



European Trade Union Confederation [ETUC]
Confédération européenne des syndicats [CES]

Final Conference Report

7 May 2013, Brussels

ETUC Green Workplaces 2013: workers for sustainable mobility

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Introduction

Sustainable mobility, is a major issue for Trade Unions who need to anticipate technological, social and business models changes.

Mobility of goods and services, is an imperative for social partners. Transport is key for the manufacturing industry.

Sustainable mobility as well as the de-carbonization of our economy is already leading to technological and non-technological eco-innovation, new business models, new services, new jobs and a better quality of life. We should expect major changes in the demand.

These transformations will give to the European transport sector new opportunities to remain in Europe and re-connect with the demand side. It opens new and exciting perspectives to get out of the crisis with transformation of sectors.

How workers are commuting is a key parameter of working conditions and green workplaces. Mobility can be a major driver of social inequality and is a key dimension of a just transition towards a low carbon economy.

This is why the ETUC Conference on Sustainable Mobility came at the right time. It has underlined the importance of new forms of multi stakeholder dialogue and co-operation between Trade Unions and other partners. Best practices are leading the way towards sustainable mobility plans and multi-modal systems at regional and city levels, between technological clusters and companies and commuters mobility plans.

A ETUC resolution should conclude the process and lead to a dialogue with the social partners as well as with the cities signatories of the Covenant of Mayors.

Setting the Scene

Access to efficient means of transport, both for passengers and freight, is of key importance to the European society and the European economy. This influences our region's ability to maintain and develop its industrial base and thereby offer millions of workers a quality job. At the same time this is the very sector that plays a key role in driving down green house gas emissions and ensuring the transition to a more sustainable Europe. However this transition raises issues in terms of social and employment terms.

An unsustainable mobility model could cause:

Pollution: According to the EEA, 20 million Europeans suffer from breathing problems daily. Current concentration of pollutants leads to 370,000 annual premature deaths and more than 100,000 serious hospital admissions. In urban areas, traffic generates 80% of environmental noise.

Labour exclusion: The wide dispersion of industrial and business parks has led to car use being the only alternative for getting to work. The most excluded sectors: women, young people on training schemes, and certain immigrants from outside the EU.

Loss of competitiveness: European Commission calculates the time lost in traffic jams is equivalent to over 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Companies equipped with a safer, more sustainable and economic mobility model, are much more competitive in comparative terms. Productivity increases and absenteeism and associated labour expenses are reduced. Likewise this results in even greater energy consumption and emissions

Economic costs: Transport by road accounts to more than 75% of total costs. According to the 2004 Infrast report, in over 17 European countries, the externalities exceeded 650,000 M € per year, that is 7.3% of European Gross Domestic Product (EGDP).

The consequences of this framework to workers are:

- 50% of journeys taken by car are for distances of less than 5 km; 30% for not even 3 km
- Average occupancy per vehicle 1,2
- Cars mean 75% of total passengers/km ratio
- Journeys by European workers are equal to a loss of 39 days per year on average
- The car is still the most used means of transport for getting to work (60%)

A sustainable mobility and transport policy for the EU

Transport and mobility are not a goal in themselves, but something designed to serve the needs of societies and populations. Industrial production is heavily dependent on efficient, reliable transport services, both for supplies of raw materials and for deliveries of finished products to the consumer. Workers need to be able to reach their workplace at the times agreed and at a cost they can afford. This makes access to transport and mobility a key factor in the prosperity of our societies.

On the other hand, unequal access to these services runs the risk of social exclusion due to regional differences or differences in purchasing power. Workers who suffer difficulties in access to mobility services are then at risk of finding themselves excluded from the labour markets. This exclusion can also be the result of the workers' profiles (age, disability, pregnancy, etc.).

Finally, the systems that exist at the moment are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, chemical pollution (toxic gases, particulates) and physical pollution (noise), as well as being major energy consumers.

