Economic and Social Council

Economic Commission for Europe

**World Health Organization
Regional Office for Europe**

High-level Meeting on Transport, Health
and Environment

**Steering Committee of the Transport, Health
and Environment Pan-European Programme**

Twelfth session
Geneva, 19 and 20 November 2014
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
THE PEP 2014 Symposium

THE PEP 2014 Symposium

Green and healthy urban mobility: the role of urban and spatial planning
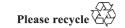
Concept note prepared by the secretariat

Summary

At its seventh session (22–23 October 2009), the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) discussed ways to more actively engage member States and other stakeholders on priority issues for THE PEP (ECE/AC.21/SC/2009/7–EUR/09/5088363/7, para. 8). As a result, the Committee agreed that beginning with its eighth session, in-depth discussions, or symposia, would be organized, including speakers from the private sector, academia, government and civil society (ECE/AC.21/SC/2009/8–EUR/09/5088363/8, para. 46).

It was also decided that topics would be in line with the four priority goals of the Amsterdam Declaration, adopted by the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (Amsterdam, 2009) and address one goal per year. Following the Fourth High-level Meeting and the adoption of the Paris Declaration, which included a new goal: "To integrate transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies", the extended Bureau of THE PEP Steering Committee decided that the next THE PEP 2014 Symposium would focus on this new Goal 5 with the title "Green and healthy urban mobility: the role of urban and spatial planning". THE PEP 2014 Symposium will be held on Wednesday, 19 November 2014 at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, beginning at 3 p.m.

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I. Introduction to the issues

A. Transport and urbanization trends impacting health and environment

1. *The challenge and why THE PEP process is key.* Transport plays an important role in people's lives, whether in providing access to jobs, services, education and leisure, as well as supporting economic development. However, unsustainable transport can have a negative impact on their environment and their health. The rapid growth of road transport has affected health and environment through congestion, automobile accidents, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and noise. It has contributed to sedentary lifestyles, especially in urban areas. The total external costs of transport in the European Union (EU) plus Norway and Switzerland in 2008 is estimated to amount to more than €500 billion per year, or 4 per cent of total gross domestic product (GDP) which in 2008 in the European Union countries was about €12.5 trillion. Passenger transport relates to 77 per cent of costs and the rest is related to freight. On top of these, the annual congestion cost of road transport amounts to between €146 billion and €243 billion (delay costs), which is 1-2 per cent of GDP. The following pressures from road transport in Europe may be considered by THE PEP to link transport, health and environment policies.

2. In the 32 member countries of the European Environment Agency, the length of road infrastructure increased by 36 per cent between 1990 and 2005, while that of railways declined by 10 per cent. The use of roads continues to increase, with more and more passenger- and tonne-kilometres travelled every year. The rising pressure on road infrastructure requires higher efficiency of transport systems if congestion is to be reduced. Road transport is a significant source of air pollution which has an impact on life expectancy in Europe.[1] Lack of adequate physical activity is estimated to be associated with about 900,000 deaths per year in the European region, where about 20–30 per cent of adults are estimated to be obese. Walking and cycling could help integrate physical activity into daily life but are also subject to infrastructure and planning limitations that lead, among other factors, to increased safety risks. Of the people dying in road traffic in the European Region, 27 per cent are pedestrians and 4 per cent cyclists. Up to 1.6 million healthy life-years are lost every year due to transport noise in EU cities. As to climate change in the EU, road transport is responsible for about 20 per cent of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, with CO_2 being the main greenhouse gas.

