



## European Commuters for Sustainable Mobility Strategies

This project has received funding from the European Union

### E-Cosmos Project

## European commuters for sustainable mobility strategies

### Executive Summary

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The environmental secretariat of the Spanish Trade Union Confederation CC.OO. started collaboration in a EU project last autumn. The project named E-COSMOS (European Commuters for Sustainable Mobility Strategies) aimed at studying, quantifying and defining procedures to promote a socially and environmentally sustainable mobility for commuters in the EU.

The project led by CC.OO. includes as partners several European trade unions, Italian CGIL, Flemish Belgian ABVV and Auto Club Europa on behalf of German trade unions. Belgian consultants' agency Traject specialized in mobility issues acted as a support and coordination body.

E-COSMOS is a mobility project. It addresses mobility in terms of easier access to workplaces for commuters, the use of less polluting vehicles and the rational use of private vehicles. It also calls for measures to quantify the economic costs of mobility for workers, companies and for society as a whole.

The global objective of the project is the definition of new mobility patterns to improve accessibility to workplaces. E-COSMOS partners consider that the current mobility model with focus on automotive mobility faces serious limitations. The current mobility model has three types of impact:

1. **Social impact:** labour exclusion of workers who do not have driving licenses, especially women, non-EU migrant workers and effects on workers' health and safety caused by commuting accidents and the increase of pulmonary diseases due to higher levels of pollution.
2. **Economic impact,** caused by the loss of competitiveness and the individual and collective costs of mobility.
3. **Environmental impact:** transport consumes around 40% of primary energy in industrialized countries.

The transport sector has become one of the main emitters of polluting compounds in the world and one of the main causes of the greenhouse effect. Acting on this factor is acting on climate change.

### Goals

The objectives of the E-cosmos project include:

- Conducting a comparative survey on mobility problems of commuters in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain.
- Making a comparative analysis of public policies to promote sustainable mobility in four European countries.
- Defining guidelines to support trade unions' and employers' actions in favour of sustainable and safe access to workplaces.
- Providing input for a possible legal framework at EU-level to support an evolution towards a more sustainable work-related mobility.





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- The project also expects partners to observe and learn from good practices in each country:
  - through presentations (theoretical part) and debate with key agents
  - visits and meetings (practical aspect)
- Project E-Cosmos aims at obtaining information on the current state of affairs of mobility in Germany, Italy, Belgium and Spain regarding:
  - mobility management policies for commuters
  - the role of trade unions or workers' representatives involved in mobility

Technical visits were arranged according to a list of tasks to be carried out by each hosting organization, aside from practical aspects it included providing general information and data on population and institutional networks in each country. Specific forms were designed to collect the information. Aspects closely related to mobility were detailed including at least:

- Modal split
- Vehicles per inhabitant ratio
- Traffic accidents
- Brief description of legal framework on mobility and mobility management policies
- Companies' obligation to implement mobility plans
- Employers' contribution to mobility costs refunds
- Average cost of public transport fares in home-work journeys
- Monthly costs of transport fares in any mean of public transport (bus, tramway, subway, metropolitan trains, etc.)
  - ✓ Employers' contribution
  - ✓ Specific transport costs for each country
- Detailed description of different mobility problems including at least:
  - ✓ Environmental aspects
  - ✓ Social aspect (exclusion, etc.)
  - ✓ Legal and fiscal situation
  - ✓ Health issues
  - ✓ Economic aspects
  - ✓ Specific factors in each country
- Description of trade unions' (or any other organizations involved in mobility) role in mobility management:
  - ✓ Is sustainable mobility a significant issue for trade unions?
  - ✓ Is sustainable mobility part of collective bargaining? To what extent?
    - ▶ national scope
    - ▶ regional
    - ▶ sector/branch
    - ▶ Company level?
  - ✓ How is mobility focused?
  - ✓ Specific aspects in each country
- Description of some good practices
  - ✓ Trade union initiatives
  - ✓ Local administration initiatives



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- ✓ Companies' initiatives
- ✓ Indicatives of industrial estates' managers

### Technical visits

The **visit to Rome** allowed an in-depth examination of problems and difficulties in the city's transport system. In Italy, the most important players in the field of sustainable mobility are the Regions and the Cities. They are fully competent for mobility policy in general and public transport organization (respectively on the regional and urban level). The central government maintains its role on the fiscal and legal level and is still responsible for the interregional (road and rail) transport networks.

