

THE MOBILITY TIMES

THE
MOBILITY
SPHERE
PROSPECTIVE
MAGAZINE

ISSUE
#2

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as a driver
of social
cohesion**



THE MOBILITY SPHERE
Transformative, sustainable insights
by transdev

 **transdev**
the mobility company



HE CLAIMS THAT ONE DAY, THIS COULD REINFORCE SOCIAL COHESION BY CONNECTING COMMUNITIES, WHILE ALSO RESPECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



HE'S HAVING A LAUGH!

DELIGNE

The Mobility Times - September 2024 edition

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About the Mobility Times



This second edition of The Mobility Times, which documents The Mobility Sphere's journey, is dedicated to "Mobility as a driver of social cohesion", theme of the forum held in Brussels in April 2024, which followed a first event on decarbonized mobility in Amsterdam in October 2023.

The Mobility Sphere think tank, launched by Transdev Group in 2023, aims to explore and shape the future of mobility in Europe.

Mobility and social cohesion were obvious topics for the second Mobility Sphere forum, held in the run-up to the European elections at a time when the European Union's Green Deal is being brought into question. Among the concerns voiced are those about the inequalities it could generate, reinforce, or fail to address.

A consensus is emerging amongst multi-disciplinary experts that if the ecological transition is to be accepted by the public, it must include support for the most vulnerable and reduce the divide between different geographical areas. Ensuring an inclusive transition has become a major priority so nobody is left behind on the journey towards decarbonized and accessible mobility.

Mobility is not a given for everyone and has a real cost, sometimes of up to a quarter of a household's income in the European Union¹. In France, 1 in 4 people have turned down a job or training course for lack of sufficient transport² and in rural areas more and more people are stranded due to a lack of mobility solutions. Unequal access to mobility combined with fuel poverty can provoke tensions and social unrest.

This edition of The Mobility Times presents highlights of discussions, insights and analysis of the challenges related to the question of mobility as a driver of social cohesion. Discover the points of view of mobility experts, politicians, academics, philosophers, business leaders and other stakeholders, representing different countries and regions, in this edition.

Sources:

1. Eurostat, 2022 - 2. Elabe study, 2017

We hope you enjoy reading it.

Videos and more in-depth content at transdev.com



FIGURES

Europeans citizens' mobility



10.6%

of European household budgets are dedicated to individual vehicle transport, compared with only 1.9% for transport services¹



71%

of passenger-kilometers journeys are carried out by car, compared with only 8% by buses/coaches and 7% by rail²



64%

of European citizens are inclined to switch from car to public transport for environmental reasons³

Sources: 1. Eurostat, 2022 - 2. Court of Auditors, 2018 - 3. EIB, 2020



FOCUS

Bridging the divide

How to make the green mobility transition fair and inclusive

Climate action requires major investment, lifestyle changes and sometimes new behaviors that can place a burden on parts of the population who have little financial leeway to make the changes required by the green transition. The question of whether the climate transition and social inclusion are actually incompatible is being increasingly discussed, especially since Europe-wide protests over measures like carbon tax and emissions reductions.

Path to acceptance

There is a path towards broad acceptance of the changes required by the transition, if they are properly explained, applied fairly and offer protection to the most economically-vulnerable parts of the population. "People need to feel that the transition is fair, that they are part of it and that it's affordable," stated Daniel Mes, Member of the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Climate Action.

Colin Scicluna, Head of Cabinet of the European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, said that while there is "no doubt about the need to green our continent, we also need to think about the costs attached, the implications attached, to make sure that the transition is just for everybody".

Beyond objective financial constraints, there can also be a feeling that European political elites pushing for the transition have a limited understanding of the realities on the

ground, suggested Ulrike Guerot, a political scientist and founder of the European Democracy Lab.

An inclusive transition

"It all seems to be about cities, smart cities, and basically the elites of this world who are all vegan now. No more meat, no more cars, just riding bicycles and having a smart time celebrating themselves because they are climate-neutral; but this is not the majority of people."

Such stereotypes need to be tackled decisively if the mobility transition is to gain wide support, recommended Jillian Van der Gaag, Senior Policy Advisor for the city of Amsterdam.