B. Making the link: transport policy, spatial planning, health and environment

3. As these effects are interlinked, a comprehensive strategy is needed to promote a sustainable approach to mobility and transport. The way we fulfil our transport needs is determined by various factors, ranging from factors related to individual situations and preferences to environmental conditions and available options. As such, the built environment has a major influence on transport choices and is a major driving force for the organization and provision of transport infrastructure and services. However, the processes determining how the built environment develops are largely outside of the realms of environment and health and often also outside the transport sector. There is, moreover, a strong relationship between the way that space is planned and used and how people and businesses can access the services and facilities they need. Physical form, and in particular

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[1] www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/environment-and-health/air-quality/news/news/2014/03/almost-600-000- deaths-due-to-air-pollution-in-europe-new-who-global-report

urban form, in terms of buildings and infrastructure, may change very slowly, but certain types of development, in certain locations, can have a major impact on travel patterns over long time periods.[2] For example, urban sprawl and the development of "out-of-town" malls and services, including health care facilities, have been closely intertwined with the growth of and reliance on private motorization, and have had a major and lasting influence on living, working and consumption patterns of hundreds of millions of people, particularly in urban areas. Good practices in spatial planning have made progress in stemming some unsustainable trends (for example, the UK's policy of restricting further out-of-town retail developments and European and Australian neighbourhood planning to encourage walking and cycling). However, there remain many gaps in our understanding of how to deliver urban infrastructure that genuinely contribute to sustainable and healthy transport and mobility both in new area developments and in existing ones.

II. The policy response

4.   Despite the interrelationship between spatial planning and transportation, and the profound effects of such interaction on quality of life and the environment, in most urban areas of the world, land use and transportation historically have not been planned in a way that promotes sustainable mobility and transport. As a consequence, the Paris Declaration, adopted in April 2014 at the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, included Priority Goal 5: "*To integrate transport, health and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies*". The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) 2014 Symposium aims to explore the issue of integrating transport, health and environment considerations/aspects with urban and spatial planning, including developing capacities to do so, in order to reduce the impact of transport on health, the environment and support green and healthy mobility and transport as well as sustainable livelihoods. Through Goal 5 of the Paris Declaration, THE PEP aims to focus political and public attention on urban and spatial planning that takes account of the importance of integrating transport, environment and health objectives into the process of planning and designing of our cities, with a particular focus on making cities more resilient to current and future demographic and environmental changes.

5.   Globally, the United Nations are working with governments, civil society and other partners to shape a development framework to meet the needs of people and planet, providing economic transformation and opportunity to lift people out of poverty, advancing social justice and protecting the environment. Two of the pillars of this Rio+20 agenda (*The future we want*) are sustainable cities and energy efficiency. Cities are hubs for commerce, art and culture, ideas, social development, science, productivity and much more. However, many challenges exist to maintaining cities that are also centres of job creation and economic vitality and prosperity, using natural resources efficiently and avoiding negative impacts on health. The future we want includes cities of opportunities, with access to basic services, energy, housing, transportation and more for all.

6.   The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)[3] suggests that "it is critical to look at both national and urban policy levers; and at the conditions that will enable cities to make the transition to a green economy models. In practice, sustainable and healthy cities will require a coalition of actors across public, private and civil society sectors – and multilevel governance models that allow these actors to come together effectively.

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[2] Williams, K. ed., 2005. *Spatial Planning, Urban Form and Sustainable Transport*, Ashgate
[3] United Nations Environment Programme, 2011. *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication.* Available from www.unep.org/greeneconomy.

Numerous instruments for enabling sustainable and healthy cities are available and tested but need to be applied in a tailored, context-specific way." It is suggested that in contexts with strong local government planning instruments can advance greater urban sustainability. "City governments need to coordinate policies and decisions with other levels of government, but more importantly, they need to be equipped with strategic and integrated planning capacities."

7. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)[4] highlights the transportation challenges experienced in many cities and identifies examples of good through better and integrated urban planning. However, many cities experience considerable institutional, regulatory and governance problems when trying to address urban mobility challenges through urban planning. In many cases national, regional and local institutions may be missing or their responsibilities may be overlapping, and even in conflict with each other. It is essential that all stakeholders in urban transport, including transport, health, environment and urban planning are engaged in the governance and development of urban mobility systems. To ensure effective integration of transportation and urban development policies, it is essential that urban transportation and land-use policies are fully integrated at all levels of government.