The visit also showed clear links between the environmental and socio-economic aspects of mobility: accessibility to work, balance between work and private life, jobs in public services, etc. These issues are the core of CGIL's initiatives while regional authorities have increased the cost of public transport fares in the wake of recent cutbacks. The struggle to maintain budgets quality investments (infrastructure and material), and to increase jobs in public transport continues. Workers' needs are also addressed (accessibility, life quality, life/work balance through improved, safer and healthier mobility, more attention to sustainability issues). The scope of these activities offers new possibilities for the development of industrial activity.

The achievement of these goals becomes difficult with the current political situation in Italy. There is clear reduction of political efforts in terms of sustainability, as well as in other policies. Budget cuts reduce the necessary human resources public investments to provide quality public transport services. Due to the lack of financial support there are no clear political decisions and future oriented mobility strategies are not implemented.

The decision to cut transport funding clearly shows that public transport is not a strategic priority for the Italian government. Negotiations with regional authorities face serious difficulties and given the lack of sustainable mobility policies CGIL has developed its own proposals for solutions. Those proposals require sound investment, specific measures and support by the EU.

The **visit to Berlin** showed a different approach on mobility management in Germany. While in Belgium, Spain and Italy the attention for a social mobility system (e.g. access to workplaces for people without cars) was a main topic in mobility discussions, this is less the case in Germany. Sustainable mobility as a way to improve quality of life and to create a more liveable environment is a main theme in Germany. The bicycle policy and the success of it in Berlin is one of the best examples.

Mobility management is a relatively new approach in Germany, also for the trade unions. Several speakers made clear that Germany is still a car-oriented country. Car manufacturing remains the largest employment area in the country, creating at times a difficult situation for the trade unions. On the one hand, the trade unions want to



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promote and support sustainable mobility programs but on the other hand there is the fear of losing employment in industries related to car manufacturing.

By implementing mobility management measures companies can contribute to improve their corporate social responsibility (CSR) and comply with EMAS (Environmental management systems) requirements. Both certificates have a significant positive impact on the image of the company that obtains them.

The implementation of measures for mobility management is basically promoted by companies and in a lesser degree by work councils as workers representatives, but hardly ever by trade unions.

The **sites visited in Belgium** were chosen for their significance in terms of good practices in mobility management. Fiscal measures have great influence on commuters' mobility. The use of company vehicles is frequent because of fiscal advantages. The enforcement of the legal framework and the development of trade union actions have proved effective. Companies located in areas of difficult access for public transport are encouraged to implement some kind of transport (public or private). Sustainable mobility is a significant issue for the government and for trade unions. Employers focused on mobility from the perspective of traffic congestions and economic benefits. The government must enforce the legal dispositions and encourage with subsidies those companies that promote sustainable mobility. The initiative of informing workers' representatives and human resources departments on all the aspects regarding sustainable mobility is also a government task.

### Workshops

The first workshops of E-Cosmos was held in Madrid and aimed at finding a common ground on goals, management, budget and schedules for the visits and workshops. One of the first consequences was the modification of patterns for workshops and visits, so that these activities would develop for three successive days, beginning in the afternoon of the first day and ending in the morning of the third day:

- ▶ Visit to Rome (Italy): 23-25 February
- ▶ Visit to Berlin (Germany): 29-31 March
- ▶ Visit to Belgium: 6-8 April
- ▶ 2nd Workshop in Barcelona: 4-6 May
- ▶ 3rd Workshop in Barcelona: 6-8 June
- ▶ Final Conference in Madrid: October 25th

In order to prepare the technical visits, a list of tasks was drafted by each hosting organization, which aimed at clarifying practical aspects and providing data on population, institutional framework in each country. A form was designed to facilitate this task.





