

Re-shaping mobility in Europe

Written by István Ujhelyi MEP on 20 March 2019 in Opinion
Opinion

A transport revolution is imminent; it is vital that we decide how best to shape it to Europe's changing needs, writes István Ujhelyi.



Photo Credit: European Parliament Audiovisual

In this report, the main focus was a horizontal approach - how the future of mobility will re-shape Europe. Mobility becomes a service, one that impacts the daily lives of citizens.

This sector plays a key role in the European economy, accounting for roughly four percent of EU GDP and more than five percent of total EU employment.

With the development of connected and automated vehicles, digitisation and the need to develop cleaner transport, the sector is undergoing profound changes that will affect all aspects of society.

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My plan was to examine where we currently stand, which legislation we have already achieved, what the key policy areas are and where the European Parliament as co-legislator could and should act.

The Commission document focused mainly on road transport, but smart mobility exists in multimodality, so we must include other transport modes.

In addition to legislative action, it will be important to sustain a focus on future developments, ensuring that any transport transition leads to a fairer, more competitive and cleaner mobility sector.

There will be profound changes in the transport sector, as digitisation poses much greater, deeper and even structural challenges than ever before.

The greatest challenge policy makers face is not to maintain the reactive approach to specific challenges but rather to take strategic action to address the broad challenges that will impact all parts of society.

"This sector plays a key role in the European economy, accounting for roughly four percent of EU GDP and more than five percent of total EU employment"

Focused research and development will be vital in maintaining the technological leadership in a highly competitive global market. It is clear that the EU needs a regulatory framework, one that encourages innovation.

The EU also needs to increase levels of funding via different instruments, notably through Horizon 2020, its main research and innovation programme.

The transport transition needs to be facilitated in a way that makes optimal use of these new opportunities from the perspective of all users of the mobility sector.

The safety and security of transport users remain of paramount importance. As human error is the leading cause of accidents, automated transport can make a decisive contribution in achieving the goal of zero casualties on European roads.

In the report, I provided some thoughts on the skills necessary in this new environment to empower citizens, both as workers and as consumers of various services.

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The younger generation learns quickly and adapts to the new technologies, but we need to remember that women make up only 22 percent of the sector's workforce, while a third of all the sector's workers are aged over 50.

However, this transition period will be challenging; it entails not only integrating automated transport into the current environment, including the provision of the necessary connectivity and infrastructure, but also enabling its safe coexistence with traditional means of transport, which are likely to remain in use for a long time.

In the report, I have underlined the importance of cooperation between the stakeholders and civil society and the EU institutions to prepare our societies and our citizens for these coming challenges.

In the coming weeks, we should support the Delegated Act on C-ITS on behalf of the Parliament. We should also continue our dedicated legislative work for a sustainable, cleaner and safe smart mobility. We urgently need to enhance vehicle safety.

The gap between actual and desired progress towards the EU 2020 target is growing, so C-ITS should start without further delay to protect European society.

European industry should maintain its global technological leadership. Through the draft Delegated Act, the Commission and the Member State experts involved in the process have established a clear legal framework to support deployment of C-ITS in Europe, ensuring continuity of services, interoperability and compatibility.

Once the Delegated Act has been adopted, vehicle manufacturers will have full regulatory clarity and the confidence to move forward with rollout in Europe. It will foster pan-European deployment and increase consumer safety.

About the author

István Ujhelyi MEP (HU, S&D) is rapporteur of Europe on the move: an agenda for the future of mobility in the EU (smart mobility)

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