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HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT,
ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

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

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THIRD HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH (2008)

MAIN BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

THE PEP ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report by the secretariat

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1. The Steering Committee of the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP) requested, at its fifth session in April 2007, the development of an assessment report as a key input document to the Third High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (ECE/AC.21/2007/10-EUR/07/THEPEPST/10, para. 15). The purpose of the report is to assess the effectiveness of THE PEP in improving communication, cooperation and collaboration among the three sectors and its impact on the development of intersectoral policies and strategies in Member States with regard to the integration of environmental and health

concerns into transport policy. Moreover, it assesses the institutional set-up of THE PEP and its secretariat and makes recommendations for improvement.

2. The report has been prepared by the secretariat in collaboration with the Bureau, on the basis of the information provided by member countries through a questionnaire¹ (ECE/AC.21/SC/2007/3-EUR/07/5068055/3, paras. 31–37; ECE/AC.21/SC/2007/1-EUR/07/5068055/1, annex II) and other information. It underlines the key messages of the draft declaration for the Third High-level Meeting and draws the attention of ministers to key policy issues in transport, health and environment and the achievements of the PEP.

3. THE PEP was established in 2002 consolidating the Programme of Joint Action of the UNECE Regional Conference on Transport and Environment (Vienna, 1997) and the London process of the WHO/Europe Conference on Environment and Health (London, 1999). The present report takes into consideration the entire programme since its inception in 2002.

4. THE PEP addresses key challenges to achieve sustainable transport patterns and a closer integration of environment and health concerns into transport policy. The Second High-level Meeting (2002) adopted THE PEP policy framework with key priority areas and a workplan. The three key priority areas established by the Second High-level Meeting were: (a) integration of environmental and health aspects into transport policy, (b) urban transport, and (c) demand-side management and modal shift.

5. Furthermore, the Second High-level Meeting established THE PEP Steering Committee, replacing the former Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (JMTE) of the UNECE and the London Charter Steering Group of WHO/Europe. The Steering Committee was tasked to promote, monitor, coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the programme, including through its ad hoc bodies, according to an agreed timetable, with clear milestones and a mechanism for implementation. The High-level Meeting also committed to ensure: (a) effective implementation of THE PEP by providing resources for activities under the agreed priorities, as outlined in THE PEP workplan; and (b) adequate participation of representatives of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South East Europe (SEE) (ECE/AC.21/2002/8-EUR/02/5040838/8, para. 7).

¹ The respondents to the questionnaire, as of 1 December 2007, were: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Georgia, Hungary, Malta, Moldova, Norway, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

II PROGRESS MADE IN THE PEP PRIORITY AREAS

A. Integration of environment and health into transport policies

1. THE PEP outputs and pan-European actions

6. The notion of policy integration underpins all THE PEP activities. Specific programme outputs include THE PEP Clearing House and guidance on the supportive institutional conditions for policy integration, as described below.

7. THE PEP Clearing House (<http://www.thepep.org/CHWebSite>) is a state-of-the-art Internet platform and database designed to facilitate the exchange of information and knowledge across the transport, environment and health sectors in the pan-European region. It has been administered by UNECE since 2005 and is available in English and Russian.² The Clearing House content covers 110 topics relevant to the three sectors (ECE/AC.21/SC/2008/7-EUR/08/5068055/7).

8. Guidance on institutional conditions for integrated transport, health and environment policies included a workshop hosted by the German Federal Government in Berlin (January 2006)³; a report on practical guidance for integrated policy and decision-making ([ECE/AC.21/2006/7-EUR/06/THEPEPST/7](#)); and a brochure developed by the German Federal Environment Agency, funded partially by Belgium, providing guidance for decision makers. It will be presented to the third High-level Meeting in 2008 (ECE/AC.21/SC/2008/8-EUR/08/5068055/8).

2. Progress made by Member States in policy integration

9. Policy integration can be applied across different sectors (horizontally) as well as different levels of government (vertically). It involves measures such as (a) the development of appropriate strategies and action plans, (b) the establishment of institutional mechanisms, (c) monitoring assessment and reporting mechanisms, and (d) adequate capacity-building and training.

10. Awareness of the importance of policy integration has grown in recent years. In some countries, this has led to the development of sectoral strategies and programmes to improve environmental and health protection, particularly in the fields of energy, forestry and waste management. In many countries, however, environmental policy integration is still at an early stage and is often addressed in a fragmented way. This holds particularly true for the transport sector, whose development, particularly in EECCA and SEE countries, is seen as one of the most important policy objectives and as a precondition for the free movement of people, goods and services, as well as for the development of trade and the economy as a whole.

² The framework of the Clearing House, a description of topic areas and some searchable materials are also available in French.

³ See: http://www.thepep.org/en/workplan/ia4pi/ia4pi_docs.htm

11. **Germany** has developed a strategy for sustainable development in which goals for environmental, economic and social policy are given equal consideration. **Norway** and the **United Kingdom** have national transport strategies with specific objectives for environment and health (e.g. air pollution, noise and casualties). In **Moldova**, institutional arrangements for policy integration are regulated by a law requiring cross-sectoral cooperation among ministries, departments and other institutions. The **Czech Republic** supports joint research and development projects among the three sectors.