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Aspects related to mobility had to be explained in detail and included at least:

- modal split of commuting
- number of vehicles per inhabitants
- traffic accidents
- brief description of the legal Framework of mobility and its management policies
- companies' level of obligation to develop mobility plans
- employers contribution to commuting expenses
- average cost of home-work trips on public transport
- Monthly cost of transport fares for buses, tramway, metro or suburban trains
  - ✓ Employers' contribution
  - ✓ Specific costs of transport for each country
- Clear description of different mobility problems for commuters considering
  - ✓ Environmental aspects
  - ✓ Social aspects (exclusion, etc.)
  - ✓ Legal and fiscal frameworks
  - ✓ Health issues
  - ✓ Economic aspects
  - ✓ Specific aspects of each country
- Description of the role and experiences of trade unions (and other organizations involved in mobility management):
  - ✓ Is sustainable mobility an issue for trade unions?
  - ✓ Is sustainable part of collective bargains?
    - ▶ At national level?
    - ▶ At regional level?
    - ▶ At sector level?
    - ▶ At company level?
  - ✓ Where is it focused?
  - ✓ Specific aspects of each country
- Description of some good practices
  - ✓ trade union initiatives
  - ✓ initiatives of local authorities
  - ✓ employers' initiatives
  - ✓ initiatives of industrial estates

The workshop was focused on partner documents procedures and mainly on mobility management in the city of Barcelona and cases of good sustainable mobility practices in the metropolitan area.

Different indicators of the mobility context were discussed (Population, area, population density, cost of car use, price of oil or car ownership) and the modal split for home-work traffic (car solo, carpooling, public transport, cycling, walking and other). Regarding **mobility challenges**, participants discussed the main topics in the field of mobility (congestion problems, traffic jams, environmental issues, global warming, dependence on oil, road safety, accidents, etc).



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Other topics discussed included organisational aspects of mobility in terms of policies: mobility management at company level, mobility management topics which are part of the dialogue – employers/trade union's negotiations, and some of the best practices.

The most debated aspect was related to barriers and drivers: What are the main barriers for achieving a more sustainable work-related mobility? What are the main opportunities at the moment? The debate extended to a third day given the level of interest.

The visits to Can Sant Joan industrial estate and the Autonomous University of Barcelona allowed visitors to know some details about the implementation of mobility management systems, the support to public transport associated with railways negotiated by two mobility managers appointed by trade union intervention.

Mobility in the city of Barcelona was approached from the perspective of planning and mobility management, with a special analysis of traffic abatement policies (areas 30), a bicycle sharing system (Bicing) and the integrated management of parking. The Metropolitan Transport Authority was in charge of explaining the approach in the metropolitan area of Barcelona. More specific aspects of company mobility and the transport fares system were explained from the point of view of the Plan of Metropolitan Mobility. The perspective was completed by a bicycle ride to visit the neighbourhood of Poble Nou - Distrito 22@ which allowed participants to observe urban mobility changes after the celebration of the 1992 Olympics.

The third session of the workshop was partially dedicated to trade union's activity (CCOO Catalonia) in the field of mobility: an initial approach to transport and commuting, union training activities in mobility aspects, the presentation of some mobility experiences in districts of Catalonia, as well as s union actions in specific cases of improvement.

The **third workshop** also took place in Barcelona and was basically focused on good practices of accessibility to workplaces in suburban areas. The first part of the workshop included visits to railway facilities of the Barcelona airport and the connections with the city of Barcelona, El Prat de Llobregat and the shuttles that connect the different terminals.

Presentations were based on CCOO's efforts to achieve better transport services to the airport, an extension of running times of suburban trains to early morning hours, and the implementation of a passengers' line to El Prat de Llobregat.

The description of good practices continued with an account of mobility plans and experiences of mobility desks in the industrial estates of Zona Franca, Pratenc, the Logistic Activity Area (ZAL), and the company Gearbox (located in Pratenc's industrial estate). Public transport modalities are currently running as a result of implemented mobility plans.





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The presentation of good trade union-promoted practices on mobility for commuters concluded with an account of specific experiences in the bus services for Pratenç's estate, the building of walkways to access industrial estates and preserve both high speed train infrastructures, and local facilities in Lleida (Catalonia). The workshop also included the views of a municipal authority of a town located in the vicinity of Barcelona, which hosts several industrial estates and a protected wildlife area in the delta of the Llobregat. The municipality also owns territories occupied by the airport. The visit to the natural park was cancelled due to the heavy storms that affected the area.

The last work session was dedicated to the discussion of data compiled by the survey, the work methodology to draw up the final report and the presentation/debate of the contents of the final conference, to be held during the third week of October in Madrid. Internal management issues associated with the project's budget were also discussed.

