

European Committee of the Regions

# COTER-VII/011

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# **OPINION**

# Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

## THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- notes that the mobility transition is mainly taking place at regional and local level. The strategy should better take into account cities and regions' knowledge and experience of making mobility sustainable. The transition to sustainable and smart mobility requires a joint approach involving all levels of government (multilevel governance), in line with the principle of active subsidiarity;
- points out that the mobility transition requires a change in behaviour, to which users are key. More
  attention should be paid to social innovation geared towards effective incentives that cities and
  regions can use to promote active mobility, such as promotion of cycling and taking all the
  necessary steps to improve accessibility for everyone, among other measures;
- believes that the EU, its member states, regions and cities need to start considering public spaces as a common good, particularly in cities in the context of the design and urban planning as well as climate and energy planning;
- defends the concept of the "15-minute city", where all of the things people need and many that they
  want are located within a travel distance of 15 minutes;
- notes that cities and regions face diverse challenges. Some regions with large cities, as well as transit regions, have high levels of congestion, air pollution and environmental noise. In other regions, especially more sparsely populated ones and the suburbs of large cities, a lack of good connections is a major problem, jeopardising accessibility;
- notes that additional EU funding is needed in order to make investments, especially to implement measures provided for in SUMPs for liveable cities and regions. Such measures include better collective public transport services and pedestrian and cycle networks, and the construction of sound infrastructure such as publicly accessible charging points for electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, shared mobility systems and smart applications;
- underlines that various incentives are needed to bring about a modal shift. These include positive incentives such as the expansion of local public transport, tax incentives for the purchase of zero-emission vehicles (bicycles, scooters and cars), and efficient, reliable and affordable rail transport.

#### Rapporteur

Robert van Asten (NL/RENEW E.) Alderman of the Municipality of The Hague

#### Reference document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future COM(2020) 789 final

## Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy

### I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

#### General comments

- 1. welcomes the EU's Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. With this Communication, the European Commission is establishing a link between the sustainability agenda from the EU Green Deal, the Digital Agenda and the role of mobility in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis;
- 2. Mobility connects people, cities and regions and is a prerequisite for a well-functioning economy. However, in Europe, mobility is also responsible for a quarter of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; therefore supports the European Commission's overall approach to making mobility more sustainable, improving access to sustainable alternatives and implementing the right incentives, including price incentives;
- 3. stresses, however, that making mobility sustainable must be combined with related challenges such as accessibility, affordability, road safety, health, spatial planning, the actual existence of alternatives to private transport and demographic change. The strategy lacks concrete measures to make these challenges mutually reinforcing;
- 4. notes that, in cities and regions, mobility is the link between living, health, working, knowledge, commercial supplies and free time. The mobility transition is mainly taking place at regional and local level. The strategy should better take into account cities and regions' knowledge and experience of making mobility sustainable. The transition to sustainable and smart mobility requires a joint approach involving all levels of government (multilevel governance), in line with the principle of active subsidiarity;
- 5. This is not just a question of making transport more sustainable (towards zero-emission vehicles), but rather of reducing distances and the amount of travel where possible and changing and sharing modes of mobility (towards more sustainable active forms such as walking, cycling and buses and trains), and sharing modes of mobility (e.g. through smart pooling of transport needs using digital tools (ride-pooling), including in rural areas);
- 6. points out that the mobility transition requires a change in behaviour, to which users are key. More attention should be paid to social innovation geared towards effective incentives that cities and regions can use to promote active mobility, such as promotion of cycling by institutions, building bicycle parking areas, monitoring cycle and pedestrian lanes to ensure they are used properly, and taking all the necessary steps to improve accessibility for everyone, among other measures;
- 7. regrets that the strategy does not represent a vision of a holistic European mobility policy, covering all modes of transport in a joint and balanced manner. Stresses, in this regard, that the

Commission should put more emphasis on other sustainable modes of transport, such as the bus, which is set to play a key role in the transition towards sustainable, safe and accessible mobility;