8. UN-Habitat's Governing Council Resolution 24/2 calls upon member States to step up efforts to improve urban mobility, to ensure better access to goods and services and to reduce traffic accidents and air pollution through improved urban planning, better public transport and facilities for non- motorized transport, such as walking and cycling. Further, UN-Habitat's Governing Council Resolution 23/17 also encourages Governments to consider seriously increasing urban density through intensification of land use, as part of improved urban planning, so as to reduce […] demand for transport and energy use, and to overcome a growing social divide, spatial fragmentation and resulting land use patterns. Action eight of the UN Urban Environmental Accords[5] calls upon cities to 'Adopt urban planning principles and practices that advance higher density, mixed use, walkable, bikeable and disabled-accessible neighbourhoods which coordinate land use and transportation with open space systems for recreation and ecological restoration'.

A. World Health Organization (WHO)

9. Recognizing the importance of sustainable transport for achieving and maintaining health, the WHO Regional Office for Europe together with its member States committed to work together through the Parma Declaration on Environment and Health in 2010 towards creating environments that allow for safe cycling and walking to reduce emissions of air pollution and noise from transport activities. The new health policy for Europe, Health 2020, further expands on this by aiming to support actions across government and society to significantly improve the health and wellbeing of populations, reduce inequalities and create, among others, supportive environments and resilient communities. Resilient and empowered communities respond proactively to new or adverse situations, prepare for economic, social and environmental change and cope better with crisis and hardship.

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[4] United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2013. *Planning and Design for Sustainable Urban Mobility: Global Report on Human Settlements 2013.* Available from www.mirror.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=3503.

[5] www.sustainablepg.org/accords/accords.php

B. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

1. Transport

10. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is a unique body specialized in inland transport with the overarching goal of promoting sustainable mobility and transport. Activities of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies contributing to the development of inland transport in a safe, efficient and environmentally friendly way take the form of policy dialogue and regulatory work, analytical activities, as well as capacity building and technical assistance.

11. In terms of *analytical activities*, studies in the area of sustainable urban mobility and transport include work: on public transport policies in the ECE region and practical solutions for their implementation in various capitals; on climate change adaptation measures at urban level specific to a variety of transportation modes; and on the role of transport as a key determinant of sustainable development both as an enabler and as an important activity on its own. In terms of *capacity-building*, the decision-making support tool for sustainable transport policies *For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS)* helps governments and municipalities to assess how much CO_2 is emitted by the inland modes of transport and through scenario building to select transport mitigation policies that are most appropriate for them. Finally, the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Package for sustainable mobility, adopted and published by the ITC in February 2012, includes (i) the analysis of benefits ITS can offer to solving transport issues, especially for sustainable urban mobility and transport, (ii) a strategy for promotion of ITS, (iii) a road map for the role of UNECE.

2. Environment

12. The Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP) is the overall governing body of UNECE environmental activities. CEP work is based on several strategic pillars:

- Providing the secretariat to the Environment for Europe process and participating in the regional promotion of Agenda 21

- Development and carrying-out of environmental performance reviews in the UNECE countries non-members of OECD

- Overseeing UNECE activities on environmental monitoring, assessment and reporting

- Increasing the overall effectiveness of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and facilitating the exchange of experience on MEAs' implementation

- Participating and/or facilitating the exchange of experience in a number of cross-sectoral activities undertaken under the leadership of UNECE (e.g. education for sustainable development, transport, health and environment (THE PEP), green buildings), or in partnership with other organizations (e.g. environment and security initiative, European environment and health process).