"It's important to listen and see what people need, especially people who can't afford to change," she said. An honest dialogue will help open a path towards broad acceptance of change, said Philippe Van Parijs, a Belgian philosopher and economist with a strong involvement in local non-governmental initiatives. "Policies become implementable because people understand what's going on, even if they don't fully agree," he said. "But they feel they have been consulted and at least some of their concerns have been taken into account."

Transport poverty

For Elisabeth Kotthaus, Head of the Unit "Social Aspects, Passenger Rights and Equal

Opportunities" at the EU Commission's Directorate-General Mobility and Transport, a key topic to be tackled is "transport poverty". "The EU is now focusing on defining the criteria for mobility that is "affordable, available and accessible", she said.

Pedagogy is required, according to Sebastien Bailleul, Director of Institutional and European Relations and Wimoov, a French association for inclusive mobility. "We work with people who are job seekers, who are on welfare, young people in suburbs, people who don't have any solutions," he said.

"We start with their realities. When we support people, we talk about ecological issues. By leading them to use public transport and other alternatives to the car, we allow them to make 31% energy savings and make money savings, because moving around by car costs a lot." More advantages of the transition need to be highlighted, according to Kotthaus. "What is missing sometimes is the positive communication on the benefits," she said.

"Acceptability is key. Otherwise, we have demonstrations and protests because people don't understand the policy." Barbara Stoll, Director of Clean Cities Campaign, told the Mobility Times: "We need to take care of the most vulnerable and the most exposed in our society, who are often the ones who bear the brunt of the cost of the transition."

2nd

Transport is the EU's second largest household expenditure item after housing.

Source: Eurostat



If we are on the side of people, of humans, and try to see their needs, we can have an impact.



Sebastien Bailleul

Director of Institutional and European Relations, Wimoov



Let's not sacrifice mobility, because mobility is freedom.



Antoine Grange

CEO Europe, Transdev

BRUSSELS INSPIRATIONS

Overheard at the Mobility Sphere Forum



Happier people tend to live in places that look better, feel better and are greener.



Barbara Stoll

Director, Clean Cities Campaign



We have to highlight and communicate the positive points of climate action while not shying away from discussing the challenges. That's how we remain credible.



Elisabeth Kotthaus

Head of Unit at the EU Commission's Directorate-General Mobility and Transport



Networks, transportation and mobility are very important for peace and unity.



Dominique Riquet

Former member of the EU Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism



We have played the first half of the European Green Deal and climate action and we have a state-of-the-art climate framework. Now we need to play the second half and bring citizens and companies along.



Daniel Mes

Member of the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Climate Action

"An intelligent mobility policy must, at the same time, be a policy of enjoyable immobility."

Philippe Van Parijs

Philosopher and Activist



If you're looking to start a new business, open a bike shop.



Elke Van den Brandt

Brussels Mobility Minister

"Are we making our communities happier, more alive, more integrated, innovative and dynamic? If we're not, then I really don't know what we're doing."

Violeta Bulc

Former EU commissioner for transport

INTERVIEW

François Gemenne

Member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Professor at HEC Paris and Sciences Po, and the Mobility Sphere's Scientific Advisor



It's about making people happier

How mobility can help change the conversation about the climate transition

We are living a difficult period for environmental policies and the ecological and climate transition. In Europe, especially after the recent European Parliament elections, the Green Deal is facing harsh criticism, sometimes outright attack. Some of its key elements are in jeopardy. Why? Because the Green Deal is often perceived as being unfair, a burden that is unequally distributed between different stakeholders.

Mobility as a vector for social cohesion

But in fact, public transportation and mobility can be a strong vector of social cohesion, and help us put the Green Deal back on track. It is clear that road transport is a leading source of emissions across Europe, and needs to be decarbonized. By developing public transportation, we can both decarbonize road transport and reinforce social cohesion. Our cities were built around the use of individual cars, but need to better integrate public transportation networks, bicycles and pedestrians, even if cars remain part of the equation. Public transportation brings people together, fostering a sense of doing this together, not just each person for themselves. This is especially important in peri-urban areas that often face both social and transport poverty issues. If we don't combine environmental issues and social cohesion issues, I'm afraid that we

will fail on both counts. By combining them intelligently, we can succeed in both.