A future European transport and mobility system will need to meet the following criteria if it is to be sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms:

Take account of global resource constraints. Modest use of resources will be the cornerstone of both the sustainability of the system and of industrial development in Europe. This will involve a balance in terms of international trade (imports/exports) and a critical approach to the trends towards relocations to areas with low labour costs. In addition, the effects of the current crisis place tight limits on the availability of public funding, and will be bound to have an impact on possibilities for investment in infrastructures and support for research and development efforts in that area. It is necessary to make sure that the infrastructures to be created and renewed are carefully identified.

Take account of societal needs. Access to transport and mobility services, whether private cars or mass transit, is an important vector in social integration. We need an equal right to sustainable mobility for

all, rich or poor, city-dweller or rural resident alike. Over recent years, mobility costs have risen more quickly than the general cost of living. This creates new exclusions. Furthermore, Europe's ageing population will develop specific needs in terms of mobility, which needs to be factored in. This applies to infrastructures, mass transport, and also the product policy of individual vehicle builders.

Cover the whole territory. The European Union is made up of very densely populated areas and huge rural territory. There is a trend towards rural depopulation. In the global context, we are seeing the emergence of the megalopolis, particularly in developing countries. There are vast differences in transport and mobility needs depending on the type of territory. The supply has to meet the needs of all citizens, regardless of where they live. Accessibility needs to be guaranteed in particular for sparsely-populated areas. This implies political choices in terms of infrastructure creation, but also clearly defined product policies from the vehicle builders.

Take account of the link between transport and the geographical division of labour. The linkage between transport and industrial development cuts both ways. Firstly, the accessibility of production sites is a crucial factor in industrial policy and it deserves to be taken into account in the European Union's policies. But on the other hand, the availability of resources to transport goods has the consequence to divide labour and production. In the same way, fragmentation of the enterprise model is partly due to the ease of transport between production sites. The question of transport and mobility policy is indissolubly tied to the question of the organisation of work in the manufacturing industry. The issues of staggered timetables, the fragmentation of workplaces but also the fragmentation of habitat structures and the concentration of large-scale distribution are linked to transport policies.

Ensure efficient use of resources. Increases to the energy efficiency of engines and propulsion systems need to be supported in the future. Issues such as product lifespan, recycling and the development of new materials need to be explored further and given better support in the future by public policies. The need to use public space must equally be taken into consideration in defining a future transport policy.

Guarantee an efficient interface between different modes. The different modes of transport are characterised by specific strengths and weaknesses. The existing system will need to be transformed to encourage the transport and mobility mode best suited to specific needs. This implies a voluntary, determined policy of intermodality and co-modality at a pan-territorial level. To this end, interfaces between the various modes must be considerably improved.

Automotive sector

The automotive sector is one of Europe's major employers. Some twelve million industrial jobs depend upon it. Most of these are quality jobs, well unionised and well paid although a large number of these jobs do not call for very high skill levels.

The sector is currently facing the prospect of major change. Firstly, globalisation, combined with the maturity of the domestic market, is raising fears for survival in our regions. Even now, we are already seeing the geographical centre of gravity of the production centres shifting from western Europe towards the new Member States of the European Union.

Secondly, the coming technological changes will inevitably bring major social consequences. The new propulsion systems, the introduction of composite materials and the diversification of business models used by companies will have repercussions on employment and the qualifications required.

The image of individual mobility, long dominated by the association with freedom, independence and openness, is in the process of changing, and the young generation in particular are much more aware of the constraints associated with private car ownership: the cost and the need for a parking space, especially in our town centres. This generation, driven in part by the financial difficulties because of the economic crisis in the countries in the south of the EU, are gradually choosing other types of mobility, disconnecting ownership from the use of the means of transport.

The car builders' business models will have to change radically. Whilst today they are producers of transport equipment, in the future there will be a far greater need for them to become providers of mobility services, via models for vehicles which are shared, rented and interfaced with other mobility solutions.

In addition, the technological change will need to rely much more heavily on research and development of new solutions. At present, our continent is lagging behind on this score. Innovation in the field of composite materials and vehicle weight calls for additional efforts. At the same time, the continuing improvement of the internal combustion engine will require support for a number of years. It is notably the requirement for mobility in rural regions that will need to be covered in this way.

