

**Keynote address of Anne Houtman  
Cities for Mobility World Congress  
Stuttgart, Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2009, 9:30**

Dear Mayor Schuster,  
Ladies and Gentleman,

It a great pleasure for me to be in Stuttgart today and to be able to attend this year's World Congress of the Cities for Mobility network. I would like to thank Mayor Schuster for his kind invitation which allows me to speak to you today about the European Commission's activities in the field of urban transport.

Today's event brings together several hundred political representatives and practitioners in the field of urban mobility from towns and cities not only in Europe but from across the world. Many of you have travelled very far to attend this third edition of the World Congress. This illustrates well the importance that we all attach to the issue at hand - urban mobility. Meeting here today also underlines the importance we attach to working together and to sharing our experiences, so that we will be able to address successfully the urban mobility challenges before us.

The importance of transport should not be underestimated. A well-functioning transport system is at the heart of our social and economic

life. It forms the basis for economic growth and competitiveness. A highly accessible transport system is a prerequisite to form a strong community and to avoid social exclusion.

Today, we are facing a particularly challenging situation. In a time of financial and economic turmoil, we have to maintain a well-functioning transport system and provide mobility for all citizens and businesses. At the same time, we are called upon to reduce the negative impacts of our transport systems on the climate and the environment.

Transport today accounts for almost one third of Europe's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and one third of our energy consumption. At the same time it has remained the one sector in which we have not been able to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the past years. On the contrary! CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport have gone up over 30% since 1990. At the same time, transport remains almost 100% dependent on oil and accounts today for 73% of all oil consumed in the EU.

Incremental improvements will not be enough to make sure that we will one day be able to fulfil our energy needs in the transport sector from other sources than oil. We will need to diversify the energy carriers used in transport and to substitute oil as the principle source of energy.

Up to 40% of Europe energy consumption in road transport can be attributed to the transport in urban areas. The commitment of local and regional authorities will be essential. It is clear that the challenges we are facing today can only be addressed successfully through decisive action also at the local level.

Many remarkable developments have already taken place. Through the Research Framework Programmes, the European Commission has actively supported research and demonstration projects, which helped to increase the energy efficiency of vehicles, to develop new technologies and to advance the use of alternative motor fuels.

To give you one example: Within the EU-funded demonstration projects Hyfleet:Cute and Cute (a project in which the city Stuttgart participated at the time) hydrogen-powered buses have travelled well over 2,400,000 km. This has been an important step in bringing this innovative technology to maturity.

Developing novel technologies, however, is just the beginning. Only when we achieve a broad and timely market introduction of these new technologies, will we be able to reach our goals. In this regard, you, the towns and cities, play a crucial role. In Europe, local and regional public authorities account for some 70% of public procurement expenditures. Public authorities can and should help provide early markets for the introduction of cleaner and more energy-efficient technologies.

In the EU, a framework for this has been recently created when the European Parliament and Council adopted a new Directive on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient vehicles. With this Directive, energy consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollutant emissions will become essential criteria for the purchase decisions on public transport vehicles. This will strengthen the competitiveness of clean and energy efficient vehicles and accelerate their market introduction in the EU.

At the same time, considerable transport-related problems that cities face will not be solved through the introduction of more energy-efficient technologies or by the increased use of alternative motor fuels alone. In many cases, towns and cities will need to find distinctly new ways of looking at and addressing urban mobility issues.

Cities in Europe and cities worldwide face similar problems and challenges, such as demographic change, volatile energy prices and a steady growth in mobility demand, which cause an increase in congestion and in the emission of pollutants and noise. Thus it is not surprising that cities will often select from the same wide range of solutions – from the same "tool box" –urban mobility measures that fit their needs and that will help them to make transport cleaner and more sustainable.

Public authorities at all levels, local, regional, national, and, in Europe, of course, at the EU-level, will need to do their part – by supporting the development of proven solutions and their implementation, by facilitating the exchange of experience and good practise, and by providing a favourable framework for change towards cleaner, more sustainable transport systems.

With the Civitas Initiative, the European Commission has provided since 2002 a total of 180 million € to 58 cities across Europe to implement and evaluate integrated sets of innovative measures in the field of urban mobility and to share their experience – for the benefit not only of the participating cities but of towns and cities across Europe and beyond.

In many regions in Europe, considerable financial support for the modernisation of urban transport infrastructure and rolling stock is accessible to towns and cities through the EU's structural funds. The promotion of clean and sustainable public transport, particularly in urban areas, is included explicitly in one of the thematic priorities for the European Regional Development Fund.

In Europe, new impetus was given to the discussion on urban mobility with the publication of the Commission's Green Paper 'Towards a new culture for urban mobility' in September 2007. This paper launched a wide debate on the key issues of urban mobility, such as free-flowing and greener towns and cities, smarter urban mobility, and transport that is accessible, safe, and secure for all citizens.

The stakeholder consultation that followed the Green Paper's publication helped to identify a number of specific areas in which action at the EU-level will offer clear added value.

As a consequence, a number of activities were launched by the Commission this year:

- 5 million euro have recently been made available for a number of new pilot projects related to urban mobility. These pilot projects will be developed in some of the identified priority areas, such as cycling and walking; freight transport; or green zones.
- To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clean Vehicles Directive, which I referred to earlier, we have now launched a dedicated internet site. It will provide information and guidance for green public procurement and support lifetime calculations as well as joint procurement.
- Earlier this year, we have launched an internet site to provide information on EU urban mobility related legislation. It should develop as a reference point for finding information on Community action and financial support in the field of urban mobility.
- We have launched a study to explore the opportunities for making public transport systems more inter-operable, including better information and smart ticketing.

- We have launched another study on 'green zones'. The results of this study should help cities to identify solutions that suit their needs and strengthen environmental protection, while ensuring at the same time, freedom of movement in a non-discriminatory way for all citizens in the Union.

Before the end of the year, the European Commission intends to publish a European Action Plan on urban mobility. The Action Plan will give a coherent strategic framework for EU initiatives in the area of urban mobility. It will present short- and medium-term actions which we foresee to launch over the next few years and which will build on our activities in the area of urban mobility over the last decades

The Cities for Mobility network itself is witness to the important facilitating role that the European Union can play to help towns and cities move towards cleaner and more sustainable transport – not only in Europe but also beyond. Based on a European-Latin American City Network which received funding from the European Commission until 2003, Cities for Mobility is now self-sustained. It has expanded and prospered, (and, on this occasion I would like to congratulate the City of Stuttgart and all the other cities active in the network for this achievement.)

While I had been invited today to give you a short and rather general overview of the activities of the European Commission in the field of urban mobility, let me finish with some words on the theme of this year's world congress: “Socially inclusive mobility – Access for all”.

Only citizens who are in a position to move freely to and within our towns and cities will be able to participate fully in the social, cultural or economic life. A high level of social cohesion and inclusion can only be achieved where at least the basic mobility needs of all our citizens can be satisfied. Urban transport systems must thus be accessible to all, including in particular those who do not own or want to use a private car. People with reduced mobility and disabled people, families with children, as well as elderly people: they all should have easy access to urban transport infrastructure and services.

In our Green Paper "Towards a new Culture in Urban Mobility", we made it clear that urban mobility must be socially inclusive. We pointed to a number of areas where change and new developments could make urban transport systems more accessible:

- Through collective transport systems that are affordable, accessible for all, and of high quality;

- Through an appropriate legal framework, which allows, for instance, competent authorities to impose social tariffs or to define public service obligations in order to guarantee services of general interest;
- Through the development of innovative new solutions and the better training of staff;
- Or through a balanced coordination of land use and an integrated approach to urban mobility.

Socially inclusive mobility with access for all is a topic of concern for us all. I am therefore looking forward with great interest to the presentations and discussions which we will have on the topic during this World Congress. I am confident that we will all be able to take home with us valuable new insights and fresh ideas.

Thank you for your attention.