12. To improve the efficiency and enhance communication surrounding sustainable transport policies, interdepartmental and inter-institutional bodies (task forces, working groups, committees, etc.) involving representatives of all concerned stakeholders have been established in many countries in the region, such as in **Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Hungary, Malta** and the **Russian Federation**. Other countries, such as **Belgium**, favour a step-by step, bottom-up approach for intersectoral coordination and consensus-building between environment and transport administrations.

13. A step-wise approach has gained ground in several countries where transport and environment authorities seek to cooperate closely, particularly in Western Europe (including in **Switzerland, the United Kingdom** and most recently in **France**). Health aspects have been included in the equation only more recently (a notable exception is **Austria**), often starting at the municipal level where the health and safety impact of road transport are often more easily visible. In addition, transport safety and accident prevention is generally not in the portfolio of Ministries of Health, but rather a prerogative of the Ministry of Interior or municipalities.

14. Involvement and ownership of experts from the three sectors requires efficient channels and procedures. Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) and strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) are important instruments of public participation in decision-making. Awareness of this need and progress at the pan-European level is evidenced by the large number of accessions to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Protocol). By 2007, 41 countries, including 10 of EECCA and SEE countries, have become Party to the Espoo Convention and have translated its provisions into national law. The SEA Protocol has been adopted by seven countries and is expected to come into force soon.

15. Governments are increasingly aware that transport policy that takes environment and health concerns into account will often lead to modifications in habits and behaviour. Public acceptance is therefore crucial for a successful integration approach and appropriate awareness campaigns explaining policy decisions and the environmental and health benefits for society are imperative. THE PEP Clearing House has contributed to this objective and THE PEP Toolbox for Action on Transport, Health and the Environment is foreseen to provide a platform for the effective exchange of information and data at the pan-European level.

3. Recommendations for future action

16. Policy integration can be improved through agreements or memoranda of understanding between competent authorities and stakeholders. Structured, permanent and high-level

coordinating bodies should not only propose, but also coordinate integration policies and report on implementation at vertical and horizontal levels. Moreover, capacity-building to exchange good practice in the different political, legal and administrative environments of countries in the region can open up new avenues, overcome barriers and promote dialogue between sectors. More detailed recommendations can be found in document ECE/AC.21/SC/2008/8-EUR/08/5068055/8.

B. Demand-side management and modal shift

1. THE PEP outputs and pan-European actions

17. Transport demand management can be achieved through policies, strategies and action plans at the international, national and local levels directed at improving the use of motor vehicles, supporting more sustainable travel and improving the efficiency of transport infrastructure. Specific programme outputs related to demand management and modal shift include THE PEP Toolbox (2008), guidance on economic valuation of transport-related health effects (2004 and 2008) and reports on energy-efficient driving methods (2004–2005).

18. THE PEP has developed guidance on transport-related health impacts, costs and benefits, including a focus on children as well as THE PEP Toolbox. The latter helps policymakers and practitioners address the negative impacts of transport on health and environments and promotes environmentally-friendly and healthy transport. It aims to build capacity in assessing transport-related environment and health effects, and provide checklists and case studies⁴ as well as policy briefs on selected topics and access to information from relevant sources. Many of these tools have been developed in Western Europe, but applicability in EECCA and SEE countries has been a focus of the project. The Toolbox will be officially launched at the Third High-level Meeting.

19. In 2003, a project on “Transport-related Health Effects with a Particular Focus on Children” was launched by six Member States (Austria, France, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland). It aimed to clarify costs of transport-related health impacts from noise, physical activity and psychosocial impacts that were not included in economic valuations. Key messages were summarized in a synthesis report⁵ and an executive summary⁶ which were launched at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health in June 2004 in Budapest.

20. In 2007, a follow-up project focusing on “Review methods and development of guidance for the economic valuation of transport-related health effects, with a particular focus on children” was initiated to update the guidance based on scientific literature published since. The

⁴ Examples of THE PEP Toolbox case studies include: “Health impact of air pollution in France”, “Speed limit reduction on highways in the Netherlands”, “External transport costs in Switzerland”, “Inter-ministerial cooperation in Lithuania”, “Economic benefits of cycling and walking in Austria”, “Health in transport appraisal” in the United Kingdom.

⁵ <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/trt/PEPSynthesis.pdf>

⁶ (<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/trt/PEPSynthesis.pdf>)

final report was presented to the sixth session of the Steering Committee and will be launched at the third High-level Meeting.

21. THE PEP reports on projects carried out in Riga and in Poland on “eco-driving” behaviour were submitted to the Steering Committee during its second session (March 2004) and third sessions (April 2005), respectively⁷ (see Box 2).

2. Progress made by Member States in demand-side management

22. Though it remains an important policy objective in most of the countries in the region and some countries have reported positive experiences (see Box 1), Governments have had limited success overall in achieving a sustainable balance between transport modes. The development of investment strategies that could influence the modal split more effectively towards sustainable transport in freight and passenger transport as foreseen by THE PEP has not been achieved. Other actions that were targeted by THE PEP did not come to fruition, including: a commitment to refocus domestic investments and bilateral aid to influence the modal split; to enhance collaboration with the international finance institutions (IFIs), particularly in EECCA and SEE countries; and the establishment of a special fund to support pilot projects towards such a reorientation in EECCA and SEE countries (ECE/AC.21/2002/9-EUR/02/5040828/9, annex 1).