Finally, the manufacturers' product policy needs to evolve. It is currently characterised by the search for an extension of the existing return on investment, and dominated by a concentration on the market for those vehicles which generate the biggest commercial margin, but it will have to focus more on the needs of the population, and in particular its purchasing power. In parallel, it will be a matter of providing access to sustainable, environmentally responsible mobility to the entire population, not simply to those who can finance it, or only to town-dwellers.

Strong public regulation is necessary to give the industry the dynamism that it cannot generate on its own in terms of energy efficiency. Account will need to be taken of a general analysis of the lifecycle and process of vehicle production. An analysis of energy streams, from raw materials to the place of consumption in the vehicle, likewise remains on the wish list.

These changes will not come without social consequences, particularly on employment. The sector's dependency on imported raw materials, particularly with an eye to the development of new technical propulsion systems, calls for firm, concerted initiatives to ensure the survival of production in Europe.

Changing qualifications and the transfer of added value within the industry, including the appearance of new productive sectors within it, raises major challenges in terms of anticipating and managing social changes.

The CARS 2020 is the follow-up of CARS 21, a consultation process ongoing since 2005 as an initiative of DG ENTR. It is meant to be the implementation phase of the conclusions adopted in June 2012. The initiative is based on four pillars:

1. Investing in advanced technologies and financing innovation
2. A stronger internal market and smart regulation
3. Global markets and the international harmonisation of vehicle regulations
4. Anticipating adaptation and softening the social impacts of industrial adjustments

The initiative offers a forum for alliances with other stake-holders and an occasion for debate and confrontation of Unions approach with the positions of others. It is also a means to influence the European Commission's understanding and press for policy making respecting the workers' needs.

The workers believe that the automotive sector is the one most impacted by new models of mobility and production capacity reductions are a daily business occurrence. Social dumping has become a real threat and both volume and premium manufacturers are impacted (together with their respective suppliers).

The Union demands:

- Transformation of the sector as the key approach to the current problems
- Placing of the decent work agenda into the Cars 2020 work group discussions
- Embed these debates into a global industrial policy for the sector
- Ensure training for workers (new skill requirements emerge, technologies change)
- Find employment opportunities for disappearing activities
 - Regionally close
 - In nearby sectors
- Adapt working conditions for an ageing workforce
- Use the current crisis as an opportunity
 - Train workers for future skills
 - Prepare the transformation of the sector
- Increase investments in R&D (Europe lags behind globally)
- Tackle the issue of contractual relations between OEMs and their suppliers (which have social consequences)

Railway sector

The sector producing railway rolling stock and equipment for the railway infrastructure is well-embedded in Europe. It is heavily dependent upon public demand, whether for urban, regional, inter-urban or high-speed transport. It is characterised by a very wide diversity of regulatory systems, incompatible signalling systems and technical standards, as well as other obstacles to the interconnection of the networks.

However, rail mobility and transport have long offered the land-based mode which uses the least energy, the fewest raw materials and the least land for its infrastructure. Yet the infrastructures that exist at the moment, especially in the centre of Europe, have almost reached saturation point and need major investments if they are to accommodate further journeys. The political framework conditions for the rail operators need to be adjusted so that they can earn half of their income from

transport services. The railways have to be on an equal footing with the other types of carriers in the context of modal distribution.

European transport policy unilaterally favours the big transnational equipment, imposing local and national co-financing. The effect of this is that the resources required for the improvement or maintenance of the regional and local network are lacking, and many pieces of equipment are becoming obsolete.

In parallel, from the point of view of the railway rolling stock builders, it is not the highspeed services that guarantee the survival of the existing production sites and capacity utilisation. It is the production of trams, underground systems and regional trains that offers the critical mass required to maintain this industry in Europe.

A voluntary policy of investing in the harmonisation of Europe's railway systems is imperative. Research and development in innovative technical solutions for noise reduction needs to be supported.