- 8. believes that the EU, its members states, regions and cities need to start considering public spaces as a common good, particularly in cities in the context of the design and urban planning, as well as climate and energy planning. That could help change the use of public space from mainly private cars to a common good for citizens;
- 9. calls on the Member States, their regions and cities to significantly increase their efforts to increase the share of walking, cycling, public transport and other collective sustainable transports options in urban, intermediate and rural areas;
- 10. regrets that the European Commission's proposal focuses in its proposal mainly on individual vehicles, thereby neglecting their impact on congestions and their other negative externalities (noise, air pollution, accidents, greenhouse gases, barrier effects, etc.). This is particularly relevant in transit regions and cities. Moreover, in some Member States the number of journeys is increasing as the population moves away from city centres to outskirts and suburbs;
- 11. welcomes the important role of the sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs). These plans are being used by an increasing number of cities in Europe but the surrounding areas should also be included as a daily urban system<sup>1</sup>. This system may vary from one city or region to another and may include both periurban and surrounding rural areas;
- 12. stresses that EU Horizon programme missions, in particular the 100 Climate-neutral Cities by 2030 mission, have made a crucial contribution to meeting the major societal challenges set out in the EU strategy, and are integrated, bringing together many different areas;
- 13. Good connections are important for economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU; notes, in particular, the absence from the mobility strategy of concrete initiatives from the European Commission for rural, isolated and outermost areas, building on the important role of mobility in ensuring the provision of services of general interest in rural areas with sparse infrastructure. About two thirds of the European population lives outside large cities. Public transport services face particularly significant challenges in more sparsely populated areas and in island, outermost and mountainous regions. European funds and regulatory measures should help to improve the mobility of citizens everywhere;
- 14. reminds that regions and cities themselves often also either provide or commission public transport services and defines public service obligations (PSO) in the field, for instance of health transport and public regular road passenger transport. In this sense, asks the European Commission to better take into account the sustainable dimension of transport in its review of the interpretative guidelines on the Land PSO Regulation, particularly to allow local and regional authorities to be more prescriptive in their demands;

<sup>1</sup> Daily urban system refers to the area around a city, in which daily commuting occurs. It is a means for defining an urban region by including the areas from which individuals commute.

### The role of the local and regional authorities (LRAs)

- 15. Cities and regions face diverse challenges. Some regions with large cities, as well as transit regions, have high levels of congestion, air pollution and environmental noise. In other regions, especially more sparsely populated ones and the suburbs of large cities, a lack of good connections is a major problem, jeopardising accessibility. Finally, some regions have to cope with seasonal influxes that as much as treble their population. Large regions can experience all of these types of problem together;
- 16. acknowledges the EU hydrogen strategy, and highlights the potential offered by hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources and e-fuels derived from it to decarbonise those areas of transport where electrification is not appropriate or likely, such as heavy goods traffic, shipping and aviation. Green hydrogen can also be a useful alternative in local public transport and for special-purpose municipal vehicles<sup>2</sup>;
- 17. Mobility is inextricably linked to spatial planning, such as the design and location of building developments for housing, workplaces, services and cultural activities, as well as of footpaths, cycle paths, public transport stops, parking spaces, etc. Structural plans and land use allocation guide mobility facilities and lay down the criteria for their construction. By only focusing on making all existing forms of mobility more sustainable, the EU is not sufficiently acknowledging the spatial dimension;
- 18. In particular, mobility in rural areas is one of the essential aspects of spatial planning, permitting connectivity between the population centres and the main country town or administrative centre where all the essential public services are located. This is why rural mobility through the most efficient modes of transport with the most extensive networks and reach gives people access to basic services (education, health, social services, etc.) equal to that enjoyed by people in the urban or periurban world;
- 19. In order to reduce emissions from fossil fuel mobility, it is recommended that essential services such as housing, work, schools, health centres, businesses, leisure<sup>3</sup> and commercial supplies be located in the immediate vicinity of each residential area. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic and online working are making people's place of residence less dependent on their place of work, which in the long term could likewise reduce the volume of traffic. The European Committee of the Regions therefore defends, when possible and taking into account the different realities of European municipalities, the concept of the "15-minute city", where all of the things people need and many that they want are located within a travel distance of 15 minutes. While motor vehicles may be accommodated in the 15-minute city, they cannot determine its scale or layout;
- 20. points out that account must be taken of the constraints on the outermost regions, where the construction, planning and maintenance of collective transport networks to serve the population

<sup>2 &</sup>lt;u>CoR/2020/549</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A good example of this is the 15-minute city. This means that residents are 15 minutes away (density) by foot or bicycle (design) from everything they need: shops, offices, schools, healthcare, sport, culture and leisure (diversity).

