

Problems and prospects for urban and periurban transport

Conclusions of the Transport Commission (Brussels - 16 October 1998)
adopted by the Brussels Central Council (18 December 1998)

The ELEC Transport Commission, meeting in Brussels on 16 October 1998, focused its talks, discussions and reflections on problems and prospects for urban and peri-urban transport in Europe. The group drew the following conclusions:

- ◇ it is difficult to evaluate the results and performance of urban transport at an European or international level because urban networks and structures are so diverse, and the indicators used are so fragile.
- ◇ this evaluation nevertheless reveals a certain number of common problems, such as: anarchic commercial zones that spring up at city gates, the consequences of urban planning choices that do not take public transport networks into consideration, the badly planned development of automobile-related urbanisation with its resulting traffic congestion.
- ◇ the commission also stressed the basic importance of political will to cope progressively and sustainably with urban and peri-urban transport problems, in particular the crucial question of integrating peri-urban offer and demand. An interesting experience in this area is the city of Rotterdam, which plans to apply a selective road system for certain target groups.

The group also brought out public transport's key role in meeting the problem of traffic in cities and their suburbs. This also implies the question of equitable sharing of resources among public collectivities, businesses and users. It also implies first a process of co-operation and repartition between the public and private network, and secondly fulfilling a certain number of conditions, including:

- ◇ co-operation among the actors responsible for defining and implementing an urban and peri-urban transport strategy in order to meet the needs of the users,
- ◇ a fare policy that is understandable and providing incentive,
- ◇ simple and complete information to travellers making use of new communication technologies,
- ◇ political responsibility that is unified in the urban and peri-urban transport area, which is backed by concertation and co-operation among all collectivities at the local, regional and national level, which can also lead to economies of scale at the financing level.