The success of the industrial sector, however, does not ultimately depend on the efficiency and speed of the public agencies which are responsible for the monitoring and approval of new pieces of equipment which is unfortunately far from being ensured at the present time.

Actions for accessible and sustainable railway may include:

- Promote the case for an integrated national railway under public ownership
- Minimise the impact of government and industry proposals
- Establish a joint Union campaign, under a common brand
- Build dynamic relationships with civil society partners, community groups and passengers
- Engage and inform MPs, Ministers, councillors and relevant civil servants
- Work with relevant industry bodies and representatives
- Establish a credible, evidence-based and accessible media presence, including social media

Proposals for an EU Framework Directive to promote sustainable mobility for commuters

The development of Project E-COSMOS (European Commuters for Sustainable Mobility Strategies) included a comparative study of commuters' mobility problems in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain which led to a clear conclusion: the problems do not differ greatly in each country and we face a problem on a European scale.

The study showed that most European workers choose private motor vehicles for commuting (home-work journeys).

Progress towards a more competitive, efficient and sustainable transport system - as expressed in the European Commission WHITE PAPER Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – requires actions on a European global scale to modify the existing mobility and commuting models.

A Framework EU Directive is a necessary reference for Member States in the development of active policies to reduce the dependence on private vehicles for commuting, and to propose/adopt sustainable alternatives for shifting to a new mobility model.

Coordination between urban planning and mobility

- A series of urban and territorial planning policies shall be promoted to reduce the number of journeys and commuting distances. Those policies must focus on the compacting of urban spaces, and on the mixed use of land space into unified residence and workplace areas.
- One of the priority policies must be the creation of hubs which generate a need for mobility in areas with optimal access to public transport, both in established urban areas and in future development and expansion projects, or in relocation projects within urban areas.

Sustainable mobility plans for commuters

Sustainable mobility plans for areas with a large concentration of work/business activity (industrial estates, business complexes, hospitals, universities, etc.) need to be in place.

This shall imply a joint approach to common mobility problems shared by several companies located in the same area, as well as recommending cooperation between employers and competent public authorities in charge of mobility policies in areas that generate commuting activities.

Sustainable mobility plans in areas with a large concentration of industrial/business/service centers

Strategies and measures to promote sustainable mobility must be based upon specific supply and demand studies. These measures include defining temporary goals, making functional proposals, and determining the agents responsible for costs, funding and follow-up indicators.

Proposals must be aimed at:

- correcting the public transport deficit
- granting accessibility to pedestrians and cyclists
- promoting the shared use of company buses
- promoting carpooling and sustainable management of parking spaces
- facilitating inter-modality and other measures to change the current mobility model

Sustainable mobility plans for companies

The promotion of a modal shift among commuters does not only require the development of area mobility plans where activity is concentrated, it also calls for individual mobility plans for working facilities (both private and public), since this is the area where specific intervention and workplace action are more viable. In work centres it is possible to promote the implementation of specific safe and sustainable mobility measures negotiated by workers' representatives and employers. These measures must include:

- granting safe parking for bicycles
- management of company's shared bicycle services
- implementation of company shuttle bus services
- providing free public transport tickets for workers
- parking management with preference to carpoolers

Mobility Plans should be implemented at least in public agencies and public authorities' facilities with more than 100 workers (regular or temporary), companies with more than 200 workers (regular or temporary).

The plan must include strategies to promote sustainable mobility based on workers' mobility habits. It must also define temporary goals, make functional proposals, and establish control and follow-up indicators. The plan must have a detailed intervention programme.

"The intervention programme" is a set of detailed measures to be implemented, for example installation of undercover parking spaces for 12 bicycles in the car park, building a database to match drivers and passengers to activate car sharing, carpooling.

All companies whose staff exceed 100 workers shall submit an annual survey on workers' mobility patterns.

Mobility Management

Company mobility desks in areas of concentrated activity should be set up.

Mobility desks are established negotiation and participation bodies that include all social agents: unions and employers, public authorities related to the area management of the plan, and transport companies.

The goal of mobility desks is to promote and cooperate in the mobility plan, and to encourage and disseminate proposals. They must be the main body of reference in terms of mobility management in each area.