is more difficult and costly, and where, without alternatives, individual vehicles remain the main means of transport;

- 21. Cities and regions stimulate active mobility by having good infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. This should include enabling those living on the outskirts of cities and village centres in rural areas to change modes of transport easily and safely during journeys, allowing passengers to take their bicycles with them and providing good and affordable connections. In this regard, it is regrettable that the strategy does not present a clear vision for collective public transport. It is also necessary for the proposed strategy to provide for different mobility needs to be allocated to the modes of transport that are more efficient, sustainable and most geared to the public in each case;
- 22. Good connections are important for economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU. They connect all regions and cities within the single market and ensure that no one is left behind. This applies not only to metropolises in economic centres but also to medium-sized cities, rural areas, mountain areas, peripheral areas, outermost regions and islands;

## Sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs)

- 23. Sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) are central to the strategy. This voluntary policy instrument from 2013 is intended for the mobility management of cities and the connections between cities and the surrounding (peri-urban) areas. There are now 1000 cities in Europe with a SUMP. In recent years, the EU<sup>4</sup> has published guidelines on issues including low-emission zones, cycling and shared mobility, promoting e-mobility, and climate planning for rural public spaces, covering a wide range of aspects;
- 24. In some Member States, regional mobility plans are used, which better reflect the scale of the challenges and are in line with regional daily urban systems. Functional urban regions are currently used as a basis, but the current Eurostat definition does not adequately correspond to the structural and functional realities of polycentric regions with transport flows between them. Regional sustainable mobility plans should also be an instrument to ensure transport in the most depopulated rural regions in an efficient and sustainable way;
- 25. SUMPs must be flexible enough to reflect the diversity between cities and regions and the principle of subsidiarity. It is important to financially support the development of SUMPs and implementation of measures they provide for, so that LRAs can gain experience with the methodology and learn from each other by implementing new policy concepts and experimenting with behavioural change;
- 26. The importance of rural, mountain and remote areas, islands and outermost regions must be taken into account in sustainable mobility plans to ensure good connections and accessibility. This requires mobility models to be developed based on efficient and sustainable systems such as on-demand transport. These plans must also include rural localities that are dependent on the

<sup>4 &</sup>lt;u>https://www.eltis.org/mobility-plans/sump-guidelines</u>

main urban hub in order to ensure proper connections to scattered settlements and remote and hard-to-access areas;

### Financial instruments

- 27. stresses that collective public transport must continue to be the cornerstone of the SUMPs, which must also include school transport in order to take vehicles out of circulation and reduce negative externalities; calls on the Commission to recognise this form of transport as the backbone of sustainable mobility in the new Urban Mobility Framework and to ensure sufficient support for its expansion;
- 28. Many of the investments required for the mobility transition must be made using national, regional and local funds in the coming years. This means that the EU has to make room within the Stability and Growth Pact and State aid rules for investments reducing the environmental impact of transport and reaching the objective of the European Green Deal;
- 29. notes, however, that additional EU funding is needed in order to make investments, especially to implement measures provided for in SUMPs for liveable cities and regions. Such measures include better collective public transport services and pedestrian and cycle networks, and the construction of sound infrastructure such as publicly accessible charging points for electric and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, shared mobility systems and smart applications. For less developed regions with less financial capacity, funding should be made available for initial investments and for the long-term operational costs of transport services. Because of the strict requirements in the use of EU funding and the intricate budget structure in the Member States, access to these funds is sometimes made more difficult for local and regional authorities compared with other funding options.

Regions with a strong economic focus on the automotive manufacturing and supply industries are facing major challenges due to the restructuring of the sector. The manufacture of electric and hybrid vehicles is much less labour-intensive throughout the value chain, from production to servicing. New technologies require completely different skills. Regions where the automotive industry accounts for a significant share of the economy and jobs must receive the extra support needed through European funds, in order to minimise the risks and compensate for the negative effects on their economy and employment levels that may result from the transition that the EU is calling on this industry to make;