23. However, in some countries such as the **United Kingdom**, policies have been enacted that require the preparation of sustainable transport plans by large private and public enterprises for passenger and freight transport (ECE/AC.21/2002/9-EUR/02/5040828/9, annex 1). In other countries, such as **Belgium**, State policies reimbursing companies that support commuter cycling have been shown to be effective, and in a few countries (notably **Denmark** and **the Netherlands**), cycling accounts for a sizable share of urban transport. **Austria** has launched a comprehensive programme on mobility management for companies, communities and public authorities, tourism, schools and youth organizations as well as the planning and constructing sector. A special focus has been given to promoting cycling as an environmentally sound and health promoting mobility by developing a federal master plan for cycling.

⁷ See http://www.thepep.org/en/commitee/documents/ECE.AC.21.2004.10e_000.pdf;
<http://www.thepep.org/en/commitee/documents/ECE-AC.21-2002-9E.DOC>.

**Box 1: Demand management:
shifting transport to more environmentally-friendly modes**

Several countries replied to THE PEP questionnaire that they had policies in place to promote modal shift – away from road transport, and towards rail, inland waterways and inner-city (light) rail. For example, **Bulgaria** noted that policymakers strive to cope with congestion through inter-modality for passengers and freight, revitalization of the rail sector, promotion of sea and inland waterway transport, and development of metropolitan railways in big cities. **Germany** and **Hungary** reported that they had adopted federal transport plans aimed to ensure that sustainable mobility policies were compatible with the environment.

Austria, as part of its climate strategy, launched a comprehensive programme on mobility management with four pillars. First, companies, communities and public authorities, tourism, schools and youth organizations as well as the planning and constructing sector get technical support by consultancies financed by the Environment Ministry to develop mobility plans for reducing CO₂ emissions. Second, these programmes are accompanied by financial support programmes of the Environment Ministry providing financial aid to companies, communities and other institutions for investments to implement mobility measures for CO₂ reduction with a focus on eco-driving, alternative vehicles and fuels, cycling, innovative public transport and mobility management. Third, a broad public awareness campaign has been implemented, motivating the public towards eco-driving and cycling. Fourth, actors developing and implementing CO₂ reduction measures in transport are annually awarded by the Minister of the Environment. In only two years, more than 150 partners have participated, saving more than 120,000 annually in CO₂.

Box 2: Eco-friendly driving

Many countries in Western Europe, such as **Finland**, **Netherlands**, **Sweden**, **Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom** have taken steps towards the wide-scale introduction of eco-driving. The **Netherlands**, in particular, has shared its know-how in this field with other countries such as **Latvia** and **Poland**, and has assisted them in organizing workshops to demonstrate low-cost training techniques, with a priority on professional drivers. Experience in the **Netherlands** shows that the potential energy and CO₂ savings from eco-friendly driving of private cars are on the order of 10 to 25 per cent. This is in addition to enhanced road safety and noise reduction due to changed driving behaviour. Similar experiences in **Germany** have shown that at least 5 per cent energy reductions can be achieved on a regular basis by professional drivers in commercial goods road transport by applying eco-driving techniques.

Austria has developed a three-fold programme to promote eco-driving targeting different groups. It has elaborated eco-driving training manuals and training courses to train driving teachers, special professional training courses for fleet operators, and a public eco-driving competition. The results show promising win-win situations for the reduction of CO₂ and costs.

3. Recommendations for future action

24. Activities undertaken in demand-side management and modal split may need to be further focused on areas where THE PEP can make a difference. Further work could focus on the promotion of instruments and mechanisms achieving behavioural changes of motorists, such as eco-driving techniques (see Box 2). Similarly, tools for the economic valuation of environment and health effects could be strengthened, including by further fine-tuning the mechanisms and models in line with the different institutional and geographical environments of countries in the pan-European region, particularly in EECCA and SEE.

C. Sustainable urban transport

1. THE PEP outputs and Pan-European actions

25. This activity serves to promote capacity-building and awareness-raising in sustainable urban transport, as well as to generate relevant policy recommendations for SEE and EECCA countries. Programme outputs include three international capacity-building workshops. In addition to Governments, all three workshops attracted participation from city networks, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, international transport associations, IFIs and academics.

(a) A workshop on “Sustainable and healthy urban transport and planning” took place in Nicosia in 2003 (ECE/AC.21/2004/4-EUR/04/5045236/4). The workshop highlighted the challenges in EECCA and SEE countries, including urban air pollution and its health and environmental effects, congestion, and road traffic accidents. It brought together experts in transport, environment, health and land-use planning representing local and central governments, as well as the academic community and private sector from 12 EU countries;

(b) A workshop on “Implementing sustainable urban travel policies in the Russian Federation and other CIS⁸ Countries”, organized jointly with the former ECMT, took place in Moscow in 2004 (ECE/AC.21/2005/4-EUR/05/5046203/4). The workshop provided an overview of environmental and health effects of urban transport in EECCA. It brought together participants from central and local governments, representing mainly the transport sector but also the health and environment sectors and urban and land-use planners;

(c) A workshop on “Sustainable urban transport and land-use planning” was held in Tbilisi in 2006 (ECE/AC.21/2006/4-EUR/06/THEPEPST/4).⁹ It brought together 70 representatives of the transport, environment and health sectors and land-use planners from national and municipal governments of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as from other UNECE and WHO/Europe member countries.

