

**To: Ursula von der Leyen  
President of the European  
Commission**

**To: Frans Timmermans  
Executive Vice-President  
in charge of the EU Green Deal**

**OPEN LETTER: The EU Green New Deal:  
The public transport sector can set Europe on a course  
to become climate-neutral**

Dear Ms von der Leyen,

Dear Mr Timmermans,

Climate change is a serious concern for Europeans as the consequences are severe. In your capacity as President and Executive Vice President responsible for the European Green Deal, the International Association of Public Transport's (UITP) European members would like to bring to your attention the key role that the urban, suburban and regional public transport sector can play in making Europe and its citizens net carbon neutral by 2050.

Transport represents almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions and is one of the main causes of air pollution in cities. The transport sector has not seen the same gradual decline in emissions as other sectors, with individual car usage and short-distance flights being some of the problems. **The fastest and most cost-efficient way to decarbonise people's daily mobility and reduce the carbon footprint of their mobility choices is to promote the use of public transport, walking and cycling.** In 2018, buses, trams and metros in EU cities carried some 50 billion passengers. This saved some 36 billion annual car trips, or 100 million daily, car trips from suffocating our cities<sup>1</sup>. Every year, public transport can help to avoid up to 20 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in cities while only emitting one tonne. Public transit users help reduce not only GHG emissions, but other air pollutants as well, thereby helping to improve air quality and public health<sup>2</sup>.

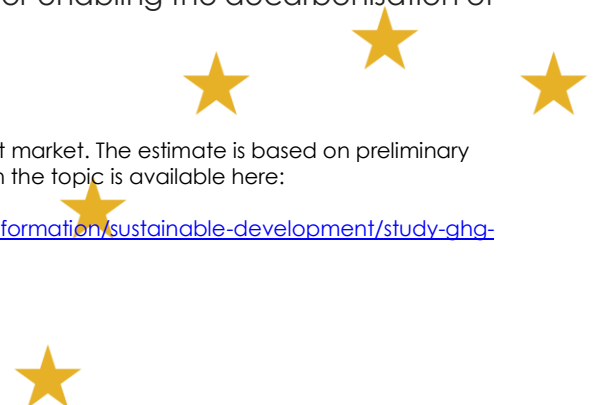
This is more and more reflected in sustainable transport policies at local, regional and national level in EU Member States. UITP therefore asks also the European level to take up this strategy in an ambitious EU Green Deal including measures such as setting specific CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets for the transport sector enabling the decarbonisation of people's travel.

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<sup>1</sup> UITP regularly monitors the developments in the urban public transport market. The estimate is based on preliminary data for 2018 in the 28 EU Member States. The latest UITP publication on the topic is available here:

<https://www.uitp.org/urban-public-transport-21st-century>

<sup>2</sup> See here : [http://www.stm.info/en/about/financial\\_and\\_corporate\\_information/sustainable-development/study-ghg-emissions-avoided-public](http://www.stm.info/en/about/financial_and_corporate_information/sustainable-development/study-ghg-emissions-avoided-public)



**With the support of the EU Green Deal, the public transport sector can achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions at the latest by 2050 in a cost-efficient manner.** At the center of this will be further efforts to decarbonise the public transport fleet.

The future EU Green Deal will have to stay compatible with other economic and social priorities, also meaning that the impact of future climate actions will have to be mitigated for the most vulnerable citizens. Besides its potential in reducing CO2 emissions from daily urban and suburban commuting, public transport plays a key role in making cities more accessible for all, providing access to education, employment and other essential services.

All of this offers prospects to decarbonise local daily mobility with strong overall benefits including clean air, reduced noise, accident-free traffic and improved quality of life in cities, altogether generating major benefits for citizens and the European economy.

Such a level of ambition will require cities to become leaders in **tackling climate change, air pollution** and the **circular economy**. UITP and its members are dedicated to supporting the achievement of such a goal by fostering practical change within public transport undertakings aligned to the **Sustainable Development Goals**. We are positioned to share successful best practices and lessons learned from delivering action on the ground so as to provide an inspiration for action that can drive change and policy to enable the public transport sector to fully contribute to the objectives of the Green Deal.

**The most affordable but largely overlooked way to achieving net carbon neutrality is to provide people with attractive clean transport options such as public transport, walking and cycling. We are committed to achieve this in our sector and the EU Green Deal can make this happen.**

For further reference:

- [UITP Climate Campaign](#)
- [2019 Implementation Report of the UITP Declaration on Climate Leadership](#)