The perception of climate action

We know today that some challenges related to cleaner and more inclusive transport should have been tackled years or decades ago. But we also realize that one reason why climate action often takes so long is that it is still widely perceived as a constraint, as a burden. We have insisted on the impacts of climate change that would materialize if we don't do anything. But we have probably not insisted enough on the benefits of action. We really need to reverse the way we communicate about climate action.

Emphasizing the benefits

Mobility, and public transportation in particular, is a great way to materialize these benefits, because we have seen that investment in public transportation and mobility schemes is also a way to make cities more enjoyable. Politics should be about making people happier, but very often we lose track of that objective. One of the reasons for the backlash against climate action is that people feel the constraint, the burden, the blood and the tears. But they don't see the victory. They don't see the benefits.

We absolutely need to insist on those benefits to make them visible. Perhaps the best way to do that is through mobility.



26% increase in European transport emissions since 1990.

Source: The State of European Transport 2024. Transport & Environment report.



44% potential European transport share of all emissions by 2030 with current Green Deal policies.

Living on the edge

Do we need to pay much more attention to peri-urban and rural areas if the transition to cleaner mobility solutions is to be successful? Discussions at the Mobility Sphere forum in Brussels gave new insights into the transportation challenges faced by peri-urban and rural areas. While lowering individual car use is necessary and welcome in the city, a similar approach in low population-density regions can only work if citizens there are given credible public transportation alternatives, some participants suggested.



13 million people in France don't have a choice, or think they don't have a choice, in their daily mobility.



Sebastien Bailleul

Director of Institutional and European Relations, Wimoov

Car dependency

"There are people who don't have a choice in their daily mobility," said Sebastien Bailleul, Director of Institutional and European Relations at Wimoov, a French association dedicated to inclusive mobility. "There is no public transport, so they are completely dependent on the car". The dependency on cars can be a big financial burden on lower-income households, with individual alternatives such as electric cars not an option for most: "The people that can buy an electric car are not the people that have to commute every day from a suburb to Leuven."

"It's a vicious circle. People live far from the center of cities; they don't have much money and they don't have solutions. They can't get around, so they can't get a job," Sébastien Bailleul added.

Factoring in local realities

The first step is to recognize that peri-urban and rural areas have different requirements from city centers. "More remote communities or rural communities are going to be impacted in a very different way from an urban setting," remarked Colin Scicluna, Head of Cabinet of the European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography. "That's why we need to have an approach that factors in the realities on the ground and doesn't make demands that are unreasonable".

One of these realities is often the absence of reliable, safe and frequent public transportation. Jakop Dalunde, a Swedish member of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, warned against urban-based policy makers ignoring this fact and taking a "morally superior stance" towards peri-urban and rural areas.

Jakop Dalunde grew up in the trendy Södermalm district in Stockholm. "I was always able to walk, bike or take the metro, so it's always been quite easy for me to be part of the green transition in a very natural way." But for many others "living more sustainably is more of a struggle," he said. "We need to be much less judgmental and much more focused on making sure that it's easy to use public transportation outside of the cities."

The price of change

It is "important to listen and see what people need to change," argued Jillian Van der Gaag, Senior Policy Advisor to the city of Amsterdam, especially for "people who cannot afford to change".

Whenever affordable and reliable public transport solutions are available, "people can quite easily live without a car in a rural setting," observed Scicluna. Good public transportation would also help lessen the impact of the financial gap between city dwellers and people living further away, according to Dominique Riquet, a transport specialist who recently retired from politics after a long career as a Member of the European Parliament. "If you are living in the center of Paris or London you are probably rich and not poor," Riquet remarked. "And if you are in a very peripheral area, you are probably poorer."

But if getting in and out of cities from the periphery were made easier "I would probably choose to live in a peripheral area", he added. "The more we solve the network question outside the main cities, the more we solve the problems of very big cities themselves."

Violeta Bulc, a former EU commissioner for transport, said policy makers should help develop what she called "smart" villages and rural areas, involving new jobs, green technologies and mobility solutions.



90 percent of suburban dwellers around the Belgian city of Leuven use their car to get into the city every day.



Tim Asperges

Leuven's Senior Advisor for Mobility

NETHERLANDS

Hop on the Buurtbus

The “Buurtbus”, Dutch for “neighborhood bus”, comes into play where regular buses won’t go because of low passenger numbers in sparsely populated areas. Born in the Netherlands, the concept involves running minibuses in cooperation between local authorities, an operator and volunteer drivers. The itinerary can vary according to the mobility needs on any given day. Transdev subsidiary BBA launched the first such service in the early 1980s. Seen as an integral part of the transportation system and the solidarity economy, hundreds of “Buurtbuses” are in operation in the Netherlands, and the idea has since been taken up in other countries.



FRANCE

Just ask: on-demand transportation

Where there is no dense transportation system, in less-populated areas outside urban centers, transportation on demand (TOD) comes into its own.

TOD solutions are offered in several countries, providing flexibility and freedom in daily mobility, and fostering social cohesion and development. In northern France, the Tadao network, operated by Transdev subsidiary Artois, offers highly-digitalized services in an area with 150 communities and 650,000 inhabitants. The aim of TOD is always to close gaps in existing transportation services, with maximum flexibility and digital ease. Success stories include PTFlex in the Netherlands, French city Le Havre’s 100-percent digital service for night owls and workers, and on-demand ferry services in Sydney Harbor.



European stories



+ 14 M passengers transported each year via Transdev Transportation on Demand services.

Source: Transdev Group

FRANCE

Red card for school bullies

Understanding the needs of young people is paramount when you operate bus services for students in schools, universities and study trips.

Experienced drivers, comfort and a high level of safety are key ingredients for successful school runs, which are essential in certain areas to ensure young people can access education.

Transdev takes 700,000 children to and from school every day in France alone. In 2023, it signed a partnership with ADN Kids, a charity that teaches children how to deal with conflict, to dare to speak up, stand up for themselves and help each other. ADN Kids’ method and insights have proved to be a valuable tool for school bus teams who accompany children every day.

Nearly 2 M students take school transportation services every day in France.

Source: Fédération nationale de transports de voyageurs (FNTV), 2022.



PORTUGAL

Just say yes

SIM, which means “Yes” in Portuguese, is a transportation offer in sparsely-populated, often low-income areas far from urban centres with no or little existing public transport, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and accessible subscription options. Among its offers is SIM-5 Dias, which runs a bus or minibus service from five communities to the municipal center, each on a different workday of the week. SIM can be upscaled according to population size, and combined with other services such as on-demand transportation. Transdev Portugal has been running these services since 2017.



ENGLAND

Boosting independence

In Harrogate, England, free bus travel is offered for people with disabilities to encourage them to use public transportation and boost their independence.

The Harrogate Bus Company, a Transdev subsidiary, teamed up with the Guide Dogs charity organization to work with visually impaired people, to help make travel easier. Amy, 16, and Sam, 26, joined a special training session to practice boarding a bus, using a ticket, making a journey and alighting to complete the trip. A group of special-needs students at Harrogate’s Personalized Learning College were also given free passes to help boost their confidence in using public transport.





FORESIGHT

Come together, right now

Why mobility is crucial for social cohesion

Maintaining social cohesion is a major challenge for policy makers who should give mobility a central role in solutions for increasingly fragmented societies in Europe and beyond. “We know that today societies are more divided than ever,” said Barbara Stoll, Director at the Clean Cities Campaign. “Urban mobility has a huge impact on human happiness and how humans come together.”

Shaping citizens’ well-being

“There’s a big leap from where we are to where we need to get to,” according to Stoll. “City leaders have a responsibility here because we know that whatever way we design our cities and with whatever opportunities we give citizens to move around, we can actually shape their well-being, their happiness and social cohesion.”

Stoll said there were many ways to bring “the most marginalized” parts of the population on this journey. “It’s absolutely paramount that we take care of those that breathe the worst air because they live in the most polluted places,

beside the worst roads, the most congested roads.”

Elke Van den Brandt, the Mobility Minister for the city of Brussels, said policy makers needed to create more public spaces “in which people feel welcome, in which they feel safe and which are healthy”.

While this approach represented a paradigm shift for many mobility experts, it was necessary to take the leap, she said. “Social inclusion doesn’t happen by itself.”