26. Another area of work focused on the promotion of safe walking and cycling in urban areas. To support the implementation of these activities, in 2005 the Steering Committee formed a task force of nearly 20 representatives of interested member countries across the region and organizations. In addition, the European network for the promotion of health-enhancing physical

⁸ Commonwealth of Independent States.

⁹ See http://www.thepep.org/en/workplan/urban/urban_docs.htm#Tbilisi

activity (HEPA Europe¹⁰), which collaborates with the WHO/Europe proved instrumental in carrying out this work. Outputs included:

(a) Walk 21 Satellite Symposium on Transport-related Physical Activity and Health (Magglingen, Switzerland, 2005). Experts discussed determinants, health effects and measurement of transport-related physical activity and the evaluation and effectiveness of interventions, policies and strategies;

(b) Case studies on “Collaboration between Physical Activity Promotion and the Transport Sector: Examples from European Countries”. This collection of 48 practical examples from 11 countries¹¹ aimed to support Member States in the intersectoral promotion of physical activity through cycling and walking;

(c) An international inventory of documents on physical activity promotion was developed to provide Member States with easily accessible information on promoting physical activity and to disseminate existing experiences to support policy developments. It contains policy documents from different administrative levels (national, subnational and local) and the different sectors involved in the promotion of physical activity, such as health promotion, sport, transport, environment and education. Relevant documents are available on THE PEP Clearing House.

(d) A project on the economic appraisal of health effects related to walking and cycling aimed at providing guidance for practitioners¹². Its products are meant to be integrated into comprehensive cost-benefit analyses of transport interventions or infrastructure projects, complementing existing tools for economic valuations of transport interventions on, e.g. emissions or congestion. Methodological guidance to quantify the health effects of cycling and walking and an illustrative tool (the Health Economic Assessment Tool for Cycling, or HEAT for Cycling) with a user guide was presented in November 2007¹³.

(e) A related event was the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity (Istanbul, November 2006). The main outcome was the adoption of a European Charter on Counteracting Obesity¹⁴ acknowledging: (a) the importance of physical activity, highlighting links with relevant processes such as THE PEP and CEHAPE¹⁵; (b) society’s responsibility to create favourable conditions for physical activity; and (c) the role of other sectors at the national and local levels and the importance of using different tools and instruments to promote physical activity (e.g. health and environmental impact assessments, regulations to support the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, incentives and fiscal measures, and information and awareness-raising campaigns). In addition, the Charter underlines the need to develop operational guidelines for promoting physical activity in everyday life and improving surveillance and assessment of interventions’ effectiveness. These aspects were further highlighted in the WHO document “Steps to health: A European framework to promote physical activity for health”.¹⁶ At the Istanbul Conference, two advocacy booklets for policymakers on physical activity with a strong

¹⁰ www.euro.who.int/hepa

¹¹ http://www.euro.who.int/hepa/projects/20050615_2

¹² http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/TRT/policy/20070503_1

¹³ http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/Progs/TRT/policy/20070503_1

¹⁴ <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E89567.pdf>

¹⁵ Children’s Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe.

¹⁶ <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E90191.pdf> also available in French, German and Russian

focus on environmental approaches, cycling and walking were launched as well: “Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action”¹⁷ and “Promoting physical activity and active living in urban environments: the role of local governments”¹⁸

2. Progress made by Member States in sustainable urban transport

27. Replies to the questionnaire indicate progress made on energy savings programmes, as well as on the use of alternative fuels in EECCA countries. For example, in **Armenia**, some taxis and public transport vehicles switched from petrol to compressed natural gas to reduce total emissions from transport. In the **Czech Republic**, the Ministry of Transport supports national programmes on energy saving and on the use of alternative fuels, as well as a programme on the regeneration of public transport vehicles. In **Georgia**, legislation sets higher excise taxes for imported old vehicles to encourage imports of newer vehicles. **Germany** has started research on traffic management and mobility and transport and is developing a freight transport and logistics master plan.

28. In 2005 **Austria** implemented a tax incentive scheme consisting of financial benefits (tax reduction of purchase tax) for new diesel cars equipped with particle filters, in parallel with a tax penalty for polluting diesel cars without filters. The results were highly successful, as the share of new diesel cars with particle filters increased from 4 per cent in January 2005 to more than 80 per cent in 2007. This led to a general reform of the purchase tax system which will enter into force in July 2008, with financial benefits for cars with CO₂ emissions less than 120g CO₂/km, for cars already fulfilling stringent nitrogen oxide (NO_x) standards as foreseen in Euro 6, and a general tax benefit for alternative clean cars.