- 30. The Commission indicates that it intends to actively support LRAs, but there is no integrated approach in its strategy. It would help if LRAs could receive support through better information, one-stop shops and technical assistance when applying for grants, or advice in order to share expertise and adapt it to the regional context;
- 31. For the mobility transition, LRAs can make use of funds from the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund (JTF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF); notes, however, that these funds are not nearly enough to enable LRAs to fulfil their role in making mobility more sustainable and therefore calls for a minimum percentage of these resources to be reserved for them, in accordance with their responsibilities;

- 32. deplores, also, that, even if the Common Provision Regulation (CPR) and ERDF regulations voted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, allow cohesion policy's investments in mobility transition, these investments are sometimes blocked by the services of the European Commission during the negotiation of the ERDF Operational Programmes;
- 33. Interreg also provides funding for local investments. This programme is important for LRAs because it enables them not only to invest but also to learn from each other. It is vital to exchange good examples at local and regional level, for example, on cycling policy. In this sense, macroregional strategies could play an important role;
- 34. The above-mentioned EU funds should prioritise a modal shift from private vehicles to more sustainable modes of transport, such as collective passenger transport, which will play a key role in the energy transition;
- 35. supports the proposal to extend funding from the budget for the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) for the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) to first/last-mile solutions, including multimodal hubs, park and ride facilities and safe active infrastructure for walkers and cyclists; stresses that TEN-T funding should also support public and collective transport infrastructure projects such as renovation of railway and bus stations, the reopening and electrification of railway lines or solutions to promote intermodal transport; accepts that a mandatory SUMP should be drawn up for this purpose;
- 36. In order to switch to sustainable and renewable fuels (in TEN-T networks) on a large scale, connection to the energy network (in TEN-E networks) is required to enable the (fast) charging of and support for the deployment of electric and hydrogen-powered vehicles or vehicles powered by other alternative fuels across all modes of transport. System integration is essential in this regard;
- 37. stresses that expanding the TEN-T network will require urban nodes to play a bigger role. These nodes currently receive only 1% of CEF funding and need to be better defined so that they can be eligible for co-financing. Urban nodes are part of a broader network of connections. The supporting role nodes play in active mobility and public transport and LRAs' role in governing TEN-T must be documented and supported. Thus local authorities representing urban nodes should be routinely involved in meetings of the "corridor forums" of the TEN-T core network where they are located. The European Commission should also better define investment that will be eligible in the urban nodes under the "railway lines" and "multimodal passenger hubs" priorities of CEF calls for proposals. Finally, the list of urban nodes of the TEN-T network should be extended during the planned revision of the network in autumn 2021 because it drastically limits the potential to mobilise funding;
- 38. welcomes the Horizon Europe programme with its "Climate, Energy and Mobility" and "Digital, Industry and Space" clusters, and supports the 100 climate-neutral and smart cities mission. The mobility transition requires innovation, room to experiment and the opportunity to exchange knowledge. Cities and regions can serve as testing grounds for both the technical aspects and the

inclusive component, such as dealing with active mobility. The missions with their new innovative financial instruments can help LRAs with their tasks and set predefined objectives;

39. draws attention to the InvestEU programme, in which "sustainable infrastructure" is one of the four policy "windows". However, these are financial instruments, where it must be possible to recoup the investments. This is by no means possible for all investments. It is therefore important for the InvestEU Advisory Hub to consider the wide-ranging needs of cities and regions and develop genuine financial engineering from the EU;

### Policy instruments

- 40. The EU strategy envisages many policy instruments that can help cities and regions with the mobility transition, but on a number of points, the Committee would like to see concrete policy proposals;
- 41. EU legislation in the field of harmonisation, standardisation and interoperability is necessary for a level playing field. Proper data standardisation, protection and exchanges and high standards for emissions and road safety can only be regulated at EU level;
- 42. considers it important to stop subsidising fossil fuels and instead to promote alternative, clean propulsion methods and, where possible, to give the advantage to new technologies so as to accelerate rather than slow down the transition. This can be achieved by applying the "polluter pays" and "user pays" principles and ending tax benefits for fossil fuels. At the same time, the Committee notes that tax systems in many places strongly favour the provision of company cars with internal combustion engines, which runs counter to the EU's long-term and medium-term climate goals;
- 43. supports the European Commission's project to include road transports in the Emissions Trading System. However, is concerned that this inclusion would hit vulnerable consumers. Insists therefore that the product of this new tax should finance a massive public investment programme within the future cohesion policy in order to allow local and regional authorities to develop decarbonised offers of transports for all EU citizens, wherever they live, particularly to connect rural and remote areas with urban centres;
- 44. Various incentives are needed to bring about a modal shift. These include positive incentives such as the expansion of local public transport, tax incentives for the purchase of zero-emission vehicles (bicycles, scooters and cars), and efficient, reliable and affordable rail transport. They also include toll systems, a location and time-based congestion charge, that encourages the use of sustainable collective transport, kerosene taxation for the aviation sector, an extension of the emissions trading system to aviation and shipping and a broader eco-tax to tackle road transport and pollution, for example in the Alpine countries or other border regions that are particularly prone to congestion due to transit traffic;
- 45. notes that, during the COVID-19 crisis, many cities and regions (re)discovered active mobility. Cycling and walking are not only healthy and resilient ways to travel; they are also good for the climate. It is therefore necessary for the EU to put active mobility higher on the political agenda;