An inclusive transition

Several government initiatives have been implemented aimed at inclusion in the mobility transition. For example, a French government leasing scheme to allow poorer families access to electric vehicles at affordable prices. The program was oversubscribed within weeks of being launched early this year, and paused after 50,000 agreements were signed.

The government said it may renew the scheme in 2025. “There is progress at the political level,” said Sebastien Bailleul, Director of Institutional and European Relations at Wimoov, an association for inclusive mobility.

IN FIGURES

● **13 M** people in France face mobility poverty

Wimoov’s daily mobility barometer analyses criteria around people’s lack of access to transportation in their daily lives and their car dependency.

● **100 K** people are accompanied by inclusive mobility organizations in France each year.

Source: Wimoov daily mobility barometer.



Mobility as a right

A mobility framework law in France, for example, for the first time stated in 2020 that “mobility is a right for everybody”, he told the Mobility Times.

Isabel Garcia Munoz, a European Parliament deputy, said she too believed that “mobility has to be a universal right, one that is a crucial precursor for the access to other basic rights, such as housing, work, education and health”. Garcia Munoz said there is a “conditionality” between efficient transport and well-planned infrastructure. “Without them, social cohesion simply doesn’t exist,” she said.

“We should invest in public transportation, improve the quality and the frequency of services, and engage citizens in using more sustainable transport solutions,” she said. Authorities should also introduce “cohesion proofing” into all transport policy decisions.

Successful grassroots action

Meanwhile, the process can also go “in the other direction”, where grassroots action for social cohesion fosters better mobility, remarked philosopher, economist and activist Philippe Van Parijs.

“I spent literally hundreds of hours on two initiatives that ended up being successful and that are closely related to mobility,” Brussels-based Van Parijs told the Mobility Times.

One was the transformation of a five-lane motorway running through the European quarter in Brussels to make more space for cyclists and pedestrians, and the other an invitation to a movement of “civil disobedience” by organizing picnics on the busy urban motorway that used to cross the centre of Brussels, which resulted eventually in its being pedestrianised. “It took a lot of lobbying, a lot of persistence with a group of young people supporting it and some courage on the part of the people in power,” Van Parijs said. “We had to persist, but in the end we got it.”



● **2.4%** of all people in the EU and **5.8%** of those at risk of poverty could not afford to use public transport regularly, according to the latest available data.*

In addition to cost, access to transport depends on other factors, including the quality and frequency of services, the state of the infrastructure and accessibility (both digital and physical).

***Source:** Access to essential services: key challenges for the most vulnerable. European Commission report, 2023.



Barbara Stoll
Clean Cities Campaign Director

How to catalyze the shift to sustainable urban mobility?

Barbara Stoll, Clean Cities Campaign Director, lists her 4 pillars for change:

- 1 **Reallocation of public space:** from cars to people, in order for communities to thrive.
- 2 **More active mobility:** enabling conditions and infrastructure for people to walk, cycle and scoot more.
- 3 **Promotion and investment in public and shared transport:** an accessible and affordable network should be the backbone of all cities.
- 4 **Use of electric vehicles for all other trips:** these ideally should be shared and small.



BENEFITS

Strategies and governance to achieve inclusive mobility and social cohesion

The European Union's institutions have a key role to play in moving the bloc's national governments, regions, cities and local authorities towards a common strategy for sustainable and inclusive mobility. The Green Deal, the EU's roadmap towards climate neutrality by 2050 – which has come under much criticism since its 2020 launch – needs a fresh push for support across member states who should do more to promote acceptance, some Mobility Sphere Forum participants recommended.

“When you want climate change politics to have popular support, you need to show the benefits.”



Jakop Dalunde

Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism

The participants advised that the European Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility needs a stronger emphasis on sustainable public transportation solutions, which now appear as a crucial ingredient for any strategy to counter recent skepticism triggered by social and cost-of-living crises across the bloc.

Show the benefits

“When you want climate change politics to have popular support, you need to show the benefits,” recommended Jakob Dalunde, Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism. Many such solutions – accessible, inclusive and affordable – are ready to be deployed, and policy makers should do more to highlight the advantages, including financial, of switching to cleaner modes of transport. In this context, fostering a sense of common purpose across EU member

countries when it comes to mobility is a winning strategy, said Dominique Riquet, a long-standing member of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism, who recently announced his departure from politics.