29. While not all cities in the region are able to deliver dependable and cost-effective public transport services to their citizens, the promotion of clean and efficient public transport continues to be seen as an important remedy for many urban transport problems. For example in **Georgia**, the city of Tbilisi has improved the public transport system (mainly the bus sector) over the past two years. New buses were imported from the Netherlands and Ukraine and further improvements to the subway system were initiated. In 2007, about 9 per cent of the city budget was allocated for the Tbilisi subway system.

30. **Germany** noted that through research and demonstration, practical recommendations on local passenger transport services were developed for both municipal decision-makers and transport companies. **Malta** implemented the first phase of a policy designed to control vehicle access to the main city, Valletta, and a Park & Ride system operating free of charge to the public. In the **Czech Republic**, most cities had well-developed and integrated public transport systems. The Government of the **United Kingdom** is working with interested local authorities to bring forward pricing pilot schemes to tackle local congestion problems, including investment in public transport.

¹⁷ <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e89490.pdf>, also available in Russian and Italian

¹⁸ <http://www.euro.who.int/document/e89498.pdf>, also available in Russian, Italian and Turkish

**Box 3: Accessibility planning in the United Kingdom:
Integrated transport and cross-sector benefits for improved accessibility**

The United Kingdom's Department for Transport commissioned a project to evaluate the impact of integrated and coordinated transport and cross-sector benefits of improved accessibility. The aims were to produce best practice case studies on the delivery of coordinated or integrated transport solutions, to identify and analyse success factors, and to quantify the benefits and costs. The project intends to:

- Evaluate the impact of policy coordination or integration has had on local transport policies;
- Identify barriers that prevent the wider uptake of coordinated or integrated approaches to the provision of transport services (e.g. regulatory/institutional barriers to resource pooling);
- Identify barriers that affect areas where integrated transport provision has not been adopted or has been adopted to a limited degree only; and evaluate the potential impact that improved integration could bring to local authorities and partners.

31. In the **Russian Federation**, congestion has led to investment in improved public transport systems. However, these programmes tend to focus on the construction of new roads, as car use restrictions and parking charges are unpopular and difficult to implement under current legislation. In **Azerbaijan**, the rapid pace of urbanization and population growth in Baku has led to overcrowding and traffic congestion. Apart from the subway, municipal transit services are provided mainly by minibuses, which have increasingly displaced more environment-friendly streetcars and trolleybuses.

32. Some countries introduced traffic management systems to alleviate congestion. In **Bulgaria**, for example, the operational programme for regional development focuses on the establishing of automated systems for traffic management and control, introduction and improvement of traffic management and information systems (e.g. traffic operations centres, central computer systems, vehicle detector stations, changeable message signs, ramp metering stations, communications subsystems), and developing infrastructure and route networks of new destinations to remote residential areas.

33. Around one third of trips currently made by car are shorter than 3 km and there is great potential for more trips being made on foot or by bicycle, especially in urban areas. A number of countries have made progress in promoting walking and cycling as healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport through specific national plans: **Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Norway and Switzerland**. Bicycles are starting to be seen as an element in planning more sustainable transport in SEE cities. For instance, in **Serbia**, as part of a master plan for urban development, Belgrade has embarked on a programme to construct more bicycle paths. New paths for recreational biking are being prioritized initially, but the long-term target is to achieve a modal share of 10 per cent from the current 2 per cent.

34. Evidence from some countries indicates that the level of cycling tends to be higher in countries that have a more cycling-friendly policy environment (of which a national policy document is an important indicator). The two countries with the highest levels of cycling –

Denmark and the **Netherlands** – are also those that have a long tradition of cycle-friendliness in terms of dedicated investment and recognition within transport policy.

Box 4: Transport planning at the city level: Germany, Hungary and United Kingdom

Several countries have made inroads into developing national frameworks for sustainable urban transport planning at the local and municipal level. In **Germany**, municipalities must prepare transport development plans to obtain federal funding for local transport infrastructure projects in accordance with the Local Authority Traffic Financing Act. In **Hungary**, the Medium-term Urban Development Programme of Budapest (Podmaniczky Programme) includes the capital's urban planning developments for the coming decade. In the **United Kingdom**, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) system is built around five-year integrated transport strategies devised at the local level in partnership with the community.

Box 5: Improving conditions for safe cycling and walking contribute to healthy city living

Several countries have reported progress in promoting walking and cycling as healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport. The Czech Republic's National Strategy for the Development of Cycling provides systematic support to environmentally friendly transport and the Ministry of Health promotes physical activity through such activities as: "Keep it Balanced!" a health-promotion project focused on obesity prevention and bicycle safety campaigns encouraging the wearing of helmets. In Georgia, the city of Tbilisi and the Ministry of Internal Affairs launched a programme to improve safety conditions on city roads by using cameras on or near busy streets and crossways to monitor traffic and record violations or driving offences made by drivers or pedestrians. In Germany, numerous projects have been carried out over the past years to implement a National Cycling Plan. Based on a successful National Cycling Policy Programme from 1993 in Finland, which achieved the halving of cycling accidents from 1990 to 2000, an updated programme to promote cycling was presented in 2001, aiming to double cycling by 2020 and improve safety further. The positive development in road safety continued, and there were only 26 cycling fatalities in 2004, a further reduction of 50 per cent, attributed mostly to the Programme, despite reduced cycling due to poor weather in 2004. In Austria, a master plan for cycling was developed to combat climate change as well as enhance physically active mobility. The master plan contains a comprehensive package of measures aimed at an increase in the share of cycle traffic, achieving considerable reductions with respect to the reduction of GHG emissions and air pollutants as well as noise, and positive health effects due to improved physical activity.

