

PRESS RELEASE

JOINT STATEMENT

Giving public transport a central place in the world of tomorrow

(3 June 2020) Everyone felt the present Covid-19 crisis as a major rupture since it made obvious that today's closely interconnected world brings together new risks. One consequence of which is an increased risk of epidemics. It shall not be forgotten that the other major ramification is the rising dangers of climate change, which has not stopped during the crisis.

Our world is more interconnected than ever before in history, bringing new risks – most evident today is the increased possibility of pandemics manifested as the Covid-19 crisis that has disrupted all our lives. However, that challenge which we face was also in part caused by the deepening consequences of climate change, a concurrent crisis that has not been slowed by this public health emergence.

For the transport sector, these two phenomena are closely linked. Mobility services provide the connectivity that enables increased trade and the ability of modern economies to create ever greater prosperity. Unfortunately, many available modes disproportionately generate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) that have contributed to today's disruptions. Unlike rail, unsustainable services are responsible for 22% of emissions that endanger natural ecosystems on which we depend on for our very lives, putting us in contact with novel pathogens.

However, rail and public transport are part of the solution. In Europe, rail accounts for 7.6% of passenger and 17.6% of freight transport, but only creates 0.5% of its GHG emissions. With regard to the average energy consumption, urban rail with its 0.12 kWh per passenger-km is 7 times more energy efficient than private cars in cities. Rail's carbon footprint is significantly smaller than those of the other transport modes. Much of this efficiency stems from rail's ability to convey mass amounts of passengers and goods with vehicles that are largely already electric.

We, as members of the public transport and supply industry, are well aware of our obligations to both society and our customers. During the crisis, our employees continued to complete their duties to allow uninterrupted service, transporting essential personnel and crucial goods. In the world that will come after this difficult period, we will continue to work for one shaped by energy efficiency and advocate for the strong public transport network that it requires.

We are conscious that this, alone, will not be enough.

The customer experience must be revolutionised through the creation of seamless multimodal mobility network that places rail at its backbone and utilizes flow management to anticipate consumer patterns. It is possible to reform cumbersome elements of public transport which act as a barrier to usage. If we act now, public rail transport can be more widely associated with freedom, flexibility and comfort.

In order to increase capacity, our networks need more infrastructure to handle ever-increasing mobility demands. It must be made intelligent to optimize existing system usage. This belief is already shaping how we design future networks. Those developments will revolve around autonomous vehicles, the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence. This will be made possible by focusing on a new telecommunications infrastructure that makes the best use of 5G technology, which is being worked on by the entire rail industry.

As we collectively rethink sustainable mobility, it is quintessential that transportation is not synonymous with individual vehicles. In order to do so, the public must understand rail's value to urban life. Due to its higher capacity, its utilization can make cities less congested and less polluted, while maintaining a multimodal system that adequately and equally serves metropolises, conurbations and their surrounding regions. Public acceptance of autonomous rail vehicle integration into public transport infrastructure is key for improved mobility and diminished environmental impact.

The Covid-19 crisis will not go on forever. We will once again be able to safely meet, to talk to each other face-to-face, and to share a bus, tram, metro or train ride.

However, we will need the support of the European Union and its Member States. Public transport and the rail supply industry commends the European Commission's new "Next Generation EU" and 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposals, as well as their recent assessment of "the European Green Deal as the EU's recovery strategy" that requires "a boost for rail travel and clean mobility in our cities and regions" to achieve climate neutrality. 2021 will be the European Year of Rail, but it must also celebrate sustainable mobility and public transportation. Today, we must maintain investment in new infrastructure projects, new rolling stock, and – above all - research. Given the clear successes of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking, it must be extended as Shift2Rail under Horizon Europe to provide the sector an ambitious innovation programme that aims to transform European transportation.

Our services and products have stood the test of this crisis, and we will continue to serve as needed. We are committed to building a new mobility paradigm for Europe's sustainable future.

François Davenne, UIC Director General *"The aftermath of the Covid 19 crisis will be the occasion to build a new normal for the world of tomorrow. Railways have demonstrated their resilience and their capacity to deliver essential services even in these difficult circumstances. We all know that railway and public transport are the key for a sustainable future, provided that they are able to implement seamless multimodal mobility networks. Together UIC, UNIFE and UITP strongly commit to giving a new sense of urgency to the delivery of this paradigm for the public transport ecosystem."*

Philippe Citroen, UNIFE Director General: *“COVID-19 has quickly brought into focus the necessity for impactful climate action and economic resilience worldwide. UNIFE believes that the EC’s recent MFF and Next Generation EU proposals are powerful recovery instruments that can help complete EU Green Deal objectives but they must be mobilised for the decarbonisation of European transportation. This is only possible through a greater multimodal mobility shift with rail at its backbone.”*

Mohamed Mezghani, UITP Secretary General: *“Public transport provides an essential service in our cities around the world. During the coronavirus pandemic, we have seen how the sector has stepped forward and stood strong during this crisis. As we advocate for its future at every turn, we must continue to recognise the role it plays in delivering action on climate. Public transport and the environment are inextricably linked and with a strong local network, emissions are lowered and our cities become healthier and more sustainable. By working with UIC and UNIFE to examine the changes brought on by COVID-19, we can commit to building a sustainable future, giving public transport a central place in the world of tomorrow”.*

CONTACTS

UIC: com@uic.org

UNIFE: robert.arenella@unife.org

UITP: scott.shepherd@uitp.org

UIC is the worldwide organisation for the promotion of rail transport at a global level and collaborative development of the railway system. It brings together some 200 members on all 5 continents, among them rail operators, infrastructure managers, railway service providers, etc. UIC maintains close cooperation links with all actors in the rail transport domain right around the world, including manufacturers, railway associations, public authorities and stakeholders in other domains and sectors whose experiences may be beneficial to rail development. For more information, visit www.uic.org or follow @uic on Twitter and LinkedIn.

UNIFE represents the European Rail Supply Industry, gathering over 100 of Europe’s leading large and SME companies active in the design, manufacture, maintenance and refurbishment of rail transport systems, subsystems and related equipment. UNIFE advocates its members’ interests at both the European and International level—actively promoting EU rail equipment and standards within Europe and abroad. For more information, visit www.unife.org or follow @unife on Twitter and LinkedIn.

UITP, the International Association of Public Transport, works to enhance quality of life and economic well-being by supporting and promoting sustainable transport in urban areas worldwide. As a passionate champion of sustainable urban mobility, UITP is internationally recognised for its work to advance the development of this critical policy agenda. With more than 1800 members in 100 countries, UITP has a long history to its name, and is the only worldwide network to bring together all public transport stakeholders and all sustainable transport modes. For more information, visit www.uitp.org/news or follow @UITPnews on Twitter and LinkedIn.