



→ Position

Consultation on Right to Stay Strategy: Your Region, Your Future

Delivering the Single Market Where People Feel at Home



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As a member of the “Freedom to Stay” coalition, UITP is convinced about the fundamental right of all EU citizens to stay living where they are. This freedom is intrinsically linked to spatial accessibility of essential services (housing, health, education, banking, groceries) and thus mitigating the risk of social exclusion and enabling the Single Market to deliver for all EU citizens.

In that context, it is important to remember that 83% of the EU's territory is composed of rural areas where 30.6% of its population live. On average, this population is older and has a smaller share of GDP.

For tackling the spatial accessibility UITP strongly advocates inclusive, affordable, and available public transport, emphasising that a just transition in a strong Single Market must also prevent mobility exclusion and provide opportunities to all European citizens, wherever they live.

- **The 4 A's Framework:** UITP promotes the “4 A's” framework —Availability, Accessibility, Affordability, and Acceptability — to ensure public transport meets the needs of vulnerable households and those in underserved urban or rural areas.
- **Integrated Mobility:** Solutions should be, as described in [UITP's 2025 Policy Brief](#), a mix of public transport, shared mobility, and on-demand options.
- **Preventing "Car Captivity":** UITP highlights that people living in rural areas are often forced into owning at least one car per household. In the case of low-income households, these are often inefficient and fuel-guzzling cars, thus polluting and expensive cars to run. The primary solution to this is accessible public transport.

Some interesting initiatives exist (see also [UITP Knowledge Brief on the rural mobility challenge](#)). However globally, there is a lack of reliable data concerning rural access and mobility, better identifying and quantifying areas where people may experience transport poverty and face the risk of social exclusion.

In this area, the **Transport Poverty Hub developed by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)** that assesses the Availability dimension of transport poverty, is a very interesting initiative. It compares access to essential services and opportunities across regions via walking, cycling, driving, or public transport. The tool provides valuable information that should now lead to appropriate policy responses at local, regional, national and European level, aiming at supporting policies improving social inclusion and transport equity, thus making the Single Market work for all.

At EU level, UITP strongly advocates the “Right to Stay Strategy” with the 6 mutually reinforcing priorities as set out in the SGI-Europe position paper: the Freedom to Stay/Right to Stay should become an official European objective with Services of General Interest (including transport) to be recognized as a fundamental enabler as a precondition for economic competitiveness, social inclusion, demographic sustainability and citizen's trust in the European project.

Enclosures: UITP Knowledge Brief (2022) & UITP Policy Brief (2025).





This is an official publication of UITP, the International Association of Public Transport. UITP represents the interests of key players in the public transport sector. Its membership includes transport authorities, operators, both private and public, in all modes of collective passenger transport, and the industry. UITP addresses the economic, technical, organisation and management aspects of passenger transport, as well as the development of policy for mobility and public transport worldwide.

This publication was prepared by **UITP EU COMMITTEE**.



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