Policy Brief: Towards a Common European Framework for Sustainable Urban Mobility Indicators

Submitted by Hannah Figg on 16 Nov 2020

Country:
Europe-wide
As a cornerstone of its urban mobility policy, the European Commission has strongly encouraged European towns and cities of all sizes to embrace the concept of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs). By improving accessibility to, through, and within urban areas and promoting the shift towards more sustainable modes of transport, SUMPs hold the potential to improve the overall quality of life for residents by addressing issues of congestion, air- and noise pollution, climate change, road accidents, unsightly on-street parking and the integration of new mobility services.

Despite increasing recognition of the wide range of benefits linked to this strategic urban mobility planning approach, the implementation of SUMPs has been voluntary and remains limited to a small proportion of European cities. This can be attributed to the lack of financial, technical and political support as well as quality control for SUMPs from national and regional levels in the Member States where devolution gives regions more competences. Furthermore, where plans have been developed these have often failed to fulfil minimum quality standards due to a lack of uniform understanding of the SUMP concept. A number of measures have been considered by Member States to improve SUMPs’ enforcement, such as for instance preconditioning the provision of operational subsidies or grants on an approved SUMP and trained mobility department.

In order to overcome existing barriers and accelerate the uptake of high-quality SUMPs Europe-wide, the European Commission is now exploring the idea of developing a common EU-framework for sustainable urban mobility indicators (SUMI), which, in turn, formed the focus of discussions at the 7th Florence Intermodal Forum in September. More specifically, the forum brought together key stakeholders for a discussion on the definition and appropriate indicator parameters; data collection techniques and data standardisation, as well as more generally the question of enhancing the enforcement of SUMPs. Last but not least, the forum drew on the lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to urban mobility in as far as SUMI are concerned.

See the Florence School of Regulation policy brief developed here.

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