3. Recommendations for future action

35. Subregional workshops have yielded positive results both in attracting participation across the three sectors and in developing concrete and practical recommendations, as those below from the Tbilisi workshop:

- (a) Design and implement comprehensive urban transport strategies outlining measures to be taken at local level;
- (b) Increase the attractiveness of public transport, in particular trolleys and trams, and improve regulation of privately operated services (minibuses). This could include the development of integrated ticketing systems and training for more environmentally friendly and safer driving.
- (c) Institute price reforms to manage private car use and to reduce environmental and health externalities of transport; to remove parking subsidies and introduce parking charges; to realign excise taxes to assure that fuel prices reflect the true environmental impact; and to institute a system of fiscal incentives for zero or ultra-low emission vehicles.

36. In its recent “Green Paper: Towards a new culture for Urban Mobility” (September 2007), the **European Commission** (EC) noted that a rethinking of urban mobility would involve optimizing the use of various modes of transport and organizing “co-modality” between the different modes of “collective transport” (which it considers wider than public transport, including train, tram, metro bus or taxis transport, including taxis or transport on demand). It points out that “efficiency is essential: without travel times that are comparable to the car, collective transport cannot be competitive.” Two EC Directives that apply to public transport by bus and tram and a new regulation on public passenger transport services by rail and road are intended to improve the quality and efficiency of public and collective transport. Through a consultation process with stakeholders, the EC found that citizens wanted to see the formulation of a “genuine European urban mobility policy”.

37. Despite the benefits of cycling and walking in urban areas, which include besides the important health benefits also less air pollution, noise, congestion and CO₂ emissions, the systematic promotion of human-powered mobility as a more sustainable part of the transport system has received little attention in most countries, as was noted by ECMT in 2004.¹⁹ Walking in particular usually does not receive sufficient attention despite the often relatively high shares of trips in many urban areas. One clear sign that cycling and walking are still neglected in transport policy is the fact that comparable European data on the development of cycling and walking are not available.

38. Further work is needed to encourage policies that promote walking and cycling as environmentally and healthy modes of transport. The inclusion of health benefits and other effects, e.g. on road safety, would not only lead to a more complete assessment but also provide much stronger arguments for walking and cycling as policy options. Guidance and tools should be fine tuned further and their application supported to facilitate the integration of transport-related health effects into economic assessments of transport interventions. Several barriers prevent people from choosing cycling and walking as a regular physical activity, including the perceived or real level of safety. Taking these barriers into account in policy development is therefore important (see Box 5).

¹⁹ <http://ntlsearch.bts.gov/tris/record/tris/00979015.html>

39. In its Green Paper cited above, the EC noted the importance of making alternatives to private car use, including walking and cycling, attractive and safe and that citizens expect safe infrastructure. The improvement of traffic safety, especially for pedestrians and cyclists, was also underlined.

40. Another key element is a stronger support for so-called “smart” or “soft” measures aimed at encouraging more informed travel choices and voluntary behaviour change. Such measures are instrumental in striking the balance between environmental interventions (e.g. facilities for human-powered mobility or restricting motor traffic) and behavioural solutions. Together, they are the building blocks of an integrated policy to promote and facilitate sustainable transport solutions.

41. National governments and local authorities have an important role to play in developing the environment for physical activity, and both national and local measures are needed to promote active transport (e.g. walking, cycling, climbing stairs, and greater use of public transport). To increase transport-related physical activity, policymakers would need to:

(a) Provide the elements that support physical activity (e.g. physical activity-friendly environments, green areas and recreational areas);

(b) Address the risks and fears associated with road traffic injuries to make walking and cycling safe; and provide realistic options (e.g. through land-use and transport planning, regulations for the use of protection devices, enforcing speed reduction and providing public transport infrastructure as well as traffic signals and signs);

(c) Develop walking and cycling policies within sustainable transport policies;

(d) Develop other supportive policies and regulations (e.g. developing policies on traffic education in the school curriculum, or promoting a pro-walking and cycling culture via educational and communication programmes, incentives and regulatory measures);

(e) Ensure that cycling and walking is fully reflected in routine transport statistics to inform policymaking and to monitor progress made and effectiveness of interventions.

D. Ecologically sensitive areas

42. The Second High-level Meeting in 2002 addressed two cross-cutting issues among THE PEP priorities: ecologically-sensitive areas and special needs of EECCA and SEE countries. Since all priority work under THE PEP is increasingly targeted towards the particular needs of EECCA and SEE, this section is not elaborated further here. Moreover, limited work has been done recently on sensitive areas. Several conferences took place in the early years of THE PEP and some limited progress has been made on the part of Member States, as below.

