MASSIVE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION CUTS

The decarbonisation of the local public transport sector is well underway, also thanks to the support by the EU institutions. However, UITP is concerned that electromobility encompassing the automotive and micro-mobility sectors is more and more frequently promoted as a sufficient solution. It is worth reminding that **private mobility modes provide only a fragmented and partial solution**, insufficient on all accounts to meet serious mobility and energy challenges.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the climate package “Fit for 55”.

BEING THE BACKBONE INVOLVES SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING AND INVESTMENT

UITP calls EU policy makers to **unlock investments** in urban and local public transport assets, infrastructures and services. The pragmatic and the most effective way to tackle green and social transformations **should go beyond the principle of subsidiary**, without prejudice to the legal responsibilities of Member States and competent public transport authorities. That is why **EU funds and financing programmes will remain of vital importance** for the entire sector. Yet, relying on EU funding is not enough, with a blend of subsidies, green bonds, financial guarantees, state aid and private investment all coming into play. Financial incentives such as the introduction of pricing of externalities are also an important step in the right direction. UITP supports the creation of a system that reflects the true cost of transport by applying the polluter-pays and beneficiaries-pay principles. UITP also supports the **earmarking of revenue for the development of public transport**, in schemes such as the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the MFF (Multiannual Financial Framework) 2021-2027 legislative packages and the climate package “Fit for 55”.



BEING THE BACKBONE ENTAILS A MULTIMODAL APPROACH

The EU's willingness to develop multimodal passenger hubs in urban nodes across the TEN-T network is very encouraging. While public transport is an integral part of any multimodal transport system, UITP is convinced that public transport cannot be considered at equal terms with new mobility providers. Local public transport is the only solution to offer mass transit capacity in the most effective, accessible and affordable manner.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the revision of the TEN-T Guidelines, and the EC Urban Mobility Framework.

BEING THE BACKBONE CALLS FOR A BETTER LOCAL AND LONG-DISTANCE TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

There is a much-needed improvement required of the physical connections between long-distance rail or bus services and metro, local buses or urban rail. This is well addressed by the multimodal passenger hub concept that is (re)emerging. From a digital perspective, UITP is committed to enhance, with PTAs playing a pivotal role, the coordination with all relevant stakeholders in order to improve digital interfaces between local and long-distance transport. UITP calls EU policymakers to support such coordination, both from a policy and funding perspective.

BEING THE BACKBONE REQUIRES A SMART USE OF TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL SERVICES

Local public transport operators and authorities are steadily transforming into multimodal mobility providers. Digitalisation however is not a magic stick. UITP disagrees with a vision of a digital or technology system that would solve all urban mobility problems on its own. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) platforms can become a valuable tool to develop shared use of transport services, and to support public authorities in transforming mobility patterns across their areas, even though its business models are precarious. However, MaaS matches supply and demand digitally without creating more capacities on the ground, and thus can only partially contribute to addressing mobility challenges of the future.

Data issues come along with the digitalisation of transport systems; a key consideration is how to establish true reciprocity and a fair level-playing field.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the revision of the Intelligent Road Transport Systems (ITS) and in the Multimodal Passenger Mobility Forum (MPMF).



BEING THE BACKBONE NEEDS METRICS TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Revised Regulation on TEN-T guidelines introduces the mandatory collection and submission of urban mobility data for every urban node. However data collection and submission must not become an administrative burden.

Such data and mobility indicators shall be defined in close coordination with the most relevant mobility stakeholders (namely PTO, PTA and representative bodies). UITP urges policymakers to ensure **proportionality of the necessary data collection**, according to the objectives that shall be further clarified and agreed on by all involved parties.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the revision of the TEN-T Guidelines.



BEING THE BACKBONE REQUIRES INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

UITP welcomes the European Commission's ambition to maintain relevant supporting initiatives in the upcoming years. However, UITP calls to alleviate barriers that prevent small and fragmented stakeholders from being part of EU research programs. In addition, due consideration shall be given to have **end-users (PT operators or transport service providers)** on-board the research programs, to ensure the innovation has a real potential for a market uptake. It is also of importance **to make sure that transport innovations** not related to digital, but relating to mobility modes, tools and engagement practices as well as services and infrastructure are given a voice. Last but not

least, **an inventory of all EU co-funded research projects on urban transport** would definitely help to fully understand the opportunities and lessons learnt; as of today, such information is cumbersome to acquire.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the Urban Rail Platform, and of the Rail Forum Europe.



