

BACKGROUND PAPER

A European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility

with a view to the consultative discussion to be held during the drafting phase of the opinion

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This document is not an initial outline for an opinion; its aim is to stimulate debate on the European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility and to contribute in this regard to identifying other issues that could be addressed in the opinion.

Summary:

The rapporteur welcomes the European Commission's Communication on a European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility and the initiatives outlined in it, which aim at supporting a rapid decarbonisation of transport and the creation of sustainable urban and rural mobility.

However, the rapporteur points out certain prerequisites for the successful implementation of the strategy. Among these it is important to underline the important role of local and regional authorities in creating and modifying transport systems and infrastructure networks, stimulating interoperability, encouraging local initiatives and technological progress, and in mitigating expected challenges in the labour market.

The European Union has a vital role to play in facilitating, where necessary, the allocation of funding through regional and cohesion policy to those local and regional investments that support the switch towards low-emission mobility, while also encouraging the private sector to participate in infrastructure investment with the support of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Furthermore, in order to address investment risks and to reduce market fragmentation, the setting of EU wide standards - with the full involvement of the regions - is indispensable to developing smart vehicles and intelligent transport systems and for providing the infrastructural basis for e-mobility.

General points:

The rapporteur is pleased to note that the European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility (hereafter "the strategy") fits well with the 2030 climate and energy framework adopted by the heads of state and government of the European Union, who met at the Council on 23-24 October 2014¹, and with the Paris Agreement adopted on 12 December 2015 at the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change².

¹ Conclusions of the European Council (23-24 October 2014). Brussels, 24 October 2014, EUCO 169/14.

² Paris COP21 agreement, 30 November-11 December 2015.

He endorses the strategy's objectives, which had already been set out in the 2011 White Paper³, namely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport, which are one of the main causes of air pollution in European cities, by at least 60 % compared to 1990.

He welcomes the fact that, in comparison with earlier proposals aimed at reducing transport emissions and promoting the use of alternative energies and urban mobility, the current strategy is a multi-disciplinary, comprehensive approach that includes taking up opportunities for development and technological innovation and covers not only the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but also innovations in the energy, infrastructure and digital sectors, industry competitiveness and the development of people's skills.

He nevertheless suggests that the relationship between the strategy and the more specific objectives and tasks set out in the 2011 White Paper should be clarified, along with the progress represented by the strategy in terms of the transport system's efficiency.

The following priorities could form the core of a review of the strategy:

1) Climate protection, greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme

The rapporteur acknowledges that the greenhouse gas emissions trading scheme (ETS), both inside and outside the EU, is one of the EU's main weapons in the fight against climate change and the transition to a low carbon economy.

He considers that post-2020, the EU ETS should be designed in such a way as to be an effective tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while increasing the competitiveness of European regions' industry, as the ETS and the new rules applying to non-ETS sectors will directly affect regional industrial and energy sectors.

2) The role of locally-produced, cheap energy in encouraging low-emission mobility

Stresses that the switch towards low-emission or even zero-emission mobility is expected to revolutionise transport in terms of networks and vehicles, as well as fuels. However, the prerequisite of such a breakthrough will be cheap, accessible energy, as in the case of the next most recent mobility transformation.

Stresses, however, that only locally – (even household-level) produced and stored energy can provide a fuel source that is sufficiently stable and inexpensive to accelerate the transition to low-emission mobility and overcome the difficulties caused by the competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis a mobility based on conventional fuels. Furthermore, energy storage which is decentralised yet integrated into the grid can overcome the mismatch between the frequently unpredictable energy supply from renewable sources and the cyclical demand of energy consumption characterised by periods of high and low demand.

Draws attention to the fact that local and regional authorities have a key role to play in stimulating local energy production as well as in the design, construction, management and maintenance of integrated and intelligent energy grids. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) should facilitate necessary investments through grants, primarily in the less developed and most lagging regions.

3) Investment

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White paper – Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system. Brussels, 28 March 2011, COM(2011) 144 final.

The rapporteur considers that the transition to low-carbon transport can be achieved primarily through regional and cohesion policy. In line with the 2014-2020 financial framework, the European Regional Development Fund and non-reimbursable aid remain of great importance in that they encourage Member States, regions, local authorities and municipalities to invest in renewable energy, smart grids and sustainable urban transport, as well as research and innovation in these areas.

The rapporteur welcomes the fact that innovation and the development of infrastructure are at the heart of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)'s objectives for incentivising investment, as they encourage the involvement of the private sector in funding transport and infrastructure. The EFSI can be put forward as an additional possibility, in combination with resources from the European Structural and Investment Funds.

