



FACTSHEET Sustainable mobility

🔍 Mobility faces major challenges

Whether for a child's trip to school, a commuter's journey to work or a pensioner's visit to the bank, access to **mobility is an essential right for citizens**.

Transport can be very costly for consumers but is also a key element of their livelihood, whether by providing access to education, employment, leisure activities or goods and services.

Our current transportation system has largely been based on the **availability of cheap fossil fuel imports**. Efforts to move away from such systems to one less dependent on non-renewable forms of energy is one of the greatest challenges of our time.

Oil is a non-renewable resource likely to be depleted by the middle of this century. Exploitation could become so expensive that it becomes economically unviable. Therefore finding ways to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels is of fundamental importance. **Ensuring that everyone, including the least well-off citizens, can afford to remain mobile** will be one of the biggest challenges.

There is also the need to tackle numerous **negative side-effects** of transportation, such as: its role in climate change; traffic congestion; air pollution; noise; a lack of space for leisure activities and recreation; concerns about increased safety risks particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

🔍 Mobility needs smart solutions

It is essential to develop a number of political measures and instruments in parallel to tackle the many mobility challenges facing European consumers in the years to come.

Substitution strategies, including developing new technologies such as **electric vehicles** and the further deployment of **sustainable biofuels**, will play a fundamental role in the transition. However, in order to successfully transform our future transport systems, simply focusing on swapping conventional cars for electric cars or replacing fossil fuels by sustainable biofuels should not be portrayed as "silver bullet solutions".

Many problems such as congestion in cities will not disappear into thin air. After all, '**green congestion remains congestion**'. This is particularly important as more and more Europeans move to cities in the coming decades. It is essential that transport policy, at both national and European levels, strongly considers this projected growth in urbanisation and plans appropriately to reduce congestion for now and in the future.

🔍 Public transportation as a key tool

The development of **public transportation** will represent a key opportunity in tackling the higher transport demand in cities. In this respect, further improvements and enhancements are needed such as:

- The existing transport infrastructure
- The interplay between various public transport modes;
- Coordination and integration of timetables and ticketing systems for different transportation modes.



Flexible systems to meet market demand

Public transportation however cannot be seen as a complete solution in itself and in order to tackle the 'last mile' phenomenon it must be complemented by flexible offers tailored to consumer demands.

In this respect, new mobility solutions such as **car and bike sharing schemes** must be further developed and better combined with public transportation systems.

In addition, we see a strong need for better access to mobility in locations or at times when demand is low, particularly for vulnerable consumers or those who do not use cars or bikes. So in cases where public transportation with fixed schedules is economically unviable, cheaper and more flexible components of public transportation, including **hailed share taxis** or **dial-a-bus services** should be offered.

Urgent actions needed, care for consumers essential.

Policy decisions are now needed to keep mobility affordable and to help the shift towards a low carbon future for the benefit of consumers in the medium and long-term. In order to get this transition right, it will be crucial to make sure prices truly reflect the cost of transport to society while simultaneously ensuring **correct pricing** does **not adversely affect vulnerable, low-income consumers**.

How would BEUC's vision of sustainable mobility come to life?

1. Application of the **'polluter-pays' principle** to policy in general;
2. Wider promotion of **multi-modal mobility**;
3. Further market penetration of **more energy-efficient cars** and development of **electric mobility** (or other alternative powertrains);
4. Further development of **sustainable biofuels** (i.e. those that have clear environmental benefits and do not negatively impact food prices.)

¹ Our UK member Which? shares the objective of decarbonising emissions from the transport sector. However it does not share this vision because their assessment in the UK context shows that several aspects of short-term costs (such as potential financial burdens placed on consumers) versus long-term benefits for consumers does not achieve the appropriate balance.