

Sustainable urban mobility must come first: so how do you get people out of their cars?



As operators and designers of public transport services, local and regional authorities and policy makers have the opportunity to shape and structure urban spaces. The best way to make the most positive impact on people's living conditions, and to influence their daily mobility choices, is to offer the very best options for movement.

During the joint conference, UITP and the [European Committee of the Regions](#) asked one of the most provocative questions in urban mobility: **How do you get people out of their cars?** But what practical solutions have proven to be successful for getting citizens on to public transport? Shared experiences and transferrable ideas were on offer when UITP and the ECoR joined forces to bring together more 160 international participants for [this topical Conference](#).

Opened by **UITP Europe Senior Director Thomas Avanzata** and **Chair of the CoR COTER Commission Isabelle Boudineau**, the gathering brought sustainable urban mobility to the agenda.

In Europe, the road transport sector is responsible for over half of all NO_x emissions and accounts for 72% of the 27% of the EU's total GHG emissions, which are attributable to transport. This is resulting in irreversible damage to our natural environment, with a detrimental impact on quality of life and the health of citizens in our towns and cities (air pollution, urban congestion, noise emissions, and more.)

"Emissions from the transport sector continue to rise. The European Union cannot succeed in its Green Deal if regions and cities are not at the forefront of efforts to provide an efficient and clean public-transport service. They are the actors most capable of proposing innovative solutions that make it possible to stop using private cars", said **Isabelle Boudineau**, Chair of the European Committee of the Regions Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER).

[The European Green Deal](#) highlights the need for transport to become

drastically less polluting in urban areas in particular, and emphasises the importance of a combination of measures aimed at reducing emissions, mitigating urban congestion and improving public transport options. Therefore the need to move as many people as possible to shared modes is vital, said UITP President **Pere Calvet**.

*"At UITP, we're convinced that a shift from private cars to public transport and active modes, cycling and walking, is the best way to decarbonise people's daily mobility, so UITBP President **Calvet**."*

*"The Green Deal is a game changer, it's an opportunity. Its ambitious objectives in terms of climate neutrality and more generally in terms of sustainability will not be met if public transport and a modal shift to sustainable daily mobility are not given priority. A number one priority. It's the bus that takes kids to school, the tram that takes me to the office and the metro that takes you to the movies which makes a difference ", said **Thomas Avanzata**, UITP Europe Senior Director.*

The Conference began with a discussion on how cars have shaped our cities and why a modal split is needed as well as how Europeans travel and how can mobility choices can be influenced.

In the context of the new European Green Deal, which calls for a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050, **Sylvie Landrieve** and **Susan Grant-Muller** of Forum vies mobiles and the University of Leeds presented their examples and implementations for improving mobility in cities: Behavioural change, incentivisation and understanding the different measures required for various locations should always be considered.

The Conference also featured two Urban Mobility Toolbox sessions.

Part one presented a range of best practices and experiences with several aspects of urban mobility, in particular aspects of seamless travel, urban access regulations and offer and demand management. BKK Budapest, RATP, Arriva and the Land Transport Authority, Singapore participated in the discussion on discouraging the use of cars and answering urban mobility needs.

The **second urban mobility toolbox** session focused on the practical experiences in relation to fare policy and multimodality, including pedestrianised areas, as well as access restrictions and zero emission zones. Participating in the discussion were SSB, Stuttgart, Wiener Linien, Vienna, the City of Balbao and Krakow Public Transport Authority.

In the **final part** of the Conference a panel of experts discussed on how to achieve a greener, carbon-free urban transport system in Europe and deliver the urban mobility of tomorrow.

Sir Albert Bore, Birmingham City Councillor and CoR member, **Clara De La Torre**, Deputy-Director General, DG CLIMA, **Anna Deparnay-Grunenberg** MEP, Member of the Committee on Transport and Tourism, **Miguel Gaspar**, Deputy Mayor for Mobility & Safety, City of Lisbon and **Elke Van den Brandt**, Minister of the

Government of Brussels Capital Region responsible for Mobility, Public Works and Road Safety, brought their experience and ideas on how to find the right balance between the urgent need for a long-term paradigm shift and today's short-term mobility need.

Matthew Baldwin , Deputy-Director General of DG MOVE at the European Commission, concluded the Conference by saying: *"To my reading, public transport will become the cornerstone of the new MFF 2021-2027"*.

What has been made clear from the joint UITP and European Committee of the Regions Conference is this: There is life without the car. There's also a demand for further EU support in sustainable urban mobility and the modernisation of public transport in Europe's metropolitan areas.

Through examples, incentivisation and investment a modal shift can be made to encourage more people to leave the car at home and use the many mobility options available in our cities.

UITP also held [a joint Conference with the European Committee of the Regions and UNIFE](#) last September to advocate for urban rail investment.