Seemingly technical issues like the standardization of electrification or speed limits could be turned into “unification tools” Riquet advised. “You will create the same culture around transportation and you explain that it's in the common interest,” he said, adding that building “trust” in the mobility project is paramount.

Dialogue and change

There have been some remarkable success stories of patient and honest dialogue bringing about change. One example is a congestion charge scheme in Stockholm, Jakob Dalunde's home town, which had almost no political or popular support when it was trialed in 2006.



But after seven months of testing and consultation, the congestion charge was approved by referendum, leading to a substantial reduction in car traffic since.

“Here is a great example where we managed to introduce a system that reduces climate change or reduces climate impact by showing the benefits – less pollution and less congestion – rather than focusing on the guilt,” Dalunde summed up the strategy for acceptance.

Elisabeth Kotthaus, Head of the Unit “Social Aspects, Passenger Rights and Equal Opportunities” at the EU Commission's Directorate-General Mobility and Transport urged a new approach to meet recent social cohesion challenges.

“We have to design our policies in a different way by considering different user groups. How do we organize this transition? If people lose their jobs, can they find something else? Are they re-skilled or up-skilled? Do we see new jobs in transport that we can come up with? That are maybe less stressful?” she said.

Impacting decision-making

“Citizens need to feel that the space between elections is one that is welcoming to them,” observed Colin Scicluna, Head of Cabinet of the European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography. “It's one where they can participate, where they can contribute to policy-making and have a determining impact also on how the decision-making works out.”

Daniel Mes, Member of the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Climate Action, suggested that much could be done to harness the climate cooperation between European cities for joint purchases of zero-emission vehicles such as buses, to make them more affordable. A quarter of new buses sold in the European Union's single market are already zero-emission, he gave as an example – “way ahead of other segments” – and more needed to be done to allow European manufacturers to compete with non-EU rivals. “It will be a political priority to make sure that our European bus makers have a role to play in this transition and have a fair share of these economic opportunities,” Mes said.



“It will be a political priority to make sure that our European bus makers have a role to play in this transition and have a fair share of these economic opportunities.”



Daniel Mes

Member of the Cabinet of the European Commissioner for Climate Action





ECOLOGY & SOLIDARITY

JOINING FORCES

A key part of civil society, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) focussing on social welfare aspects of policy have major contributions to make to the debate about the future of mobility. The Mobility Times asked three NGOs how they think Europe can move towards decarbonization goals in transportation while leaving no socially and economically-vulnerable parts of the population behind.

A LITTLE COURAGE



Arnaud Potel
Member
Pour Un Réveil Écologique

How can mobility contribute to social cohesion?

The dominant doctrine today is that we need a transfer away from the massively used individual vehicle towards public transportation. For that to work, we need to develop the notion of acceptability of ecology. You have plenty of environmentalists calling for ecological measures, but often they are unacceptable socially. There can be a lack of pedagogy in this area.

Is public transport attractive enough?

Many people don't use public transport, and it's not necessarily a question of ticket prices. It's about solutions. But even where solutions exist, there is a mental effort involved in using them.

In some European countries, you can take public transport by just swiping your credit card. This system is in place in French cities like Marseille, Dijon and Lyon, and in Brussels, it's even cheaper than physical tickets. But in Paris, for example, you have a plethora of different travel passes instead. It's as if they were trying to deter people from taking public transport. The real problem is this awful lack of readability. People don't understand what's

on offer, or where the timetables are. So they take their car.

What's an example of best practice?

We need to look more closely at congestion charges, especially very dense urban centers. You can't ban people from using cars, but there could be a charge, depending on income, and the size, type and age of the car. Some people find this scary, but it can be made acceptable if it's explained properly. It will require a little courage to implement.

Any message to local authorities?

Stop developing projects that are absurd. I'm not at all certain that the Paris project to build a dedicated rail link to Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle airport will help to decarbonize mobility when there already is a public transport link. A direct link for 25 euros will increase social segregation a little bit more. And you will encourage people who already take the plane a lot to take it even more. Instead we should be looking at how to decarbonize the huge part of mobility that is happening in peri-urban areas, and between peri-urban areas and the city center.