Company mobility groups (commissions) in areas of concentrated activity

Mobility groups are participation bodies for the negotiation of measures to achieve a modal shift, and for the follow-up of implementation.

A task force must be designated to develop a company mobility plan. This task force must include employers, union representatives and if necessary, transport operators and local authorities on a temporary basis. Workers' representatives must seek the possibility of including both regular and temporary workers in the commission.

The objectives of this commission include promoting and cooperating in the implementation of the mobility plan, encouraging and disseminating proposals, as well as monitoring its implementation.

Mobility managers for areas of concentrated industrial activity

Mobility managers are responsible for the implementation of decisions by mobility commissions. They must coordinate with the different players involved, generate information and monitor the implementation of mobility plans.

Mobility managers are also responsible for the adequate implementation of the decisions and proposals of the mobility commission.

Their functions should include:

- negotiating with public and private agents in the industrial area to expedite the execution of the mobility plan

- adequately generating and forwarding mobility information on the industrial estate (public transport, bicycle rental services, etc.).
- carrying out training and advisory activities (for workers and employers) related to the promotion of sustainable mobility in the different companies.

Company mobility manager

Company mobility managers are responsible for the management, control and organisation of mobility in the company.

They are also in charge of promoting the actions of the mobility plan, their follow-up and assessment.

Their responsibilities also include the dissemination of the mobility plan, recommending collective public transport measures, mobility on foot/cycling, carpooling and other modalities that improve the global sustainability of the transport system.

European Commuting Observatory

The European observatory on commuting could help assess and monitor commuting patterns in different Member States.

The observatory shall become an instrument to compile, process and disseminate information through specific publications and websites.

Data collected by the observatory must focus on mobility indicators, follow-up on the implementation, and results of sustainable mobility planning and the dissemination of good practices. The observatory shall also promote European research on commuting.

The observatory's staff must include European mobility experts and agencies, as well as European trade unions and employers' organisations.

Conclusions

The topic of transport and mobility is inseparable from the topic of employment in Europe.

The vision of transport (of both passengers and goods) needs to be converted into a long term industrial policy approach, establishing what support goes to which sectors, what funding and what infrastructures are to be created. Against this background, account will need to be taken of the importance of the infrastructures available to allow market penetration of new transport technologies. The current crisis cannot be used as pretext for negligence. On the contrary, public investment policies can be used as a vector for economic recovery. Conversely, national industrial policies need to be coordinated at European level, and must no longer be used as a vehicle for competition between Member States.

In the same way, research and development efforts need to be considerably stepped up. European industry is in the process of losing its leading position in the cutting-edge technologies, and is thus at risk of losing its industrial base in the medium term. This is where the public authorities need to intervene: they are the ones who have the competence of the long-term strategy and the definition of the regulatory framework.

Next, the question of short-term policies needs to be addressed. Depending on the long-term vision, initiatives on vocational training (initial and on-going), and on measures to anticipate industrial changes which at the same time support the transformations of the necessary sectors, need to be taken now. According to the industrial transitions, workers will need to be retrained between declining activities, and new jobs created. In that area, cooperation with the trade unions and the workers' representatives is of crucial importance.

The survival of our jobs in Europe depends on the effectiveness of public policies in these fields. It is for businesses, with their knowledge of the markets, their technical know-how and their qualified teams, to contribute to the definition of these public policies.

In most cases, jobs in Europe are quality jobs, representing decent work, and benefitting from a high level of social standards. In this sense, we need to abandon the principle of the 'lowest bidder' in favour of the principle of the 'best bidder' in public contract tendering. Many transport equipment sales depend on public budgets. So public authorities, at any territorial level, bear much of the responsibility for the survival of jobs in our industries in Europe.

A transport policy geared to the needs of the populations offers prospects for the development of quality jobs in Europe. That said, the question of labour and employment policies must be taken into account in this debate. The only approach that offers promise is that of quality: quality of employment, product quality, and the quality of the industrial processes, and above all, the quality of the workers' skills.