The rapporteur supports the increase in resources for the Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation under the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, as well as the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), as the projects supported by these financial instruments contribute significantly to the decarbonisation of transport. By supporting the development of the energy sector, we are encouraging the introduction of alternative energy sources in transport, thus ensuring affordable “zero emissions” transport.

4) Transport policy paradigm shift

Recalls that individual motorised transportation has been systematically prioritised over public transport and active mobility in transport, city and land-use planning in many places across Europe. This evolution has significantly contributed to a number of severe challenges, notably climate change, air pollution, noise pollution, road safety concerns, congestion, low quality public spaces, land use segregation, and oil dependency within the transport sector.

Proposes, in order to address this challenge, a paradigm shift in transport and planning/land-use policies which would require a new sustainable travel hierarchy enabling the necessary integration of the different modes of transport firstly by prioritising incentives and measures to make active modes (walking and cycling) safer and more attractive; secondly by promoting public transport; and thirdly by developing car-sharing/pooling above the use of private individual cars.

Acknowledges that a paradigm shift in transport policy will require joint efforts at all levels of governance (local, regional, national, European and indeed, even global). Therefore calls for improved integration between planning levels, particularly local and regional, involving the active engagement of all actors in civil society, including business, NGOs, trade unions, academia, etc.⁴

5) Deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems

The rapporteur emphasises that the strategy's objectives for the shift towards low emission mobility can only be achieved by harnessing the potential of digital technologies. It will not be possible to optimise transportation or set up a multimodal trans-European transport network without intelligent transport systems, ecosystems and infrastructure. It is imperative that the regions are involved in implementing these systems.

He notes that information technologies play a crucial role in promoting mobility based on the combined use of all modes of transport for passengers and freight (e.g. electronic ticketing and toll systems, intermodal freight transport documents, electronic route planning, real-time delivery information).

4 An EU Roadmap for Cycling, Rapporteur: Mr Kevin Peel (UK/PES), CoR opinion on 12-10 October 2016 — COR-2016-01813-00-00-AC-TRA

He urges local and regional authorities to promote initiatives relating to the deployment of intelligent transport systems. He stresses that significant results can also be achieved in the short term with regard to cities by implementing the “smart city” concept .

He shares the Commission’s view on the need to introduce uniform technical standards and common technological standards, taking into account the needs of the different Member States, in order to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and develop the use of alternative fuels in the European Union; in this regard, particular attention should be paid to fostering interoperability between local systems and border regions.

He welcomes the European Commission package on standardisation⁵ and the Joint Initiative on Standardisation⁶, which will contribute to the development of intelligent transport and automotive systems. He points out that the standards laid down for infrastructure should be based on EU standards and in line with international standards.

6) *Connected and automated vehicles*

The rapporteur notes that the emergence of connected and automated vehicles using digital technology also offers many opportunities for tackling the negative effects of transport. He calls strongly for the measures on connected and automated driving to be implemented, in accordance with the Amsterdam Declaration⁷ adopted by EU transport ministers at their meeting on 14-15 April 2016.

He welcomes the work⁸ embarked upon by the Commission and its intention to adopt a Masterplan on this subject⁹, but notes that any further delay could result in Europe lagging behind its global competitors¹⁰.

In addition to the initiatives at EU and Member State level, the role of the regional dimension should also be highlighted; this is why European regions wish to be involved in establishing smart telecommunications and transport infrastructure, so as to ensure that connected and automated vehicles can be used efficiently and without hindrance along the corridors of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) that crosses the borders and territory of the Member States.

7) *Electromobility*

The rapporteur draws attention to the fact that, in the future, electromobility will be one of the driving forces for innovation and technological development. This could have immediate benefits and play a key role in reducing environmental impact.

Electric transportation and infrastructure for recharging electric vehicles could be put in place very quickly in urban areas and conurbations, and local authorities could be even more ambitious in

5 Standardisation package: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – European standards for the 21st century. Brussels, 1 June 2016, COM(2016) 358 final.

6 Joint Initiative on Standardisation under the Single Market Strategy.

7 Declaration of Amsterdam — Cooperation in the field of connected and automated driving, 14-15 April 2016.

8 Round table on connected and automated driving; High Level Group on the automotive industry (GEAR 2030); platform on Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems; C-ROADS platform.

9 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Digitising European Industry – Reaping the full benefits of a Digital Single Market. Brussels, 19 April 2016, COM(2016) 180 final.

10 Federal Automated Vehicles Policy – Accelerating the Next Revolution in Roadway Safety. US Department of Transportation, September 2016.

encouraging central governments in their endeavours. Moreover, the infrastructure for electric transportation needs to be constructed along the strategic routes that link the regions of Europe.