A SOCIALLY FAIR TRANSITION



Diane Strauss
Director, France
Transport and Environment (T&E)

What is your assessment of progress towards decarbonized transport?

We are at a crucial moment today. The EU's Green Deal is a positive development, but it was conceived without sufficient means, either financial and social, for implementation in a socially equitable way.

Politicians must decide whether to take it forward by adding a social component to its industrial component. And that is a very important dimension. But the political landscape has changed, and some want to go back on parts of the Green Deal.

How should the Green Deal evolve?

We need a new ecology approach that is built around a social contract. We're at a point where all regulation, all taxation is received as punitive. We need to organize the transition in a way that gives the most fragile and vulnerable parts of the population access to decarbonization solutions without them feeling that they are being punished.

An example?

Take electric cars. Low-income households cannot afford new electric vehicles, around 60 percent of which are bought by companies, and 40 percent by wealthy households. We need to ask companies, especially, to be at the forefront of electrification.

This is a social measure in two ways: firstly you don't put the burden of expensive new cars on low-income households. And secondly, after a few years there will be a second-hand market with affordable electric cars. If you add social leasing schemes into the mix, you can imagine the impact.

Will attitudes have to change?

We need to find a consensus to the effect that people and entities with more money contribute more to a socially fair transition. Lower-income households often don't have good alternatives to their private cars.

To succeed in the transition, they need mobility solutions that are affordable, safe and comfortable. If possible, they should be decarbonized, but even a non-electric regional transit bus is a better choice than the private car. And if you really need a car, try and have an electric one.



BIGGEST PROBLEM, BIGGEST SOLUTION



Benoît Thirion
Lawyer - expert
Terra Nova

What's the problem with transport?

Transport is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gasses, with a share of 30 percent of national emissions in France. Despite some progress, transport decarbonization is not a success story, because it is the only sector that has not reduced its emissions since the 1990s. The biggest share goes to road transportation which accounts for 80 percent of human travel, and 90 percent of freight.

So it should be a priority for decarbonization?

We're in a situation where the biggest problem also contains the biggest solution. Since transport is the biggest emitter of greenhouse gas, it has to see the biggest reductions. This will help the climate and air pollution, but also energy sovereignty because with more electrification we will import less fossil fuel, and economic sovereignty because hydrocarbon imports make up a big part of our deficits, and our purchasing power.

What are the obstacles?

The social aspect is very important. There is a risk that we create a two-speed society, with metropolises

decarbonizing with good public transport and good infrastructure, such as cycling paths, while peri-urban areas, where individual vehicles with combustion engines are still the only solution, would be cut off. And this splintering causes problems for people who have been unable to decarbonize because they have no alternatives.

What can be done?

Decarbonizing is expensive, and if we want lower-income populations to sign up, we need to help them. The main effort must go towards electrification. Even if we, say, doubled the share of rail transportation in the mix, the share of road transportation would still be more than 70 percent of the total. There needs to be help towards the acquisition of electric vehicles, but we also need more infrastructure, such as charging points for e-vehicles.

And public transportation?

We need more mass transit in non-urban areas, such as express transport on roads, which would include express buses and car sharing for longer, everyday trips. Trains, which are great mass transit vehicles, are not always available in some regions, especially outside of metropolitan areas.

A Maltese falcon for European democracy



Colin Scicluna

Head of Cabinet for the Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography

Colin Scicluna works for citizens' engagement at the European Commission, armed with an openness that owes much to his native Malta, the EU's smallest member with a fascinating history.

Colin Scicluna likes a challenge. As a student in 1980s Malta, he had a dream that his tiny home country,

population around 500,000, could one day join the European Union. Even though at the time it seemed that Malta would have stood a better chance of winning the European Football Cup than becoming part of the EU. "It looked unachievable because we had a government that was actually moving away from Europe," he told the Mobility Times. "But it was something I always aspired to." When the political tide changed, Scicluna joined a new foreign ministry department dedicated to future EU membership as a trainee. "I wanted to be part of it." A few years later, Malta's team dedicated to coordinating the entire negotiating effort for accession with the Chief Negotiator was just nine people, including Scicluna, who remembers with a chuckle that Poland, also seeking membership, had over 250 people doing the same job. "Now I appreciate that having been part of a small organization makes you so much more flexible and better at multitasking," he smiled.