- 46. points out that the revision of the Energy Taxation Directive offers a unique opportunity to decarbonise transport, to encourage the use of the most energy-efficient means of transport, such as collective passenger transport, and to boost the internalisation of transport costs;
- 47. adds that the promotion of collective transport must be accompanied by measures to make it easier for all users to use, in terms of both pricing including setting low prices for users or even making it free for some groups and the possibility of combining it with cycling, in order to facilitate mixed mobility models;
- 48. points out that, depending on regional and local circumstances, renewable biofuels, e-fuels, hydrogen and other innovative fuels and propulsion systems may present sustainable solutions and must not be placed at a disadvantage;
- 49. Public-private solutions can play a role in reducing unsustainable mobility through agreements with businesses on working from home, location policy or urban distribution. The EU can ensure that these public-private solutions become more widespread;
- 50. Cities and regions are trying to limit car and freight traffic through low-emission and zeroemission zones; requests that LRAs have access to the EUCARIS<sup>5</sup> system and its vehicle registration data from other Member States to ensure proper enforcement;
- 51. welcomes the proposals for zero-emission vehicles (CO<sub>2</sub> standards and post-Euro 6/VI standards), but points out that the regulations must be implemented in such a way that they can keep pace with the necessary expansion of renewable energy production, transmission networks, regional and local distribution networks, and fuelling and charging infrastructure. The new standards must leave sufficient room for innovation, and be technology-neutral. They should apply not only to passenger cars and buses but also, in the context of zero-emission city logistics, to clean delivery vans and lorries; also calls for EU legislation for polluting mopeds/scooters and inland waterway vessels. Stricter rules for tyres and brakes as well as emissions are important for reducing particulate matter, which contributes to air pollution. Care must always be taken to ensure that vehicles are also subject to other requirements (in particular with regard to range and charging/refuelling time) that are essential for functional passenger and delivery services, in particular local public transport;
- 52. advocates a clear EU framework for light electric vehicles (LEVs) such as electric scooters, speed pedelecs and other forms of micromobility in regulation 168/2013; welcomes the intention of the European Commission to issue guidelines to support the safe use of micromobility devices still in 2021;
- 53. urges the European Commission to do more to encourage the purchase of electric, low emissions and hydrogen cars or bicycles, by providing incentives, which will increase the volumes of production and create appropriate infrastructure, thus leading to the reduction of their cost, which is currently very high and makes them unaffordable to a large number of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> EUCARIS is an intergovernmental application for a network of national vehicle registration databases. It is currently used for Directive 2015/413 on the exchange of information on road traffic offences.

consumers. Also, this could involve revising the VAT Directive so that Member States can encourage the purchase of electric bicycles by means of a lower tax rate;