### Comparative analysis

The comparative study of obtained data on modal split and preferred topics in each country allowed us to conclude the following:

- Modal split:
  - ✓ *high share of car use in Italy*
  - ✓ *share of public transport is equal in every country*
  - ✓ *cycling is especially popular in Belgium and Germany and (almost) non-existent in Italy and Spain*
  - ✓ *high share of walking in Spain (and Germany)*
  - ✓ *None of the four countries has available registration of carpooling*
- Attention to different mobility topics:
  - ✓ *less interest for all topics in Germany ; most interest in Belgium*
  - ✓ *strong similarities between Spain and Belgium (except for the employers point of view)*
- On general public conclusions:
  - ✓ *Main difference in road safety and congestion ; less difference in environmental issues and dependence on oil*
  - ✓ *Most attention paid by public opinion in Belgium and Spain; less interest in Germany*
  - ✓ *Congestion and road safety are the main issues ; dependence on oil plays a minor role for the general public*
- Conclusions on trade unions:
  - ✓ *in general less attention for these topics than for "public in general"*
  - ✓ *similarities between trade unions in Spain and Belgium*
  - ✓ *focus on environmental issues and road safety, less on congestion*



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- Conclusions on employers:
  - ✓ *Traffic congestion is an important topic in Belgium, but less significant in other countries*
  - ✓ *employers pay less attention to environmental issues and road safety*
  - ✓ *dependence on oil is a significant topic in Belgium and Italy*
  - ✓ *more difference between countries than for “public in general” and “trade unions”*

### Guidelines for the improvement of mobility

The ultimate goals of the project included:

- Defining mobility management guidelines for trade unions –actions and measures to be implemented
- Proposals for a set of guidelines on a common EU mobility policy

The project concluded with the drawing up of a set of guidelines and recommendations based on the following research steps:

- starting position in the countries represented in E-cosmos
- existing guidelines on EU-level
- findings and best practices collected during the site visits
- discussions and conclusions of the workshops during the project

Guidelines are summarized in 10 recommendations for trade unions (U) and /or Public Authorities (PA)

1. A **platform for sustainable mobility within the trade union** is a necessary first step (U). One of the findings of E-cosmos is that trade unions can play a major role in working for a more social, ecological and efficient mobility system. However, an internal consensus within the whole trade union about the need for a more sustainable mobility system is necessary before raising awareness amongst others or to entering a debate with employers.
2. **Investing in exchanges of expertise and good practices** (U/PA). Expertise and knowledge are necessary to facilitate discussions and awareness campaigns on sustainable mobility. Throughout Europe trade unions are confronted with more or less the same problems and challenges, that is why an exchange of knowledge and good practices would be a very efficient way to learn from each other and build a common understanding of the problem and of possible solutions.
3. It becomes necessary to establish companies' **obligation to develop sustainable mobility plans**, but those plans must be supported and followed up by public authorities (PA). Visits and workshops showed that some kind of obligation is necessary to achieve a change of mentality of employers and workers in favour of a more sustainable mobility. This type of obligation



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requires in-depth debates. It could imply providing data on companies' mobility profiles and describing mobility problems and measures to be implemented or it may include the obligation to develop a sustainable mobility plan, however the participants in E-Cosmos consider that such obligations can only be effective under two conditions:

- they must focus more on the implementation of measures and less on research (relieving companies of administrative workload)
- there must be a clear support/commitment by public authorities

Companies' obligation to develop mobility plans will offer trade unions the opportunity of including mobility issues in negotiation processes.

4. **Collecting data and examples of good practices for debate (U/PA).** There are serious difficulties and barriers for the promotion of sustainable mobility. First of all, changes of human behaviour, and especially mobility patterns, are hard to achieve. It takes some time before employees who drive to work start considering that single car use can be part of a bigger problem and that there are other options to commute. Persistent, long running awareness campaigns are necessary in order to change employees' perception.

On the other hand there is still a wide spread point of view amongst employers that how workers travel to work is an individual choice without any involvement nor obligation from the employers side.

Both employers and employees are easier persuaded about the profit of sustainable mobility when they are confronted with facts and good examples. In a lot of cases discussion on sustainable mobility remains an ideological or even political one. Only by showing the effect of investing in sustainable mobility the debate can be held on a more objective level.

