Citizen's network: fulfilling the potential of public passenger transport in Europe. Green paper

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The Committee on Transport adopted the draft resolution on the Commission's Green Paper entitled "A citizens' network". Noting that more than three-quarters of all journeys in the European Union are currently made by car, the rapporteur, Mr Wijsenbeek (ELDR, NL), proposed, in line with the Green Paper's objectives, a scenario conducive to the functional and rational use of a public network for citizens. Referring to the Union's special competence in relation to the trans-European networks and the coordination of national infrastructures, the draft resolution addresses the following topics: - financing: services should essentially be paid for by the travelling public; - intermodality should be promoted through public transport, taxis or car-sharing, as well as by creating integrated park-and-ride interchange points; - planning should be used to create more underground and multi-level infrastructures and promote measures to discourage the use of private cars in towns, in exchange for alternative means of transport, including bicycles. With regard to public transport, various objectives need to be attained, such as economic objectives, by adopting the system of contracting out services at network or line level while guaranteeing a universal service; accessibility which takes account of the needs of physically disabled travellers and the security requirements of women and of part-time or shift workers; viability, by setting quality standards, links with the outermost and island regions and a single fares and payment system on the various networks. The draft adopted also encourages research into environment- and health-friendly modes of transport (using alternative energies, biodiesel and electric-powered cars), greater use of information technologies and telematics and upgrading of rail transport and waterways in urban and suburban environments. In conclusion, although the committee generally approved the Green Paper, it called on the Commission to publish a White Paper containing specific proposals and a coordinated master plan on the Citizens' Network and a series of pilot projects to meet the long-term objectives of the Citizens' Network.