



European Declaration for Sustainable and Attractive Public Transport in Cities

Barcelona, 5 November 2024

We, the representatives of major European cities and public transport organisations, have gathered in Barcelona to reaffirm our commitment to supporting sustainable and attractive public transport systems that guarantee the daily mobility of people in European cities.

Considering that the role of public transport has never been more crucial in urban areas facing multifaceted challenges such as rising costs of living, the need to preserve social cohesion, and the growing urgency to address climate change;

Considering that public transport remains a key lever in addressing these challenges by offering a convenient, affordable, and sustainable mode of transport for millions of urban dwellers, peri-urban residents and tourists;

Considering that the public transport sector is a key ally for urban authorities in achieving their ambitions in air quality, health, and climate, as it serves as an exemplary sector in terms of sustainability;

Considering the recent crises that have significantly affected the public transport sector, including the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on passenger traffic, the rising costs of energy, staff shortages, and rampant inflation in many countries, which have increased operational costs and reduced revenue streams;

Considering that the challenges posed by the twin digital and environmental transitions that the sector is undergoing require concerted efforts among all levels of government to ensure a smooth and achievable transition for the vast majority of urban areas;

Considering that public transport is increasingly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which can lead to service disruptions and additional costs for both operators and responsible authorities;

Considering the need to maintain the leadership position of the public transport industry in Europe, aligned with the calls to improve industrial competitiveness and the challenges

of the sector in a globalised market

The signatories of this declaration commit to:

- Promote the development of public transport within their territories based on the principles of **sustainability, resilience, convenience, security, inclusiveness and accessibility**.
- Collaborate with other levels of government to make public transportation a **credible and high-quality option for the majority of the population**, while addressing appropriate measures to mitigate potential threats, including lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Develop seamless **multimodal integration of public transport** with other modes of transport, encouraging interoperability between public transport, cycling, walking, and shared mobility solutions.
- Fully address **the affordability and convenience of public transport** as a means to empower vulnerable communities and ensure equal access to jobs, education, and public services.
- Prepare the **public transport sector for climate adaptation**, strengthening its resilience in the face of increasing disruptions caused by climate-related disasters.
- Enhance **the attractiveness of the sector** to address staff shortages and invest in training and skills development to meet future labour market demands, ensuring more gender balance among those working in the public transport sector.
- **Prioritise public transport** over individual private modes of transport to fully unleash its potential in urban and peri-urban areas.
- Position **public transport at the core of smart mobility strategies** to increase ridership and leverage the latest technologies to improve services.

The signatories of this declaration call:

- On European policymakers to adopt a **European declaration on public transport** setting collective objectives to be achieved for the public transport sector, highlighting the multiple positive externalities of the public transport sector, recommending best practices and committing to support actions.
- On European policymakers to support the sector's transition to zero-emission mobility, as well as on digitalisation, the implementation of network projects, and innovation in new services and products, through the **EU multi-annual financial framework**.
- On European policymakers to preserve the freedom of local and regional authorities to **set public services obligations** on public transport, highlighting the role of public transport in addressing transport poverty and decarbonising urban mobility.
- On European and national policymakers to **mainstream adaptation policies** in public transport policies to help the sector better identify risks and vulnerabilities on the network and set up dedicated climate adaptation plans.
- On European and national policymakers to **unlock new funding streams for public transport investments** based on beneficiary payers and already existing polluter-payer schemes at the national or European level such as the Emissions Trading System.
- On European and national policymakers to work with local powers and public transport authorities on the evaluation of existing **public procurement tools** to ensure they are still fit for purpose in view of the latest developments in the public transport sector.

- On national policymakers to **better channel their national budget** to provide a sustainable and long-term development of the public transport sector and support the twin transition of the sector.
- On national policymakers to **draw up ambitious Social Climate Plans putting public transport at their core**, ensuring a fair share of the funds allocated under these plans is used to improve access to public transport for vulnerable communities at risk of transport poverty.
- On the supply industry to further **develop innovation in public transport products and services** as a way to address the current challenges faced by the public transport sector and improve its reliability and convenience.

The future of urban mobility in Europe depends on decisive and coordinated action across all levels of government. As Deputy Mayors of European cities and representatives of the public transport community, we stand united in our commitment to transform public transport systems into the backbone of sustainable, inclusive, and liveable cities. We call upon national and European policymakers to endorse this vision and to work with us in creating a greener, more equitable future for all.

Together, we can make Europe's cities leaders in sustainable urban mobility, setting a global standard for accessible, innovative, and environmentally responsible public transport, ultimately leading the transition toward a future of zero-emission mobility.

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