13. The CEP works to support countries to enhance their environmental governance and transboundary cooperation as well as strengthen implementation of the UNECE regional environmental commitments and advance sustainable development in the region. Its main aim is to assess countries' efforts to reduce their overall pollution burden and manage their natural resources, to integrate environmental and socioeconomic policies, to strengthen cooperation with the international community, to harmonize environmental conditions and

policies throughout the region and to stimulate greater involvement of the public and environmental discussions and decision-making.

3. Housing and land management

14. The UNECE Committee on Housing and Land Management (CHLM) addresses housing, urban development and land management challenges. It serves as a forum for exchange of experiences and best practices; it also assists member States through assessments of countries' housing, land and urban development systems, development of policy guidance, provision of advisory services and capacity-building activities

15. CHLM prepares studies to promote activities relevant to spatial planning which result in compact, efficient and inclusive cities and low-carbon and disaster resilient urban development. Among these studies, Spatial Planning - Key Instrument for Development and Effective Governance with Special Reference to Countries in Transition (ECE/HBP/146) identifies the role and benefits of spatial planning, the challenges vis-à-vis spatial planning in countries in transition, key principles, the division of roles and responsibilities, the main stages of developing spatial plans, and priority actions for countries in transition. The report Climate Neutral Cities (ECE/HBP/168) outlines a range of systemic interrelated measures to be implemented at a city level for a progressive transformation towards low-energy, low-carbon, highly resilient and ultimately climate neutral cities. UNECE Country Profiles on Housing and Land Management include strategic analysis of and policy recommendations for the improvement of the countries' housing urban development and land administration systems. Country profiles have been developed so far for 17 countries in the UNECE region

4. Non-governmental organizations

16. Non-governmental organizations play an increasingly crucial role in advancing sustainable urban mobility solutions. For example, the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) is specialized on public transport. UITP brings together public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, scientific institutes and the public transport supply and service industry, representing an international network of 3,400 members located in 92 countries covering all modes of public transport.

III. Organization of THE PEP 2014 Symposium

A. Proposed content of Symposium

17. The proposed topic of THE PEP 2014 Symposium is "Green and healthy urban mobility: the role of urban and spatial planning", reflecting the main components of Paris Goal 5. It makes reference to the importance of planning for future livelihoods through sustainable transport in a setting of ongoing changes. Key questions to be answered and issues to be addressed at THE PEP 2014 Symposium include the following:

(a) What do we understand is sustainable and healthy urban planning and what improvements do we expect from integrating transport, health and environment goals into urban and spatial planning? Which transport, health and environment goals should be considered when thinking of integrating transport and urban planning?

(b) How could existing urban and spatial planning frameworks be influenced or modified to integrate transport, health and environment concerns?

18.   Further questions that may be considered include:

(a)   Is integrated urban and spatial planning only about infrastructure?

(b)   Which capacities (and where) should be built to include transport, health and environment considerations in integrated urban and spatial planning?

(c)   What demographic and environmental changes are cities' transport systems facing today and could face in the future? How could they be addressed through integrating environment, transport and health considerations in urban and spatial planning?

(d)   Which barriers should be overcome in making strides in integrating environment, health and transport in urban planning?

(e)   What could be learned from the experiences of those who have pioneered integrating transport, health and environmental concerns into urban and spatial planning policies?

(f)   Where could THE PEP best deliver added value to the member States?

B.   Proposed format of the Symposium

19.   The Symposium will be part of the twelfth session of THE PEP Steering Committee (19–21 November 2014). It will take place at the WHO headquarters on 19 November 2014 from 3 to 6 p.m., with interpretation (English, French and Russian), opening with a keynote address, followed by a panel discussion with brief statements from six panellists, and ending with a moderated discussion.

20.   The secretariat will summarize the discussions for the Steering Committee on the following day, 20 November, under item 1 of the provisional agenda. The Committee will be invited to review the results of the Symposium and to consider possible follow-up actions in the context of THE PEP and its future work programme. A detailed programme of THE PEP 2014 Symposium, including speaker and panellists, will be available in October 2014.