

TRANSPORT SUFFICIENCY: TOWARDS A NEW SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY CULTURE

CIPRA Position on the mobility of goods and people in the Alps

CIPRA DEMANDS

Making transport sustainable is a common challenge for all Alpine countries. Therefore, a common approach to decision-making is needed in order to distribute the transport flows among all countries and to consider effects of infrastructure and policy on an Alpine wide level. Many different actors are involved in the way mobility evolves in the Alps: politicians, administrations, businesses and civil society must establish a better dialogue and work together to reduce the negative impact of transport in the Alps.

The following demands are addressed to the EU, the Alpine countries, regions and municipalities. In some cases additional actors such as tourism or transport operators are also called to action.

CIPRA demands the introduction the concept of “transport sufficiency” into public policies, meaning that the level of necessary transport should be assessed and adapted to the “transport capacity” of Alpine regions, based on shared criteria for ensuring a good quality of life.

CIPRA asks for meaningful steps towards a new and more sustainable mobility culture by:

- raising awareness of the negative impacts of transport, such as air pollution and related health conditions;
- launching and promoting soft mobility offers to reduce individual car-based leisure activity;
- supporting environmental friendly mobility also in peripheral areas, amongst others through integrated, forward-looking spatial and mobility planning as well as integrated mobility systems;
- helping to strengthen regional value-added chains and the local offer of services in the Alps, in order to reduce the distances travelled by goods and people;
- making better use of the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICT), in order to both reduce the need for transport and to increase the attractiveness of remote regions for businesses, in particular those in the service sector. This means narrowing the digital divide and mobilising enterprises to use



these ICT solutions to set up branches and activities in remote Alpine valleys. This must go together with the development of resource-efficient ICTs.

- raising awareness on the fact that the replacement of carbon fuels through electricity or fuels from renewable energies offers certain opportunities, but is not a complete answer to a meaningful and responsible reduction of the negative impacts of transport. For all forms of necessary individual and commercial mobility, priority should be given to the most efficient technologies throughout the life cycle of the vehicles, i.e. from production to disposal.

CIPRA asks for the implementation of an integrated, modal shift to public transport (in particular railway) in the Alps:

- In order to make the modal shift a reality, clear, long-term political and legal frameworks are required. In particular, CIPRA demands the implementation of existing air quality and noise regulations and action plans. Furthermore, CIPRA asks for the adoption and implementation of an Alpine transit stock exchange an instrument that would support the modal shift with a well-used railway infrastructure.
- A fair competition and realistic financial modelling is needed for comparing the different modes of transport in order to strengthen the attractiveness of the railway as an alternative to air travel and individual car journeys, for tourists and inhabitants of the Alps.
- The realistic cost should also be applied to infrastructure projects, including railway infrastructure. If additional railway capacities are required, the priority should be given to the improvement and further development of existing infrastructure.
- Public transport is a fundamental service which must be maintained. In a context in which public expenses are being cut, solutions are needed to organise public transport in an effective, innovative and cost-efficient way, instead of allowing these services to be downgraded or to disappear.
- The quality of public transport services, in particular railways, should be improved, in order to encourage passengers to use public transport rather than individual car journeys or short distance air connections for transit journeys through the Alps as well as for local and regional mobility.
- Several major new road infrastructures (in particular the Gotthard, Fréjus, Colle di Tende, Feldkirch and Karawanken tunnels but also the Val d'Astico and Alemagna motorways) are being planned or already implemented. All of these are in conflict with the aims of the Alpine Convention and compromise the principles of a modal shift by increasing capacities for transport by road. CIPRA demands that the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention and bans on developing road transit routes in the Alpine region be respected.

Position paper, CIPRA International, 31.08.2015



BACKGROUND

Transport, in particular by car and truck, is one of the main causes of climate change and a major source of air pollution and associated health risks. In the Alpine countries, transport accounts for more than 25 % of the emitted greenhouse gases. Out of all contributing factors for climate change, transport is the one with the highest increase in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990, making it the main cause for the stagnation in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the EU. All forecasts show that CO₂ emissions from transport will continue to increase unless counter measures are taken.

