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Making Tomorrow Today 2nd UITP Sustainable Development Conference 22-24 October in Milan

This article summarises the main ideas, concepts and innovations presented at the 2nd UITP Sustainable Development Conference 'Making Tomorrow Today' held in Milan. The conference was supported by charter signatories with a good international turn-out with delegates from most European countries, Canada, China, Japan, Thailand, South Africa, Russia and the USA to name a few.

The focus of the Conference was on the business and economic aspects of sustainability and innovations and included a general managers' round table debate, a youth delegation from Leipzig, UITP's 1st Handbook on Sustainable Development and a poster zone.

Getting sustainability into business for real

Sustainable development should be part of core business for all public transport actors. Elio Catania, Chairman and CEO of local host ATM outlined the ongoing transformation of ATM into a sustainable company, combined with his personal commitment. This opinion was echoed by other CEOs and General Managers from small, medium and large systems and decision-makers. There was agreement that this was going to be a tough challenge in the months ahead as the financial and economic crisis deepened.

Investments in sustainability are booming

At current development rates, in the next 25 years China will consume more fossil fuel, coal, steel, meat and grain than the world can provide. But the present economic meltdown also gives the opportunity to change investment structures towards sustainable technologies.

Some encouragement was given by Robert Rubinstein¹, an expert in mobilising capital for sustainable projects, in his keynote speech. Money is flowing into extra-financial funding: and groups are looking for projects that have environmental and social dimensions. He gave some surprising examples such as Governor Schweitzer of Republican Montana, USA, pushing for 'green business' in a coal rich region. If he can do it, so can Europeans. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments add social and environmental value to external stakeholders, while increasing shareholder value. Public transport has a lot to offer but he questioned if we were talking to the right people.

Strategic thinking for sustainable development

Los Angeles Metro Board member Pam O'Connor felt the financial crisis also offers opportunities: road pricing schemes addressing the three-fold objective of financing transport infrastructures, tackling congestion and reducing environmental harm. Los Angeles could become a role model for this kind of demand management with its huge freeway infrastructure.

Munich's urban development concept of "compact, urban, green", integrates a public transport masterplan and bans heavy trucks in the city center, giving Munich the highest modal split of public transport and bicycles in all German cities. Munich's Lord Mayor, Hep Monatzeder said the city's CO₂ emissions must be halved (1987-2010). Major actors are

brought together to support the plan "Munich for climate protection" – and one of the four forums focuses on sustainable mobility. Every year 85,000 newcomers arrive in Munich. Each receives a comprehensive information pack on mobility alternatives. One year after introduction of this programme, car use has fallen by 3.5% while public transport ridership increased by 7%, **proving that providing information to newcomers and people changing homes is a low-cost but effective tool.**

An environmental city toll for better air quality and other co-benefits

A lack of mass transit infrastructure and the highest car ridership in Europe makes Italy vulnerable to highly fluctuating oil prices. Managing demand and pollution in Milan with the Ecopass was presented by Edoardo Croci Milan's Commissioner for Mobility, Transport and the Environment. Ecopass levies a fee on cars and trucks entering the CBD according to their environmental performance. Introduced in January 2008 it has reduced traffic by 19.5% in the first nine months. The Expo 2015 is an opportunity for investment in public transport as most trips between Milan and the surrounding area are by car.

Certification (eg. ISO 14000) helps as an incentive to educate employees and achieve better discipline in data collection according to John English, General Manager UTA, Salt Lake City, USA. Walter Casazza from Karlsruhe highlighted the tram-train system, where trams collect commuters from suburban and rural surroundings using the heavy rail infrastructure but are able to switch to the light-rail system once in town.

How to finance greener and cleaner

Risk and engagement evaluation cycles help MTR, Hong Kong PRC to take a system approach to improving sustainable performance. Dr. Glenn Frommer, Chair of UITP's Sustainable Development leads the MTR Sustainability team, seen as a world leader.

Current EU policies must be reconciled with the goals of increasing local public transport use, decreasing traffic, noise and air pollution. Noise pollution by cars costs EUR 40 billion per year in Europe. A detailed case study of Salzburg, Austria, showed how higher investments in public transport can be justified. The impact study showed that the higher investment costs for Salzburg's 70 year old compact and dense trolleybus system, serving 150,000, were offset by lower operational costs compared to diesel/gas bus operations and lower vehicles maintenance costs. Co-benefits include some 5,600 t CO₂ saved every year; higher real estate price increases along trolley lines than with diesel buses; and shop centers now ask for trolley bus services having realized the advantages. Even more surprising, communities happily now finance the infrastructure.