1. PEP outputs and pan-European actions

43. The 1997 Vienna Declaration of the UNECE Conference on Transport and the Environment defines sensitive areas as “areas where the ecosystems are particularly sensitive, where the geographic conditions and the topography may intensify pollution and noise and where unique natural resources or unique cultural heritages exist”. Ecologically sensitive areas

that are particularly vulnerable to transport impacts include, e.g. mountainous areas, coastal zones and wetland areas.

44. A UNECE conference at Eisenstadt, Austria, in 2001 on “Sensitive areas: A key challenge for environment and transport in Europe” was a milestone in the recognition by European Governments of ecologically sensitive areas and the impact of transport. The Conference concluded that: (a) regional development, land use and transport infrastructure plans should integrate criteria for preserving and reducing impacts on ecologically sensitive areas; and (b) public relations and information campaigns were important to promote changes in consumer behaviour.

45. In 2004, a conference was held in Vienna on “Sustainable freight transport in sensitive areas.” Participants concluded that: (a) it was important to define sensitive areas, preferably at the European Union (EU) level, as solutions will differ for different areas; (b) stricter rules and measures were necessary to protect sensitive areas and EU legislation should take this into account; and (c) policies to protect sensitive areas should be addressed at both the European level and at the regional level (e.g. the Alpine or Pyrennean countries).

46. The 2004 Vienna Conference was followed by one in Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain, in 2005 on the same subject. It covered: (a) terminology relating to sensitive areas; (b) their importance vis-à-vis the economy and the risk of overprotecting these sites at the cost of other areas (i.e. environmental standards should be high everywhere, not only in ecologically sensitive areas); and (c) the importance of expanding environmentally friendly modes of transport. All three Conferences aimed to raise awareness among European decision makers of the impacts of freight transport on sensitive areas such as mountainous regions. However, recent progress in this area has been slow and limited to a few countries (particularly in the Alpine region).

2. Progress made by Member States on sensitive areas

47. **Austria** and **Hungary** have cooperated in the transborder zone of Neusiedler See–Fertő tó, a protected area with a highly sensitive ecosystem as well as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Based on an agreement by Austrian and Hungarian Ministers of Environment made at the 2001 Eisenstadt Conference, this umbrella project, implemented since 2004, is intended to be a model in developing innovative transport solutions in ecologically sensitive areas. It focuses essentially on innovative, sustainable public transport. Both **Austria** and **Switzerland** are using fiscal tools to reduce or limit demand for road transport, pay for expansion of the rail system, and also fund efficient maintenance of the road system. In implementing the Alpine Convention, the eight countries involved have set up a monitoring system to better define and measure the needs of and impacts on the region.

3. Recommendations for future action

48. Ecological areas can be sensitive because of their natural values, but also because of their responsiveness to disturbances such as transport. Therefore, solutions need to consider both these dimensions. Specific recommendations include:

- (a) Promoting intermodal transport, thus reducing dependence on road transport, particularly in view of expected growth rates of freight transport;
- (b) Currently a very small proportion of freight is transported by rail. This share as well as transport by waterways should be increased. This will entail increasing investments in railways. Funds for this could be raised through various taxes on road use;
- (c) Expanding the role of the shipping sector, where appropriate;
- (d) Removing distorting policies, such as subsidies, that artificially reduce the costs of environmentally less friendly transport options;
- (e) Setting stricter limitations on emissions to minimise disturbance;
- (f) Properly integrating the specific considerations of ecologically sensitive areas in EIAs, and ensuring that these considerations are appropriately dealt with;
- (g) Cooperation beyond boundaries. As shown by the Austro-Hungarian as well as the Alpine examples, many ecologically sensitive areas encompass more than one country. Efforts therefore need to be made by all countries involved if they are to be effective.

III. THE PEP'S PROGRAMMATIC APPROACH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

49. While THE PEP Steering Committee and its Bureau have in general expressed satisfaction with the progress made under the existing priority areas, problems have been cited regarding the programmatic approach. The workplan of THE PEP includes only a limited number of activities to be carried out within the above-mentioned priority areas (ECE/AC.21/2002/9-EUR/02/5040838/9). This limited focus was a reflection of the large and diverse number of activities included in the Vienna Programme of Joint Action (POJA) that did not provide for a clear identity or visibility of this Programme. Due to limited funding, POJA was not able to deliver concrete results.

50. While most of THE PEP priority areas have been addressed during the reporting period, not all actions listed in the workplan were implemented in substance and with concrete results. For example, no activities have been undertaken since 2002 on ecologically sensitive areas. In addition, cooperation with other international organizations, with the exception of the former ECMT (now the International Transport Forum), has not been established.

51. On the other hand, the concentration of work on a few areas and activities facilitated a streamlined approach on the part of the Steering Committee and increased the impact, visibility and identity of THE PEP among experts and policymakers. However, apart from limited WHO and United Nations budget resources and staff to support the operational activities of THE PEP, particularly its Clearing House, the restricted and unpredictable availability of extrabudgetary resources from a few donor countries and organizations hindered the initiation of more ambitious projects.

52. In cases where resources for THE PEP activities at the pan-European level do not change substantially, it might be appropriate to keep the present narrow focus of THE PEP as recommended by the Steering Committee in 2006. Moreover, it might be worth considering fine-tuning the priorities, in particular concerning "demand-side management and modal shift" to bring the objectives of THE PEP more in line with its realistic potential, and to abandon overly

ambitious goals such as investment strategies and other measures influencing the modal split that have not been realized.