BEING THE BACKBONE DEMANDS LEGAL SECURITY AND STABILITY

UITP is deeply concerned about the revision of the interpretative guidelines of the Regulation 1370/2007, which is the cornerstone of the legal framework that governs land transport services across the EU. The proposed revised guidelines introduce new legal concepts and interpretations of existing laws, which are not appropriate in such a non-binding, but nevertheless influential, interpretative document. They will create legal and business uncertainty for the European local public transport sector at the time when its efforts should be fully focused on both the recovery from the pandemic, as well as a fair and inclusive transition to a climate-neutral future.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the revision of the PSO (Public Service Obligations) guidelines.

BEING THE BACKBONE ENCOMPASSES RECOGNITION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF VOLUNTARY APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

Local public transport stakeholders support the improvement of the functioning of local public transport markets through the harmonisation of technical specifications. However, UITP believes that compliance with standards developed by the European standardisation bodies should remain voluntary for urban passenger transport, which does not require international interoperability.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the Urban Rail Platform.



BEING THE BACKBONE INVOLVES SMART INTERLINKS WITH ZERO-EMISSION URBAN LOGISTICS

First and last mile delivery in city centers could be potentially carried out using public transport services, although such solutions have not yet gone beyond the alpha stage development. **Substantial investments** and **regulatory framework**, as well as a constructive approach towards the uptake of zero-emission urban logistics by private stakeholders, should be promoted at the EU level. In this perspective, UITP welcomes the proposed integration of urban logistics matters into SUMPs.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the EC Expert Group on Urban Mobility (EGUM).

BEING THE BACKBONE REQUIRES ATTRACTING AND RETAINING HUMAN RESOURCES

The public transport sector has a high potential to create quality jobs in urban areas, and makes a valuable contri-

bution to the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in the labour market. The public transport operators are engaged into **ambitious reskilling and upskilling initiatives** to allow their employees to develop new skills and improve their employability while enabling them to keep pace with new technologies as well as changing work tasks. UITP is convinced that **motivated, well-trained and rewarded staff** represent essential elements for the delivery of high-quality public transport service able to attract and retain users.

✓ This UITP position is advocated in the frame of the Social Dialogue on sustainable Urban Public Transport.



FOCUS ON URBAN RAIL

Urban rail plays a critical role to deliver on green and digital transition objectives. Having specific needs and requirements, **urban rail is an important component** of the whole railway ecosystem. UITP recalls that the **urban rail performance is frequently higher** when compared with mainline railways. These special features result in the exclusion of urban rail from the scope of the safety and interoperability Directives, and in the mandate M486 issued in 2011 by the European Commission to the European rail standardization bodies to develop voluntary standards for rail systems, which is still valid.

The Urban Rail Platform (URP) set up by UITP and UNIFE, and involving the European Commission, is also a key component of the urban rail ecosystem at the EU level. URP is a discussion platform gathering experts from operators and manufacturers that ensures a strategic steering

of all EU-related issues affecting urban rail across legislative, standardisation and research matters.

UITP is also active in the **Rail Forum Europe (RFE)**, the Members of the EU Parliament's association dedicated to rail transport.

Regarding research and innovation, urban rail is also leading a technology race in automated train operations. With extensive 30 years of operating experience, **automated urban rail systems have fully proven their maturity**. UITP therefore calls EU policymakers to give higher priority to urban rail research projects, with **earmarked budget and dedicated calls for proposals**. Considering significant passenger volumes realised daily on commuter corridors, **urban rail needs much more significant policy priority** as well as a dedicate and comprehensive set of research programmes being independent from those on mainline railway.

The rolling out and operationalising key assets such as radio communication systems for urban railways – the Communication Based Train Control (CBTC) – **requires guaranteed priorities in specific frequencies for safety-related applications**. To enable operators modernising existing metro systems and planning new lines with CBTC, the **Spectrum User Group (SUG)** coordinated by UITP has been working since 2010 towards the goal of **securing a guaranteed continuous 20 MHz bandwidth in the 5,9 GHz band**. Several technical requirements currently protecting Urban Rail ITS (Intelligent Transport System) might be revised in the near future and therefore further involvement of the SUG, with the support of its members, will be essential.

✓ *These UITP positions are advocated in the frame of the Urban Rail Platform and of the Rail Forum Europe.*



This is an official paper of UITP, the International Association of Public Transport. UITP has more than 1,900 member companies in 100 countries throughout the world and represents the interests of key players in this sector. Its membership includes transport authorities, operators, both private and public, in all modes of collective passenger transport, and the industry. UITP addresses the economic, technical, organisation and management aspects of passenger transport, as well as the development of policy for mobility and public transport worldwide.

This document was prepared by UITP Europe.

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