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Preparations by the European Commission and stakeholders started on a Green Paper on urban transport. The document will be published in September of this year. The conference Urban transport: problems, solutions and responsibilities was organised in the framework of the EU Sustainable Energy Week. With activities mostly taking place in Brussels from 29 January until 2 February 2007.

Urban transport is a pressing European issue. Rising mobility and economic growth seem to be intertwined. For the EU to be competitive, tackling problems of congestion is an economic necessity.
For the EU to be sustainable, another set of problems needs to be dealt with.

The EU is facing a specific set of urban mobility problems:

- automobile dependency
- congestion
- land consumption & urban sprawl
- air pollution & climate change
- accidents & safety
- noise

Expected spearheads of the Green Paper are:

- promoting the use of cleaner vehicles
- improving infrastructure
- reducing the automobile’s share of urban trips
- promoting the use of public transport
- promoting cycling and walking

The first stakeholder conference linked to the new Green Paper on urban transport brought together representatives from all the sectors that have a possible interest in the Green Paper. The European Commission outlined its plans for the Green Paper. Political representatives from different European institutions and cities gave their views on the issue, and presented their expectations. During the conference particular attention was paid to the question of subsidiarity and governance. The conference closed with a speech by Commission Vice-President Barrot. Interested parties are able to give their input in the process of drawing up the Green Paper by participating in technical workshops and by taking part in an internet consultation.

The following dates are important for getting your voice heard:

- Technical Workshop 1: 'Urban transport and green propulsion,' 31 January, Brussels
- Technical Workshop 2: 'Urban transport financing: experiences from different cities,' 6 March, Budapest
- Technical Workshop 3: 'Public transport, intermodality and intelligent transport,' 7 March, Budapest
- Technical Workshop 4: 'Integrated urban transport approaches for successful and attractive cities,' date and venue to be confirmed
- Internet consultation: February-March
- Final conference: 'Towards a European policy for urban transport,' 4 June, Brussels

The Green Paper is due to be adopted by the Commission in September 2007. After publication of the Green Paper, another consultation period will begin. This whole process will result in the adoption of an Action Plan on Urban Transport in Autumn 2008.