5. **Appointing mobility coordinators at all levels in trade unions (U).** Attention to mobility management is necessary at all levels and in the all steps of the decision making process. Trade unions should therefore invest in collaborators specialized in mobility management who would take part in the social dialogue at every level of trade union activity:
  - at national or regional levels where mobility and urban planning policies are designed, the legal and fiscal frameworks are approved and working conditions are discussed
  - at more local levels where sustainable urban mobility plans are developed
  - and finally at the level of industrial areas or individual companies (company mobility coordinators)

The mobility coordinator or the mobility cell within the trade union is a necessary precondition to dedicate the necessary attention and time to sustainable mobility issues. The presence of a mobility coordinator in the company or group of companies is especially necessary for the implementation



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of mobility measures. Otherwise mobility plans remain mere bureaucratic formalities.

Besides facilitating discussions and accelerating the implementation of actions, mobility coordinators are also responsible for the follow-up and assessment of mobility plans or, at higher levels, mobility policies.

### 6. **Supporting companies in the implementation of measures** (not in research) (PA).

Except for a few examples sustainable mobility is not in the core business of most companies or institutions. In order to develop a company mobility plan and – more important – to implement some measures, it is necessary to collect and analyze key data. Support from public authorities in this study process is welcome but in most countries private consultants are available for this activity.

Experiences and good practices show that public authorities can focus better on supporting the implementation phase of mobility plans. Although some first line advice and support (like in Belgium through provincial mobility points) can be effective during the study process, investment and implementation of different actions are the most difficult steps to take by companies. Even when mobility problems are obvious, it is often a difficult process to make resources available for investments in sustainable transport solutions (shuttle buses, bicycle parking) in companies.

### 7. **Creating a fiscal and legal framework in favour of sustainable mobility** (PA).

A fiscal and legal framework which that favours sustainable transport modes for commuters is a clear incentive for workers to choose cycling, public transport or carpooling. Apart from the financial stimulus given by this kind of legislation, it also symbolizes the mobility policy of the authorities. By giving financial advantages to cyclists, public transport users or carpoolers a government shows its intention to generate a modal shift. This would be even more valid if besides stimulating sustainable transport, single car use would be financially discouraged via taxation, road pricing or higher parking fees.

### 8. **Mobility management is the most efficient way to deal with current mobility problems** (PA).

In most western countries the current mobility problems are so severe that the classical solution based on increasing road infrastructure will not solve the problem. This is especially true in the case of urban environments where limited space force city planners to invest in the most efficient transport solutions. Mobility management can provide various economic, social and environmental benefits compared to new road infrastructure.

Conventional, car-oriented solutions generally focus on improving the flow of car traffic whereas mobility management takes into account different aspects like energy conservation, use of public space, health issues, road safety and social mobility issues (e.g. access to labour market for different target groups).



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- 9. A sustainable urban planning is the first step in the mobility management process (PA).** Avoiding the need to use the car is the most efficient mobility management measure one can imagine. The most ecological and efficient home work trip is the one that can be made on foot, cycling or with public transport. Therefore national, regional or local authorities must bear in mind accessibility by sustainable means before developing new industrial areas or allowing new projects. Plans for new working locations can be drawn in such a way to promote and encourage the use of sustainable transport means. A new office close to a railway station will from the very start generate a different modal split than a new office in a remote industrial area.

As the location of workplaces with regard to public transport and/or bicycle networks, the design of the area also has a major impact. It makes a huge difference if there are good footpaths and sidewalks to access the bus stop or if there is a high quality bicycle parking just in front of the entrance. Unfortunately site visits in each country showed that a lot of mistakes have been made in the past regarding the sustainable planning of new workplaces

Good accessibility to workplaces with public transport and bicycles also has a social dimension: it avoids the exclusion of the labour market of people without car or driving license. Women, migrant non-EU workers and young workers have less access to car mobility.

- 10. Avoiding labour exclusion through investment in sustainable mobility (U/PA).** A car oriented mobility approach discriminates a number of workers who have no access to a car or who do not have a driving license. Research shows that in most families with one car, women are forced to use other means to commute which means meaning that workplaces with no good access with public transport are practically out of reach for them.

The same limitation is faced by young workers who do not have a driving license or financial resources to buy a car. Migrant workers and disabled people are also groups that would be discriminated if sustainable mobility is neglected.

Achieving equal labour opportunities is a key aspect of trade union activity.