Action plan on urban mobility

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Gilles SAVARY (PES, FR) on an action plan on urban mobility. It regrets that the action plan announced by the Commission has not been published and, while approving of the separate initiatives, stresses the need for a cohesive approach. The committee decides, therefore, to follow up its own-initiative report, fully respecting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, by drawing up proposals for a European action plan on urban mobility. It recalls that urban transport is subject to the subsidiarity principle, but nevertheless stresses that local authorities often cannot meet challenges without European coordination, so that the Commission must provide studies and a legal framework, finance research, and promote and disseminate best practice on the principle that it should be available to everyone in all EU languages. The Commission is asked to publish a compendium of binding European regulatory provisions in this area and offer regions and cities a common frame of reference to make it easier for them to make choices as regards the planning and implementation of development strategy.

Accelerating European research and innovation in the field of urban mobility: Members propose the launch of a programme for the upgrading of statistics and databases on urban mobility at Eurostat, including in particular: data on traffic, including soft modes of transport (cycling, walking, etc.); statistics on air pollution and noise, accidents, traffic jams and congestion; and statistics on transport services and their supply. They suggest that a European internet portal and forum on urban mobility be launched in order to facilitate the exchange of information, particularly in the field of soft transport. They also suggest the introduction of an annual European prize, incorporating the CIVITAS awards into the European mobility week, to reward outstanding and transferable transport initiatives, as well as the development of a new generation CIVITAS initiative. In addition, ITS research and development should be stepped up and national and European funding for ITS applications should be increased.

Encouraging optimisation of various modes of transport by improving urban scheduling: Members recommend (i) the introduction of integrated sustainable urban travel plans in conurbations with over 100 000 inhabitants, comprising certain specified factors, and (ii) a permanent European forum on urban transport governance be created for representative transport-organising authorities, including user and citizens' organisations and professional federations of transport operators, in order to promote the exchange of best practices. They also propose that European financing in the field of urban transport be made conditional on the existence of integrated urban mobility plans. The report advocates the operational integration of, authorities responsible for the organisation of public transport, traffic and parking in European cities of over 250 000 inhabitants, in comparable areas, based on movements of population and goods and in line with local circumstances.

Incentivising sustainable mobility in urban areas: the committee advocates the setting-up of an urban mobility observatory within the Commission, but does not wish a new agency to be created. It regrets the fact that during the 2007-2013 period, only some 9% of all Structural Fund spending on transport is earmarked for urban transport. This proportion too small to be able to meet the challenges of devising appropriate mobility in European cities and environmental protection. It strongly suggests that the possibility be examined, under the 2014-2020 financial perspective, of a European financial instrument for urban mobility (integrated programme of the Marco-Polo type) enabling the cofinancing of: surveys of urban travel plans with a view to encouraging their widespread introduction, and a proportion of investments in modes of transport that meet the EU's environmental and socio-economic objectives. This financing should be allocated as an incentive, on the basis of calls for tender. The committee also proposes that an urban transport ticketing network for the main urban destinations in the EU be set up in stations and airports of departure.

Lastly, the committee suggests that a significant proportion of the appropriations released by the European economic recovery plan be allocated to the financing of on-going urban transport and public transport investments that can be implemented before 31 December 2009.