- 54. recognises that Mobility-as-a-Service is an important concept for many cities and regions, enabling them to promote door-to-door transport. To that end, it is important that the EU focus on multimodal tickets and integrated information about all possible types or combinations of transport<sup>6</sup>;
- 55. endorses the new proposals that the European Commission will make to promote charging infrastructure and hydrogen points<sup>7</sup>. This is important because of the speed of technical developments (towards fast charging, charging hubs and hydrogen) and from the point of view of fire safety. Agreements must be made at EU level on technological standards and requirements for charging stations and on uniform payment options. The current lack of robust infrastructure is hampering private investment in the market;
- 56. Multimodal hubs in municipalities mean good connections to interurban and international transport links but also transhipment or other opportunities regional freight logistics and for smaller urban distribution. The timely expansion of the European TEN-T corridors must be accompanied by the development of multimodal logistics and transhipment facilities;
- 57. The Commission intends to make scheduled collective transport under 500 km within the EU carbon-neutral by 2030, with the planned doubling of high-speed transport as an alternative to aeroplanes playing a key role in this regard. Rail freight transport should be far more than doubled by 2050, and aviation, shipping and inland waterway transport should be made considerably more sustainable. The European Commission should favour clean transport alternatives wherever possible;
- 58. Rules for rail and waterway transport need to be better harmonised to increase sustainability and competitiveness. Multimodal freight loading points must also be created or expanded, both along transport corridors and in the regions. Moreover, international rail traffic consists not only of connections for high-speed lines, which are prioritised, but also of normal (cross-border) connections. The EU should continue to use the CEF to close gaps in cross-border rail connections, which are essential to link regions in Europe with each other. For these connections, there is still a lot to be gained from increasing the speed to 160-200 km/h. After all, for short and medium distances, people need to be persuaded to choose travelling by rail or bus not just over air travel but also over travelling by car; therefore, supports the European Year of Rail;
- 59. underlines the successful cooperation between the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions in the framework of the European Year of Rail. Notes with satisfaction the great interest generated among local and regional authorities by the Commission's call for event proposals aiming at promoting rail as the most sustainable, energy-efficient and safest form of transport;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> By revising the EU Directive on Intelligent Transport System (ITS).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> By revising the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Directive (AFID) and the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD), specifically provisions related to charging infrastructure in the built environment.

- 60. The mobility transition is also a social transition. Some jobs will disappear and others will change, while many new ones will also be created. It is important to ensure that workers are upskilled and reskilled in good time, particularly in the automotive industry. A large proportion of the added value of electric vehicles rests in their batteries, which are currently largely manufactured outside Europe in places with different environmental and social standards. It must be ensured that the transition does not lead to jobs and added value being shifted to regions of the world with lower climate and environmental ambitions. Sustainability needs to be looked at globally and through the entire lifecycle. The mobility transition will also have consequences for the aftermarket, independent garages and the trade in spare parts. Restructuring in the aftermarket sector must be supported and its social impact mitigated;
- 61. Autonomous vehicles could fundamentally change the way we use the environments in which we live. In view of Europe's demographic development, autonomous vehicles offer opportunities for rural and urban areas. This development in rural areas can make it possible to set up "public transport on demand" for small municipalities in sparsely populated areas. This offers regions development opportunities, social innovation potential and ways of countering rural depopulation. In urban areas, autonomous vehicles can increase traffic efficiency and improve capacity utilisation. This can help address congestion, air pollution and environmental noise in cities;
- 62. To gain public trust, there is a need for cooperation and exchanges of experience between research, industry, legislation, municipalities and regions. Improving road safety must be one of the key starting points for the development of transport automation. Automation should contribute to achieving Vision Zero for road safety. Local and regional authorities with different structures should form pilot projects for autonomous mobility. Autonomous vehicles must function without restriction on all transport routes, including in rural areas and on narrow urban and municipal roads. When developing and managing autonomous transport, it must be borne in mind that promoting, and ensuring the road safety of, walking and cycling in built-up areas are the overriding priorities.

Brussels, 1 July 2021.

The President of the European Committee of the Regions

Apostolos Tzitzikostas

The Secretary-General of the European Committee of the Regions

Petr Blížkovský

## II. PROCEDURE

Title	Communication from the Commission to the European
	Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and
	Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions
	Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting
	European transport on track for the future
Reference(s)	COM(2020)789
Legal basis	Article 307 TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(b)(i)
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of	10 December 2020
Commission letter	
Date of Bureau/President's decision	2 February 2021
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU
	Budget (COTER)
Rapporteur	Robert van Asten (NL/Renew Europe)
Analysis	25 February 2021
Discussed in commission	23 April 2021
Date adopted by commission	23 April 2021
Result of the vote in commission	adopted by a majority
Date adopted in plenary	30 June 2021
Previous Committee opinions	CoR 2613/2020, CoR 6151/2017, CoR 18/2017, CoR
	1813/2016, CoR 90/2014
Consultation of Subsidiarity	Not applicable
monitoring network	