The main cause of greenhouse gas emissions in transport is motorised road traffic which accounts for more than 93% of emissions. Almost 60% of these are due to individual mobility and 40% to freight transport (UBA 2008).

A special feature of the Alpine region is the high volume of leisure and tourism traffic that regularly results in traffic overloads and congestion during the main holiday seasons. The Alps are one of the European regions with the highest share of tourism-related traffic. On average, 84% of holiday travel in the Alps is done by car, but there are big differences between the Alpine countries (Alpine Convention 2009). Furthermore, never since the 1970s have the Alpine regions been more under threat from new road infrastructure projects than today; this compromises all efforts of the 1990s to instigate a modal shift from road to railway.

The Alpine valleys and transit points are excessively impacted by the disproportionately high levels of noise and air pollution as well as the massive landscape modifications for the construction of infrastructures. This has negative consequences for the quality of life of the people and for the life of animals and plants along the transit routes and in touristic regions.

Some trends in the behaviour of inhabitants and visitors of the Alps, however, indicate an increasing interest in sustainable mobility solutions. For example, 55% of journeys travelled by train in 2015 in Austria were formerly done by car (VCÖ Bahntest 2015). Furthermore many older people, a growing segment of Alpine societies, renounce the use of individual cars and rely on public transport. In almost all Alpine countries, the number of young adults passing their drivers licence is falling continuously, thereby increasing the need for public transport solutions. User-based mobility, solutions such as car sharing, is also an increasingly popular alternative in almost all Alpine countries.

For such trends to be strengthened, the EU, Alpine states and regions have to update their policies in favour of a new sustainable mobility culture offering appropriate infrastructure and services.



CIPRA VISION

Infrastructure measures to displace or facilitate a better flow of traffic will not solve the main challenges as each new infrastructure tends to increase the volume of traffic. Fuels from renewable sources do also not provide the complete answer to the negative impacts of the current and projected future levels of transport. Reducing the need for transport, coupled with better coordination, a new mobility culture and a cap on the volume of traffic for each Alpine region are needed to reduce the negative impacts of transport on people and nature.

- ***Reducing the need for transport***

One option to solve the problems related to excessive transport is to strengthen local and regional production and service chains within and around the Alps, in order to shorten the transport distances of goods as well as to reduce the need to commute for employees. This means avoiding transport as far as possible, in order to reach a better air quality, less noise and a higher leisure value for the inhabitants and visitors of the Alps.

- ***Improving the organization of transport***

Increasing the efficiency of traffic flows reduces negative impacts of excessive transport. Shifting goods from road to rail, improving public transport offers and promoting alternative soft mobility solutions allow for people and goods which need to be mobile, to be so in an environmentally and climate friendly way.

- ***A new mobility culture***

Reducing the need for transport as well as organising transport in a more environmentally and climate friendly way is linked to profound changes in our societies, from a culture and system dominated by individual private cars to a service-based mobility system, including offers such as car-sharing, flexible forms of public transport, integrated mobility offers and incentives for changing individual and collective behaviours.

- ***Transparent, fair and effective costs for transport***

In order to prioritise the most sustainable modes of transport and to carefully evaluate the need for construction of new infrastructures, the external costs of transport must be transparent and form the basis for decision-making. This includes also the elimination of the distortion of competition for some means of transport, for example the tax exemption for kerosene. Further, the principle of 'polluter pays' must be adopted Alps-wide.

- ***Regional transport capacity***

In order for the above mentioned approaches to be implemented in an effective way, regions in and around the Alps need to be aware of their opportunities but also of their limited capacities regarding the amount of transport they can accept without destroying these opportunities. Regions cannot all accept the same levels of transport infrastructures and flows. Therefore it is important for each region to define the limits to its capacity and criteria for the quality of life (e.g. air, landscape, noise, security...) of its inhabitants and visitors. This would allow capping traffic at maximum limits, and possibly also the formulation of reduction aims. This would also be the base for an intelligent, long-term and effective approach to spatial and transport planning in the Alps.