



MAASTRICHT MANIFESTO FOR INTEGRATED, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE MOBILITY

We envision a future where public transport is the backbone of mobility – sustainable, reliable, and accessible to all. A high-quality public transport system is vital to ensure inclusive access and quality of life for all, while driving the shift to sustainable mobility needed to cut emissions and meet climate goals. Yet today, our transport system remains unequal, polluting, and overly dependent on fossil fuels at a time when the global energy crisis demands greater resilience and energy independence.

Across Europe, public transport too often remains fragmented, difficult to navigate, insufficiently accessible, or simply not attractive enough to compete with private car use. Public transport remains underfunded, while overreliance on cars continues to drive congestion, pollution, and climate change, and deepens inequalities in access to jobs, education, and essential services. For very long journeys, rail is too often more expensive and less convenient than flying. Improved ticketing, more infrastructure and better integration will push people toward more sustainable choices.

KEY OBJECTIVES

EPF, BEUC and EDF – representing passengers, consumers, persons with disabilities and older people –, jointly, and with broad support from the sector, from ALLRAIL and CER amongst others, call for a fundamental shift: public transport must become an appealing, user-friendly, inclusive, accessible, and seamless system. It should be designed not as a last resort, but as the first choice - a reliable, affordable, and dignified option that meets diverse mobility needs across all contexts, from urban to rural areas, within and between regions, and across borders, for both short- and long-distance and high-speed journeys.

As signatories, we are committed to advancing the goals of this manifesto. We will work collaboratively, advocate decisively, and hold decision-makers accountable to ensure meaningful progress at both EU level and national levels. At the same time, we call on policymakers, urban planners, industry leaders, civil society, and all stakeholders to join us in this effort and take responsibility for turning this vision into reality.



Crucially, this must include actively involving the users of the transport system in policymaking and service design, to ensure that solutions respond to real needs and truly meet people's expectations. A greater focus on end-users is essential, when aiming for a transition towards a more sustainable and smart mobility system that is also fair and just.

Affordable and accessible public transport is not a cost, but a smart investment in fundamental rights, social inclusion, economic vitality, and a sustainable future. It is a precondition for independent living and full participation – especially for persons with disabilities and older people –, supports local businesses, improves access to jobs, delivers public health benefits, and fosters more accessible, sustainable urban development, all while increasing ridership and efficiency for operators.

Only through shared commitment, forward-looking investment, and inclusive design can public transport become a truly viable and attractive alternative for all. We therefore urge policymakers to act with urgency and ambition; cities to redesign streets for people, not cars; organisations to advocate for sustainable mobility; and citizens to support and use public transport.

Together, we can transform how we move. The future of transport is public. The time to act is now.

CALL TO ACTION

1. Make public transport more user-friendly, attractive and reliable

- **Service quality:** Ensure a minimum level of public transport provision for all communities (urban, peri-urban, rural), in terms of frequency, comfort and travel time, so that it is a usable and attractive alternative. Optimise the overall passenger experience to attract choice users.
- **Ease of use:** Ensure conditions for integrated information and ticketing so passengers can easily plan, book and pay for multimodal, especially regional and cross-border, journeys in a one-stop shop.
- **Clear performance standards and passenger protection:** Improve passenger rights framework for all modes, including journey continuation, appropriate assistance and fair compensations subject to shared and fair liabilities between operators and other stakeholders involved in rail operations, particularly for integrated journeys purchased in a single transaction, and enable operators to sell combined tickets.

2. Facilitate integrated and well-connected end-to-end journeys

- **Territorial and network integration:** Deliver seamless door-to-door mobility by integrating TEN-T, regional and local public transport with walking and cycling networks through Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). Strengthen multimodal hubs, tackle missing links, integrate timetables, and reallocate public space to prioritise public transport and active mobility.
- **EU framework for interoperability and coordination:** Establish common standards and harmonised approaches to ensure interoperability of systems, rolling stock and services across Member States. Incentivise data sharing and collaboration and ensure consistent regulatory principles – such as aligned planning cycles and track access rules – to enable seamless cross-border operations.

3. Ensure that public transport is inclusive and accessible to all

- **Universal, system-wide accessibility:** Adopt strong accessibility legislation, investment programmes and develop technical standards for public transport to enable spontaneous and autonomous travel for all and covering the entire travel chain, including but not limited to vehicles, infrastructure,

websites, ticketing and information. Advance notice requirements should be eliminated or reduced as much as possible.

- **Full lifecycle implementation:** Integrate accessibility from the outset in all new vehicles and infrastructure, prioritise it in procurement, and fund upgrades to existing assets to remove barriers and meet standards.
- **Inclusive governance and capacity:** Ensure structural consultation with end-users and their representative organisations, including persons with disabilities, older people and accessibility experts, invest in accessibility training and strengthen monitoring and enforcement.

4. Make sure that sustainable options are affordable, visible and price-competitive

- **Fair and sustainable pricing across modes:** Ensure a level playing field by consistently internalising environmental and other external costs across all transport modes, including aviation and maritime, creating a coherent charging framework that guides users towards more sustainable choices.
- **Affordability of sustainable transport:** Make sustainable modes the most affordable and visible option. Correct-current price distortions favouring polluting modes, using taxation and subsidies, and improve efficiency and competition, particularly in rail. Ensure that all sustainable alternatives are searchable and bookable.

5. Make public transport a priority with stable long-term investment funding

- **Stable and strategic long-term investment framework:** Secure predictable multi-level funding (EU-national-local) for public transport, rail and active mobility – covering daily operations, maintenance and investment –, guided by a transparent and standardised framework to measure environmental impact of all modes, to inform policy, investment and modal shift decisions.
- **Climate-aligned and socially fair financing system:** Redirect funding flows away from environmentally harmful subsidies, and use Social Climate funding to address transport poverty and support vulnerable groups. Use transport pricing revenues and climate-related instruments – such as ETS (Emissions Trading System), a dedicated levy on air transport, truck tolls, or congestion charges – to structurally fund public transport and active mobility.

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