Sustainable development



► **Keynote speaker Robert Rubinstein, the UITP Sustainable Development Commission and Charter signatory John English of Utah Transit Authority flanked by Secretary General Hans Rat and Commission Chairman Glenn Frommer**

Whole life cycle costs were also highlighted with the new European directive addressing lifetime CO₂ emissions. SBB, Stuttgart constructed a complex matrix for five different investment scenarios looking at the environmental impacts of the current fleet configuration as a whole, including topographical conditions, energy supply, PM levels and other pollutants. In their research, full synthetic fuel ranks best in terms of overall emission reductions.

Can communication change behaviour?

Consumer behaviours are complex, contradictory, confusing and often superficial! Mike Longhurst, Senior Vice President of McCann Erickson introduced market research separating the different levels of 'green consumer'. 10% of consumers are 'Evergreens' (totally convinced), 20% Green Supporters, 40% Neutral Greens, 20% Green Sceptics, and 10% are Nevergreens. Up to now a lot of publicity addresses the 'Evergreens' but it is really the next 60% that show the highest potential for change and need persuasion and leadership.

Is public transport an obvious solution? Not always, and it is a tough battle to make consumers switch to public transport, whilst car companies are fighting back with "green" adverts. Eco-driving campaigns are also working against public transport, reassuring many people that they do not have to switch.

Climate change round table

Climate change is an evergreen topic for sustainability professionals and Dominique Delis from Veolia Transport presented new tools to measure CO₂ emissions avoided by public transport. Two new rail lines and an express/BRT style bus in Nantes, France are part of the city's plan to reduce CO₂ four-fold by 2050. 800,000 t CO₂ has been saved across the measures, such as converting an expressway into an urban boulevard limiting car speed to 30km/h.

JR East serves more than 16 million passengers each day with some 12,000 trains. Such high patronage means their passengers only emit 12g/km per person. New technology has also helped and new locos are twice as efficient as the previous ones. Railway stations are equipped with PV panels and green roofs, and uniforms are made from recycled materials. Carbon is offset by planting a 'railway' forest along rail lines on land bought for rail expansion while it is not yet used.

The internalization of external costs - an opportunity for public transport

61% of all motorized trips in Paris centre are made on public transport, but only 16% in the suburbs. RATP's carbon footprint is quite low compared to other European cities (4 g/pass Km CO₂ for railways) as the electricity is produced by nuclear

and hydro energy. Using the EU handbook, external costs are calculated at 51 eurocents/km for cars and 0.2 eurocents/km for urban trains!

More people than ever live in cities

The role of organising authorities on a regional and local level is indisputable. Responsibility lies with them for the supply and infrastructure of public transport, as well as service quality, vehicle age and fuel types used. Madrid's integrated approach has achieved considerable results and the Province of Gelderland, Netherlands, has introduced several measures to reduce CO₂ through taxes and subsidies, also by stimulating short distance bicycle use, an opportunity often overlooked. New development is only permitted where mobility can be guaranteed. The objective for the Brussels Mobility Plan is a 20% reduction in vehicle kilometers by 2015. Different approaches tested in models clearly showed that a combination of measures including a city toll would work best, achieving a 25% cut in car transport. Authorities have to balance complying with contracts and tendering rules. Currently there are too many organising authorities but fewer and fewer operators able to offer services. For long-term sustainability, a better combination of top-down coordination by government whilst still allowing enough freedom for creativity and efficiency is sought.

The social aspects of sustainability were not neglected - Ed Watts from the US Transport Workers Union pointed out that the USA is at a critical juncture. High oil price for the first time in many years has prompted a drop in vehicle miles. A new green economy, however, can provide many new jobs. Tools available on the internet from the WHO Transport, Health and Environment partnership were also presented.

This event has become an important date in the calendar of all charter signatories, allowing them to meet UITP Sustainable Development Commission members, share international experience and network with peers and make new friends. It was also the occasion to welcome new signatories and recognize that great progress has been made but there are still critical barriers to overcome such as the level of skills and competence in sustainability in some organizations and municipalities.

A CD-Rom of the presentations can be purchased from UITP publications: www.uitp.org/publications

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