

## **Streets for people!**

### **International Association of Public Transport (UITP) supports European Mobility Week**

This week (16-22 September) European citizens in more than 1,300 cities and towns will have the opportunity to enjoy a week of events dedicated to sustainable mobility. The objective is to facilitate widespread debate on the necessity for changes in mobility behaviour and, in particular, the use of the private car. As usual, Car-Free Day will be the highlight of the week.

UITP has been an official partner of this campaign since its inception in 2002.

The sixth edition of European Mobility Week is on the theme of '**Streets for people**'. This theme conveys the clear message that increasing road space for cars is not the answer to existing transport challenges. On the contrary, reducing road capacity for cars can represent a sustainable, efficient solution and also allows better quality of life for all citizens without reducing individual mobility.

"European cities were neither planned nor built for uncontrolled mass transit in the form of private vehicles and, without public transport, will suffocate in sheer transport chaos. Quality of life and long-term viability can only be ensured if quality public transport is promoted and expanded," stated UITP Secretary General, Hans Rat.

Ad-hoc urban planning and urban sprawl combined with increasingly congested roads bring alarming consequences. People have to commute for longer, the environment suffers, and high levels of congestion mean that public transport becomes less reliable, making the car the only alternative. Indeed, such an urban model is not only expensive for the community and high in energy consumption, but it also marginalises anyone who does not have access to a car.

"UITP fully backs this year's campaign theme," said Mr Rat. "Public transport, due to its collective nature, really promotes the concept of 'streets for people'. It is safer and more socially inclusive than individual transport." The barriers created by a car-dominated infrastructure - such as urban freeways or busy highways close to residential areas - isolate communities, disband social ties between neighbours and lower quality of life. Public transport infrastructure, on the other hand, takes up much less urban space and helps bring communities together.

As regards the use of space, in order to transport 50,000 passengers per hour in the same direction, one could choose a right-of-way measuring nine metres in width for a metro or RER ... or one measuring 35 metres across for buses ... or one measuring 175 metres across for cars. Furthermore, parked cars waste even more urban space, especially since they spend 95% of their time parked.

In support of European Mobility Week, UITP published an information sheet on public transport initiatives for this and other public awareness campaigns. This aims to give ideas to public transport stakeholders on how to get involved in such campaigns and to demonstrate the important role public transport plays in sustainable mobility.

#### **Notes for editors:**

The International Association of Public Transport (UITP) supports a holistic

approach to urban mobility. To fulfil this objective, it offers to its 2,900 members representing public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, scientific institutes and the public transport supply and service industry from some 90 countries, an international platform to foster business opportunities and to exchange knowledge and know-how. UITP also actively promotes innovations and advocates public transport and sustainable mobility towards regional, national and international decision-makers.

For more information about European Mobility Week, visit <http://www.uitp.org/advocacy/Public-awareness.cfm> or <http://www.mobilityweek-europe.org/>.

UITP's information sheet on public transport in European Mobility Week can be downloaded from <http://www.uitp.org/mos/corebrief/CB-emw-en.pdf>.

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