Deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) in Europe:

Urban, suburban and regional public transport is not properly addressed by European legislation

EU affairs

Several initiatives currently being developed at the European level may be detrimental to local public transport customers. Indeed, some major stakeholders of long distance transport – including the European Parliament and the Council – are about to take decisions influencing services operated under public service contracts without consulting the competent authorities and operators. Various pieces of European legislation already adopted or under preparation make this possible.

Two examples of such a trend can be found in rail transport and in road transport.

Rail transport

In application of the rail "Interoperability Directive" 2008/57/EC, the European Railway Agency is preparing "Telematic Applications for Passengers Technical Specifications for Interoperability" – TAP TSI –, which once approved by a Commission Decision before the end of 2010 shall have to be applied across Europe on "potentially interoperable" rail systems.

TAP TSI are needed for international and national long distance passenger (and freight) rail services. However, TAP TSI in the existing draft version, based on the requirements of international long-distance transport, ignore the fact that "commuter" rail services operated under public service contracts awarded by local "Competent Authorities" are serving an extremely far larger amount of passengers: suburban and regional conventional rail (*metro and light rail not included*) account for about 90% of all rail passengers and 50% of the total number of passenger sx kilometers per year.

According to UITP, the draft TAP TSI are not appropriate for rail services operated under public service contracts which are part of an integrated multimodal set of public transport services by bus and/or tramway, light rail, metro and other urban transport modes. For such services, the approach must take into better account the needs of local public transport passengers and cannot rely on detailed Europe-wide rail prescriptions.

Road transport

In 2008, the European Commission (EC) adopted a Communication COM(2008) 886 on an Action Plan for the deployment of ITS in Europe and on a proposal COM(2008) 887 for a Directive laying down the framework for the deployment of ITS in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other transport modes.

Many of the proposed actions can be regarded as positive in terms of coordination of road transport. However, the ITS Action Plan and the proposed Directive do not provide enough clarity on the final objective. They clearly subordinate "urban mobility" to road transport, and road transport to travel by car (other modes are "connecting" ones to private car). The current proposals give a clear focus on the improvement of traffic conditions, and if adopted, the proposed measures will make the use of private car and trucks even more attractive than they are today in comparison with public transport.

UITP has adopted a position (http://www.uitp.org/mos/positionspapers/76-en.pdf) in which it specifically requests avoiding that the new situation created by the deployment of ITS in Europe for road transport only benefits private car users: it should be clearly recognized that the ultimate goal cannot be only the facilitation of road vehicle use but the improvement of the mobility of persons and goods. For passenger transport, the use of non-motorised modes (walking, cycling…), new mobility services and above all integrated public transport have to be presented and enabled as the preferred option in all congested areas. Proposed measures must be correlated with the pending Action Plan for Urban Mobility still currently retained in the EC back-office. It is a necessary precondition for fighting climate change, increasing energy efficiency and reducing congestion, as well as reducing negative external effects of the intense use of motorised private transport modes.

Unfortunately, in its first reading resolution adopted on 23 April 2009, the Parliament has requested to define ITS for road transport in a very extensive manner, as follows:

- Amendment 7: Article 1.2. It shall apply to all intelligent transport systems **for travellers, vehicles and infrastructure and their interaction** in the field of road transport, **including urban transport**, and interfaces with other transport modes.

- Amendment 9: Article 2 (a). "Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)" means systems, in which information and communication technologies are applied, in support of road transport (including infrastructure, vehicles and users) **and, traffic and mobility management** and for the interfaces to other transport modes, **including the provision of multimodal interoperable ticketing**.

The proposed Directive aims at designing a European ITS framework architecture integrating all transport information under a unified multimodal system. It must be recognized that this ambition is unrealistic: road traffic and multimodal travel depend on very many and different data providers, and no single decision-maker can enforce a single solution which in any case cannot fit all. Secondly, there is no reason why the common procedures and specifications needed to ensure the continuity of ITS services for private mode users should be necessarily enlarged under a single architecture to other modes used by those leaving their car at home. On the contrary, **any ITS development should be based on a proper balance between the needs of the different categories of transport customers**. Thirdly, travel data access has also to take into account the commercial and legal aspects of the production of transport and travel data by the transport services providers, especially if real-time and ticketing information is at stake. The proposal to oblige public authorities to deliver all public transport traffic and demand data from urban control centres and to integrate all travel and transport information, whatever the mode, into a single European ITS architecture for urban mobility is not in line with the proportionality principle.

Conclusion

The two examples above show that - as soon as they intend to cover urban public transport in the scope - people involved in the drafting of information and ticketing system architecture at European level are touching upon issues that they neither understand properly nor manage in practice. Furthermore, they are exceeding the limits of their responsibility. The legitimacy for developing public transport passenger information and ticketing systems operated under Public Service Requirements lies in Competent Authorities and Operators that have been awarded public service contracts under Regulation 1370/2007/EC.

The future European Parliament representatives and the Council should pay more attention to the shortcomings of the European legislation on ITS, as it may have a negative impact on urban mobility and on public transport.

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