

Societal and economic mega trends

an opportunity for public transport

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Public transport is currently going through a crucial phase in its evolution. On the one hand, the urban and regional mobility market is undergoing a period of strong growth accompanied by public opinion that is ever more concerned by the environment, quality of life and security. On the other hand public transport receives insufficient political support and has to find alone the resources needed to win shares of a market that is made up of increasingly savvy consumers. Public transport of tomorrow must assert itself not only as the only solution to the traffic problems that paralyse our towns but also show that citizens, businesses, and the environment alike stand to gain.

The world is undergoing immense changes in both land use planning and in demographical, economic, social, and technological terms, the consequences of which will be clearly reflected in society and economic sectors. Urban sprawl will increase, with towns growing in number and size. Demographic changes will manifest themselves through the ageing of the population in the Northern hemisphere whilst the population in developing countries will remain very young. Allowing for regional inequalities, people will live better throughout the planet as a whole and the spending power of households will increase, offering greater mobility possibilities and making access to cars more democratic. This will be accompanied by behavioural and lifestyle changes, translated into flexible working hours, a new pace of life in cities (e.g. nocturnal mobility), or more time devoted to entertainment and shopping, etc. New information and communication technologies will develop a pace and gradually become indispensable parts of daily life. On another level, security and safety issues will become a concern for the public, local environments will worsen, and on a planetary scale, the negative effect of unchecked human and industrial behaviour will be seen in climate change. The economy will become truly global - the movement of capital, goods,

services and people will explode. Private initiative will expand and the market economy model will be adopted virtually everywhere. Fossil fuels will become scarce, prices will rise and the end of the crude oil era will approach. Factors such as those listed above will influence all sectors of the economy, public transport included.

Unlike one might imagine however, these changes do not constitute a threat to public transport. Quite the contrary, they represent a unique opportunity for public transport to create from these societal and economic mega trends over which it has no influence, a maximum of opportunities to develop and win the political support it so sorely needs. It is certainly no mean feat but if the key players - public authorities, operators, manufacturers - wake up to the opportunity on offer and accept to work in partnership with the prime objective of satisfying the citizen-client, the sector will emerge as the winner and market shares will follow. To do this, our sector, above and beyond realising this opportunity, needs a clear and ambitious strategic vision for the 15 years to come. To join in this debate, UITP launched a study 18 months ago to analyse the main socio-economic trends that have an impact on the public transport sector and define a strategic vision and action plan for the year 2020. This study, with input from UITP's committees and commissions, will form the point of departure for the Rome Congress. Specifically, it will attempt to answer the following question: What action can the different actors in the sector take both on an individual level and in partnership with others to anticipate or respond to these trends? For example, how should the liberalisation of the economy and its consequences be seen, or the opening up of the public transport market; as a chance to enhance passenger service through more efficient management and business-mindedness - elements still lacking in a large number of networks? And in this case, what institutional framework needs to be defined to oversee this process? Another question is the possibility of taking advantage of the hike in crude oil prices to call for a redistribution of government tax revenue in favour of public transport, an energy-efficient mode. Further food for thought will be how to integrate technological progress to better meet clients' needs in developing demand-responsive transport or promoting automated metros and thereby reducing operating costs. These are some examples of the different Congress sessions where the contribution of each actor to the strategic vision will be discussed.



Ideological considerations have all too often put the brakes on the expansion of public transport, causing passions to run high and making decision-makers, operators, suppliers, workers' unions, and other actors forget the overriding aim of public transport, which is to meet citizens' needs in travelling to work, essential services, leisure activities and meeting up with others. Whether the service is provided by a private or public operator, using metro or bus, paid with a paper ticket or smart card, is not an end in itself. These are merely means to be defined and implemented with the aim of preserving public monies, meeting sociopolitical objectives as defined by the authorities, and citizens' expectations all within a framework allowing room for entrepreneurial spirit and risk taking. An approach of this kind, oriented towards complementary objectives, heads in the direction of sustainable development and its three economic, social and environmental pillars. This idea is embodied in the slogan for the Rome Congress which focuses on these three pillars, their complementarity and the need to ensure the link between people, business and the environment. It is the sine qua non for public transport in 2020 to be the option of choice of politicians and their electorate. For this to happen, professionals in the sector must first demonstrate public transport's plus points and added value from each of the three angles, in particular to attract investors and cement popular and political support. Institutional communication will need to be reinforced following the example

of key industrial sectors of the economy and considered as a long-term investment. If ever there were a sector whose legitimate contribution to sustainable development no one can call into question, it is surely public transport. But paradoxically it is the sector that makes the least noise compared with other industries whose contribution to environmental damage is undeniable. This situation must be urgently remedied, all the more so since we have nothing to reproach ourselves with.

Furthermore, external communication must also raise awareness that the revival in public transport can only come from within the sector itself. Adopting modern management methods, integrating new technologies to reduce operating costs and improve efficiency, instilling new relations with employees as well as employee-client relations, redefining relations between authorities and operators, diversifying transport supply, evolving towards the role of service supplier (and not confined to the function of transporter), making the most of opportunities offered by globalisation and access to new markets, etc. are also actions that public transport actors must begin to put in place to prepare, starting today, the public transport of tomorrow. To grow up, once and for all, from an assisted, adolescent public transport, that is hesitant and shivery into an adult transport public that takes itself in hand and asserts itself.

Rendez-vous in Rome to discuss these issues together.

Focus on the organising authorities Missions and roles of public transport actors

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UITP's World Congress in Rome will mark an important milestone for the Organising Authorities Committee. For the first time, the Committee is holding a Congress session dedicated to the missions and role of public transport actors.

Globalisation, liberalisation, regulation, restructuring, budget restrictions, use of contract... The urban and regional public transport industry, just like other sectors of activity, is subject to upheavals that have a considerable impact on its organisation. In such a changing context, it is not always easy to have a clear view of the missions and role of the main actors, and to understand the division of responsibilities and tasks.

This issue is all the more complex since it is linked to market organisation, which is the result of national traditions, history and legal and administrative customs. Operators and authorities are considered the main players in the organisation and supply of public transport services, but they can vary greatly in nature and role according to a particular time and country.

Given this context, the Organising Authorities Committee decided to conduct a survey amongst its members to analyse the structure and role of authorities. The outcome is summarised in the report *A market in motion*, designed to serve as a tool for improving knowledge and understanding of the different types of organising authorities, their composition, responsibilities and relationships with the operators.

The aim of the public authorities is clear: more and better public transport for less money. Public transport however is not an end in itself but a means of serving the general good. In responding to the mobility needs of the population in a sustainable manner, public authorities also have to take into account the interests of other