

EEA's views on Sustainable Urban Mobility

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The European Express Association (EEA) is the representative organization for the express industry in Europe. The express industry is a fast-growing business sector which provides vital services for the European economy, bringing the global marketplace to life. The industry specializes in time-definite, reliable transportation services for documents, parcels and freight. It allows European businesses to rely on predictable, expeditious delivery of supplies, thereby enabling them to attain and maintain global competitiveness. The express industry employs over 250,000 people across the European Union and supports a further 175,000 indirect jobs in Europe through the supply-chain.

In view of the Transport Committee work on Sustainable Urban Mobility, the EEA would like to convey two key messages:

THE NEED TO SHAPE A NEW ACCESS FRAMEWORK FOR URBAN AREAS

The EEA very much welcomes the timely discussion about city access. The growth of e-commerce and the presence in the inner-cities of SMEs active in diverse business sectors trigger a continued increase in urban deliveries/pick-ups, and, subsequently, congestion and road safety issues as well as air quality concerns.

Efficient and effective urban delivery networks to supply shops, businesses and residents are of key importance and will benefit both urban areas and its inhabitants as well as members of the EEA; efficient and effective delivery networks indeed keep urban areas economically viable and environmentally friendly: they enable urban areas to continue to be at the heart of economic activity and fully play their role as a host to residential and commercial functions, while the burden of transportation and its effect on the urban area's environment is minimized. Effective urban delivery networks are also key to support the development of e-commerce in Europe.

The EEA is of the opinion that, when some critical elements are taken on board, such efficient and effective delivery networks can be realized.

ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY NETWORKS:

1. City access policies should be based on preliminary consultations and impact assessments, on facts and figures about the traffic flows to and from urban areas as well as on different transport needs. This exercise should include the involvement of all relevant stakeholders: authorities, shop owners and businesses, inhabitants, and transportation/delivery companies, stakeholders and particularly the express sector. Regulations can only be as good as the data on what they are based. Identifying improvement opportunities is an important part of this data-gathering: one has to first identify whether there are congestion, safety, air quality or other issues in order to come up with the most appropriate approach, in coordination with relevant stakeholders in order not to restrict the economy/business.

2. The best guarantee for efficient and effective urban logistics solutions is to maintain a market-driven approach. The market will drive change when there is a need, e.g.:
 - Bundling shipments, as suggested in the EC's Urban Mobility Package of 2013, will decrease transport movements in urban areas. The express industry is a good example of this approach: it consolidates transport volumes from different shippers and fine-distributes and delivers it in the most efficient manner;
 - All members of the EEA are experimenting alternative urban delivery methods and are exploring and testing alternatively fueled vehicles - with the objective to make the operations run even more efficiently, generate less transport movements and, as a result, become even more environmentally friendly;
 - When conducted in such a way, freight transport should be allowed to use bus lanes and other infrastructure which can help making the traffic flows more fluid.
3. The existing potential to improve the quality of the air in urban areas should be exploited: the use of intelligent transport systems (traffic light synchronization, traffic management communication technology, dynamic traffic information...) will increase the fluidity of traffic streams, thus improving air quality.
4. There should be an obligation for urban areas to provide safe and legal parking space for delivery activities.
5. Research and innovation funds should be more actively used to increase knowledge of urban authorities on how to deal with access challenges but should equally benefit transportation companies in further developing new delivery solutions.
6. Urban areas should strive, in their approach to city access regulation, to achieve at least regional harmonization of policies in order to generate the desired results in terms of city access. This fits well into the EC's best practices / benchmark platform. The development of sustainable urban mobility plans will also contribute to this.
7. Linking together ITS systems used by transport operators and local authorities
8. To foster their broader use, alternative fuel vehicles which exceed the threshold of 3.5 tonnes due to the additional weight of the low emission conversion technology (electric, LNG etc) should effectively be treated as being in the same weight category as a 3.5 tonnes vehicle, (i.e. extend N1 category for alternative fuel vehicles), so that the drivers of these vehicles would not need to have a C-driver license.

Last but not least, the access for cities to EU funding schemes should be facilitated on the condition that they follow EU guidelines on sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMP).