

**Recovery and Resilience Facility  
and the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans  
in the area of urban public transport**

**Joint Statement  
of the European Social Partners in Urban Public Transport  
UITP-ETF**

UITP, the International Association of Public Transport, and ETF, the European Transport Workers' Federation, praised the adoption of the Recovery and Resilience Facility back in February 2021. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is a performance-based, temporary financial instrument at the heart of the Next Generation EU programme deployed to meet the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic has posed to the socio-economic stability of the Union. The €724 billion worth-of Facility has been supporting the EU Member States through loan and grant components in implementing specific reforms and investments as outlined in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs). The identified reforms and investments should all be aligned with the EU priorities as well as address the challenges identified in country-specific recommendations under the European Semester framework of economic and social policy coordination.

**While RRF is expected to provide at least €73 billion for sustainable and green mobility investments, both UITP and ETF are now jointly calling upon the European Commission and the Member States to speed up the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans in the area of urban public transport.** The scale and speed of the RRF implementation does require a wide and concerted effort across all levels of government. It is why the European Commission must ensure Member States fulfil their obligations and move on with the rolling out of all political reforms and investment projects as pledged across their respective Plans.

**Both undersigned European associations jointly express the following considerations related to the implementation of the RRF in the area of sustainable mobility and urban public transport:**

1. The RRF is failing to live up to its potential in the urban public transport sector. While many Member States came forward with comprehensive investment and reform plans related to urban, local and regional mobility networks – including collective passenger modes – there is still **a limited movement visible regarding the full scale implementation** of all investment and reform pledges made in the respective NRRPs.
2. The overall **number of investments and policy reforms under the C11 component (Sustainable Urban Transport) is in short supply and** remains an issue for the RRF's overall impact on the urban public transport sector. There are 384 total transport sector measures, out of which 218 measures for sustainable transport themes, out of which only 34 fall under the C11 priority. Just 14 out of 27 Member States are planning C11 measures, with striking and significant national differences in the share of 'sustainable mobility' expenditures across all adopted NRRPs and ranging from 2% to 32.7%.

3. The limited availability of public data on RRF projects, both at European and national levels, makes it difficult to properly measure the impact of the Facility on the urban public transport sector. It remains unclear from the available official data which reforms and investments are currently being or were just implemented. Moreover, many national Implementation Reports do not include specific sections dedicated to sustainable mobility measures, making it difficult to evaluate the impact of the NRRPs on the respective urban public transport sectors. **The transparency of these datasets is therefore critical in order to hold Member States accountable** on their pledged and approved reform and investment initiatives.
4. From the perspective of local public transport operators and authorities, one of the persisting issues related to the RRF implementation is both **coordination and complementarity between different already existing EU funding and financing programmes**, including the RRF. Many local authorities lack the very administrative capacity to process all the administrative requirements related to accessing and/or managing different EU funding mechanisms currently available under the MFF 2021-2027 and NGEU 2021-2023. A complementing issue remains the implementation timeline (2026) which makes it even more challenging for many authorities to execute bigger urban infrastructural projects on time.

The undersigned parties are therefore concerned that the RRF is not yet playing a visible role in supporting investment levels and the quality of investments and reforms in the area of sustainable mobility and urban public transport. Hence, we call on the European Commission and the Member States to mobilize all means necessary to speed up the reform and investment process corresponding to the pledged measures in the respective NRRPs – particularly given the end of the Facility on 31 December 2023. Otherwise, it is recommended for consideration to extend the deadline for the RRF in order to ensure that the commitments are properly fulfilled.

Furthermore, **UITP and ETF jointly call on Member States and the European Commission to ensure that the swift implementation of pledged urban mobility reforms and investments remains a political priority, with Member States expected to make their best effort to deliver RRF in line with the timelines they committed to in their respective Plans:**

- A. Investing in local public transport networks remains critical for the post-pandemic socio-economic recovery as well as building back better of more accessible, efficient and connected mobility ecosystems with collective passenger modes as their backbone.
- B. With the current crises related to, among others, the climate catastrophe and the cost of living-energy crisis, progress on the RRF investments is key to help ease the cost-of-living issues for citizens at large, and in particular for vulnerable households and for workers while also reducing carbon emissions.
- C. Making urban mobility green and sustainable still remains one of the key objectives of the European Green Deal. Without the full implementation of the NRRPs to modernize and develop local public transport systems, it will not be possible to achieve significant decarbonisation targets as well as increases in passenger numbers in the long term. These plans can complement the expansion of accessible services including social ticketing schemes and integrating regional services.

- D. The NRRPs give governments an outstanding opportunity to commit to a frequent and high-standard of green public transport services needed to encourage the much needed modal shift. This modal shift, in turn, will reinforce structural and organisational measures to give priority to local public transport over cars in urban and suburban areas.
- E. Urban mobility projects under the NRRPs stimulate local economies and create quality public transport jobs often covered by collective bargaining agreements. This capital funding for collective urban infrastructure will therefore help secure the long-term financial stability of local public transport, which is key to developing an attractive, high-capacity public transport offer, sustaining fair pay and quality working conditions, and to address notorious worker shortages in the sector. Public investment and control of the planning, organisation and delivery of public transport remains key to achieving our social and environmental goals.

**Both associations wish to express the need to continue further mutual cooperation and to increase stakeholder engagement with all relevant EU institutions** to support the accelerated implementation of the RRF in the area of sustainable mobility and urban public transport. Both UITP and ETF believe that the prioritisation of local collective passenger transport is of absolutely necessity to achieve all major Green Deal's objectives, but also to make the public transport sector more resilient and green in the decades to come.

*Signed on 24 October 2023*

**For ETF**

**Livia Spera**  
ETF General Secretary

**Andreas Schackert**  
President - Urban Public Transport -  
European Social Dialogue

*The European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) is a pan-European trade union organisation which embraces over 200 transport trade unions from the European Union, the European Economic Area and Central and Eastern European countries. The ETF is a recognized social partner in eight European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committees and represents the interests of more than 5 million transport workers from 38 European countries vis-à-vis the European Institutions*

**For UITP**

**Mohamed Mezghani**  
UITP Secretary General

**Julieta De Micheo**  
Chairperson of the Employer's Group -  
Urban Public Transport - European Social  
Dialogue

*UITP is the international association representing public transport stakeholders. In the European Union, UITP brings together more than 450 urban, suburban and regional public transport operators and authorities from all Member States. We represent the perspective of short distance passenger transport services by all sustainable modes: bus, regional and suburban rail, metro, light rail, tram and waterborne. The UITP EU Committee has the quality of employer in order to ensure the European social dialogue with ETF.*