The rapporteur considers that in order to promote low-emission transport, local and regional authorities can, successfully and in their own way (e.g. parking spaces, use of bus lanes, procurement benefits, “green” registration plates, tariff reductions on tolls), influence consumer preferences and choices, encouraging them to opt for alternative fuel vehicles.

The installation of smart charging systems in buildings, which goes hand in hand with the more widespread use of electric vehicles, could help to ensure that the power grid remains flexible, insofar as the energy stored in batteries could be returned to the network.

The rapporteur points out that the Directive on deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure¹¹ has already set out the mandatory requirements regarding the use of electricity, natural gas and hydrogen to fuel vehicles. He considers it essential for regions to be fully involved in implementing the Member States’ plans, in particular as regards ensuring cross-border electric mobility that can overcome internal market fragmentation.

It should also be stressed that measures aimed at encouraging the introduction of electromobility should be restricted quantitatively or time-bound in order to ensure that the transition to electric mobility does not disrupt transport.

It is vital that charging stations are standardised, and the rapporteur therefore calls on the European Commission to support the development of standards encouraging the creation of electric recharging stations that are connected to existing facilities.

He draws attention to the fact that public transport is increasingly gaining ground on private cars, and believes that the transition towards electromobility can be accelerated by prioritising the manufacture and use of electric buses and trams, and thus reducing the carbon dioxide emissions from buses.

He points out that power grids, electricity storage and trade and the management of public lighting infrastructure will all need to be overhauled, along with transport rules and vehicle taxation, if the use of electric vehicles is to become more widespread.

8) Alternative fuels and biofuels

The rapporteur stresses that the alternative fuels and biofuels that are currently available will make it possible to replace conventional diesel- or petrol-powered vehicles, particularly for urban and suburban transport, and that the wide-scale use of these fuels will reduce demand for conventional energy sources, thereby enhancing energy security.

Regarding guaranteed independence from oil and the diversification of alternative fuels, it is important to take specific national, regional and local situations into account, as well as the different raw materials available locally.

He notes that the total energy balance, including the energy consumption involved in fuel production, should be taken into account when regulating the use of alternative fuels from renewable resources.

9) Measurement of emissions in real driving conditions, type-approval

The rapporteur welcomes the change to the arrangements for measuring and verifying emissions of harmful substances from vehicles (as mentioned in the strategy) with the aim of ensuring that the

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Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure.

environmental performance of vehicles is transparent and reliable. This will facilitate the implementation of limit values for air pollutant emissions and increase consumer confidence.

He noted that the views of manufacturers should also be taken into account when establishing a measurement system for emissions in real driving conditions with the aim of resolving the issue of atmospheric pollution, as they need enough time to make the necessary changes. A solution needs to be found that, in a predictable legal environment, will not penalise the automotive industry, jeopardise production capacity or (as a result) endanger jobs.

The rapporteur supports the drafting of new guidelines on vehicle labelling, as this will help to avoid misleading consumers by clarifying the rules on how values measured via the new Worldwide Harmonised Light Vehicles Test Procedures (WLTP) and the old procedure (New European Driving Cycle – NEDC) should be displayed. The consumer should be clearly informed, and it may be necessary with this in mind to amend not only the guidelines but also the Directive on labelling¹², so as to distinguish between the results of the NEDC and the WLTP measurements.

He stresses that when defining emission limit values for passenger cars and light commercial vehicles, which will be put in place after 2020, it is important to take into account the competitiveness of the European automotive industry and not to jeopardise economic growth and employment.

10) Rail, river, maritime and air transport

In order to make transport and logistics “zero emissions” in practice in cities, rail, maritime and river transport should be coordinated and multimodality should be encouraged, as the modal shift from road transport in particular represents progress with regard to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

As regards the maritime and air transport sectors, the rapporteur is in favour of the EU continuing to cooperate effectively on the implementation of initiatives aimed at reducing emissions from maritime and air transport set up within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation.

11) Skills, dual vocational training

The rapporteur recognises that the transition to a low carbon economy and the diffusion of new technologies significantly increase the challenges for the labour market, and therefore considers it a priority to ensure that the population and the workforce are re-trained for new jobs. This is due to the fact that, despite high unemployment rates, there is a shortage of staff in many important areas related to the transport sector, in particular as regards the availability of digital literacy.

He stresses the importance of putting in place dual training systems, and therefore proposes an intensive exchange of information between all Member States on successful practices in terms of cooperation between vocational education and training systems and businesses, so that all regions can benefit from them.

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Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – Review of Directive 2010/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by energy-related products. Brussels, 15 July 2015, COM(2015) 345 final.