Malta finally joined the EU on January 1, 2004, opening a wide horizon for Scicluna's diplomatic career that was to include Malta's mission to the UN in New York, heading the EU's Middle East and Mediterranean department and being his country's Ambassador to Austria and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Scicluna, 57, is now Head of Cabinet for the Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy and Demography, where he manages operational and strategic affairs. When that operation kicked off in 2019, Scicluna yet again found himself facing a huge task with limited means. "We had a mission letter, but no directorate general and no budget," he remembers.

Five years on, Scicluna feels that it's been a

worthwhile endeavor. "By focusing on people: studying the impacts of demographic change and by using deliberative processes of citizen engagement, I think we're starting to introduce a new way of doing policy." A "new way" that could be crucial in convincing citizens that the EU's flagship Green Deal – which has run into opposition across the bloc – is worth pursuing. "There are so many interlinked aspects to this discussion," he said. "You can't talk about the Green Deal without talking about transport, about mobility, about energy, about food, about demographic change." Scicluna believes that the EU can steer clear of any "one-size-fits-all" approach, admitting that decision makers may not always be successful in trying to explain complex issues to skeptical populations.

"Perhaps we need to give more visibility to the fact that there is a transition underway, and that it needs to be just and equitable, and to address the impact on ordinary people," he recommends. "We've seen that experts appreciate it when regular citizens bring in an angle that they themselves are not able to bring in."

Scicluna, a father of two who has made Brussels his home, believes that his Maltese origins prepared him well for the infinitely diverse challenges and patchwork of cultures that make up today's Europe. "Malta has benefited from a very turbulent and diverse history," he said, with every foreign influence leaving "something behind". Like what? "We drive on the other side of the road compared to the rest of the Mediterranean, we have afternoon coffee but we call it tea time, and we're probably the only southern Europeans who are punctual," he answered, with a broad smile.



Laurent Mazille

Public Affairs Director, Transdev

Everyday mobility must be a priority

How has the EU political landscape changed since the European Parliament elections and how do you expect the shift will affect progress towards more sustainable mobility?

Populist parties who rejected the Green Deal have emerged strengthened from the European elections. This highlights how social and territorial cohesion have been neglected in the Green Deal's implementation. The risk is that climate change accelerates and has an even greater impact on the purchasing power of Europeans, and even on their quality of life. There is a high price to pay for doing nothing in this domain. The EU cannot hope to make

progress on the basis of technology shifts and new regulation alone. The EU's Social Climate Fund and the Cohesion Fund must be targeted towards sustainable alternatives such as public transport to reconcile medium-term environmental targets – 55% fewer emissions by 2030 – and the preservation of Europeans' purchasing power in the short term.

Some say that the EU's Green Deal should be put on hold. Do you agree?

The Green Deal needs to keep its decarbonization objective but, if we want to avoid it being completely rejected, it needs budgetary mechanisms that take into account the necessary adaptation of territories and populations. Social cohesion is at the heart of mobility.

Since 2020, Transdev has urged a revision of the European mobility strategy to orient it towards everyday mobility which has the highest cost for European consumers and generates the most negative externalities.

What public transportation solutions can be implemented quickly and at a bearable cost?

Growing urbanization creates mobility needs that, in most cases, only individual cars can meet rapidly. It is therefore necessary to concentrate investment

and additional services on peri-urban and rural areas to limit the share of cars in transportation. There already are solutions, such as express buses that run on designated motorway lanes, allowing quick access to employment sites, while being less of a financial burden on passengers.

What message would you like to send to incoming Members of the European Parliament concerning sustainable mobility?

Europe faces economic challenges in terms of competition with China and the US, environmental challenges in terms of adaptation by companies and territories to climate change, and social challenges in terms of difficulties faced by lower-income households. These challenges can impact our democratic choices, as we've seen in the recent European elections. We must choose our priorities for the EU's next framework budget carefully. We have already won a revision of the TEN-T Trans-European Transport Network integrating the peripheries of urban centers. The European Parliament should now implement this revision. Everyday mobility, with its impact on our purchasing power and on our carbon footprint, must be a priority for this parliamentary term.