53. Activities could be enhanced in other fields, such as guidance on environment and health impact assessments, case studies of sustainable urban transport solutions and good practices (e.g. the Toolbox) or on behavioural changes, such as promotion of eco-driving, the use of public transport or cycling and walking. In these “soft” policy areas, the prestige of international organizations (the United Nations) and an international mechanism (THE PEP) might assist Governments in gaining acceptance of integration policies within public administrations and by the public at large, particularly in EECCA and SEE countries.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP OF THE PEP AND RECOMMENDATIONS

54. As noted above, the Second High-level Meeting in 2002 established THE PEP Steering Committee and its Bureau as tripartite bodies, replacing the former Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment of UNECE and the London Charter Steering Group of WHO/Europe. The Steering Committee was tasked with giving guidance and strategic direction. Since 2003, the Steering Committee has been convened annually. Similarly, the Bureau has met at least annually to prepare the sessions of the Committee.

55. However, participation rates are declining: in 2007, the annual session of the Steering Committee was attended by THE PEP Focal Points and other designated experts of 22 countries (2007). This compares to 23 countries in 2006, 27 countries in 2005 and 29 countries in 2004 and 2003. As the majority of participants were from the EU, participation rates of EECCA and SEE countries have been particularly limited. In 2007 only 5 EECCA and 2 SEE countries attended (mission costs for which were covered by THE PEP Trust Funds). In 2006, only 5 EECCA and 3 SEE countries participated at the sessions of the Steering Committee; in 2005, 4 EECCA and 4 SEE countries attended.

56. While it is understandable that participation at international meetings is costly, particularly for EECCA and SEE countries, the participation of experts from these countries is a crucial prerequisite to maintain the credibility of THE PEP. Appropriate expert participation from EECCA and SEE (i.e. participation by the relevant experts from all three sectors) is particularly critical if THE PEP wants to claim to be a pan-European mechanism addressing the needs of all of its member countries.

57. International organizations and financial institutions such as the European Commission and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have only sporadically attended sessions of the Steering Committee. This may be due to the focus of THE PEP on a few specific activities not necessarily of intrinsic interest to these organizations. It may however also be due to the limited possibilities for these organizations to present themselves and to provide input to the agenda items under consideration.

58. Another factor contributing to the lack of visibility and effectiveness of THE PEP lies in its tripartite nature and its “independence” from UNECE and WHO/Europe institutional

mechanisms. While the secretariat and conference resources for THE PEP are provided by United Nations organs, the Steering Committee reports to the WHO/Europe, to the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy and to the UNECE Committee on Inland Transport, and is mandated by and accountable only to the High-level Meetings.

59. Thus, as may be the case at national levels, THE PEP mechanism and its area of work are not in the mainstream of the activities and concerns for which these WHO/Europe and UNECE organs and their secretariats are accountable. This lack of clear ownership applies to many horizontal and cross-sectoral activities and processes and can only be overcome by a strong commitment to valuable work at a high political level on the part of the Member States and focal points.

60. Given these constraints, renewed efforts must be made to make the sessions of THE PEP Steering Committee more attractive to its constituencies. One approach could be to discuss and review at its annual sessions selected policy themes, through for example in-depth discussions on salient topics and activities particularly useful or relevant in the integration of transport, environment and health policy. Routine and administrative issues could be discussed in and prepared by THE PEP Bureau for approval by the Steering Committee only.

61. Moreover, wider participation of EECCA and SEE countries will most probably require continued assistance through international resources and donors. In line with similar procedures, it might be considered to use a certain percentage (e.g. 10%) of all extrabudgetary assistance provided for THE PEP activities to cover such expenses.

62. Finally, further efforts need to be made to increase the number of national focal points able to act as national coordinators and represent all three sectors, as well as to engage relevant members of the transport, environment and health NGO communities.

V. THE PEP FUNDING AND RECOMMENDATIONS

63. The Second High-level Meeting committed to ensure the effective implementation of THE PEP through the allocation of adequate resources and financial means for carrying out the activities under the rationalized priorities. While resources have periodically been made available by a number of donor countries, particularly for the development of THE PEP Clearing House, they have not been sufficient to implement all activities of THE PEP workplan (ECE/AC.21/2002/9, annex 1).²⁰ This was due not only to the insufficient level of funding, but also to the unpredictable nature of such funds, which made effective implementation of the planned activities challenging. In particular, it was impossible to obtain regular funds for the sustained operation of the Clearing House in line with projected requirements. In addition, the planned mechanism for subscriptions of “shares”, to be earmarked for specific or general support

²⁰ Major donors thus far include: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, United States of America, UNECE and WHO.

of THE PEP work programme, did not produce tangible results – even though a similar system had worked reasonably well in the framework of the Aarhus Convention²¹.

64. While the lack of a legal basis for THE PEP (such as a multilateral agreement or convention) makes it difficult to ensure sustainable funding by its member countries, further efforts are required for more effective fund-raising, including preparation of attractive project proposals, if THE PEP is to increase its visibility and impact in the region.

²¹ The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters.