

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Recommendation 287 (2010)¹ **Intra-regional transport: a challenge for sustainable development and territorial cohesion**

1. In recent decades Europe's regions have undergone major transformations linked to economic globalisation, population trends and lifestyle changes. These transformations have significant impacts on the physical distribution of populations, on the land use and zoning, and also on the organisation of public and private services. Moreover, these alterations cause an exponential growth in mobility flows.

2. The limitation of fossil fuel resources and the rise in fuel prices, together with the need to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, raise new challenges. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is concerned about the increase in these emissions, principally connected with the growing use of personal motor transport and the large expansion of goods transported by road.

3. Mobility and its related policies have become a major issue in the quality of life and the economic and social development of our societies. An effective network of transport infrastructures is needed to ensure the proper functioning of the economy and the development of a region. It enables the free movement of goods, services and people, and ensures the mobility crucial to labour, education and leisure.

4. The Congress is convinced of the obligation to rethink transport policies and of the necessary transition to a low-carbon mobility. Indeed, the inevitable rise in the price of fuel causes severe economic and social vulnerability linked with dependence on road transport which, in Europe, remains the principal means of carrying both passengers and goods.

5. Although the majority of Europeans live in urban areas, very special attention should still be paid to the outskirts of these urban areas as well as to rural areas where a coherent standard of service provision, which meets the legitimate needs of the population, has to be guaranteed.

6. The Congress calls for a new culture of mobility giving pride of place to sustainable modes of transport with greater emphasis on social and regional cohesion, hence on the more vulnerable users.

7. Since responsibilities in respect of transport are shared among the various levels of governance, the stimulus can be local, regional or national, and, moreover, public or private. None the less, the Congress is convinced of the dominant role that the regions should play in order to achieve high coherence of action and balanced regional development.

8. A sustainable intra-regional transport policy needs to limit traffic congestion, improve road safety, reduce levels of noise and air pollution and provide a better sharing of the road. It must also propose methods of rapid transportation at a reasonable cost to users and encourage greater interaction between urban and regional public transport.

9. Transport and spatial planning are the two facets of mobility. Good integration of transport issues into town and country planning decisions will result in a reduction of transport volume and a better response to the needs of the population.

10. The Congress reiterates the imperative need for a renewed public policy for sustainable transport that is both multimodal and integrated. This policy must promote soft modes and innovative solutions as alternatives to the individual car, such as car sharing, bus-on-demand and modern systems for hiring bicycles, whose potential could be exploited.

11. In this regard, it stresses the important, but largely underestimated, role of non-motorised modes which should be naturally grafted on to other modes of transport. In many regions of Europe they represent over one third of citizens' entire daily travel. Walking and cycling should be encouraged as they are more accessible and cheaper, as well as the most environmentally friendly and healthy modes of transport.

12. Where motor vehicles are concerned, European and national legislation require strengthening so that these vehicles comply with the highest standards of emissions. It will also be expedient to hasten the development of low carbon vehicles and to promote their distribution, particularly in public administrations and companies, as well as integrating them into new mobility solutions.

13. The transport sector also has social and cultural aspects which should not be overlooked. The image of certain modes of transport plays an important part in their development. Public opinion could be won over by offering a quality multimodal service.

14. The Congress welcomes the fact that the European Commission, within the framework of its plan to combat climate change, is taking more interest in sustainable transport, and stresses that these efforts need to be increased if a significant reduction in the proportion and volume of carbon dioxide emissions in this sector is to be achieved.

15. Consequently, the Congress asks the Committee of Ministers to invite the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning (CEMAT) to:

a. continue its reflection on better links between transport and spatial planning policies for sustainable development and greater regional cohesion;

b. include concrete proposals for solutions to the new challenges that face territories in a globalised world in the declaration from the next ministerial conference (Moscow, 8-9 July 2010).

16. The Congress invites the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to encourage the member states to:

a. recognise the appropriateness of the regional level for building a concerted, future-oriented vision as regards intra-regional transport;

b. develop, in co-operation with the regions, a new transport policy combining spatial and temporal approaches with the new patterns of mobility;

c. foster and support a coherent development of collective transport on a national scale through long-term investment and commitment;

d. support experimentation and ensure systematic evaluation of experiences with innovative transport, in order to make them widely available.

17. The Congress also asks the Committee of Ministers to invite the European Commission to give stronger support to the initiatives taken at the local and regional level for sustainable transport by means of demonstration programmes similar to the CIVITAS initiative for cleaner urban transport.

18. The Congress invites the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to continue its work on the emerging challenges of sustainable development and territorial cohesion.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 18 March 2010 and adopted by the Congress on 19 March 2010, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPR(18)4, explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: A. Banaszak, Poland (R, NR).