

LINK TO EUROPE

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STATEMENT

by European Office of the Metropolitan Region FrankfurtRheinMain on Draft Second Edition SUMP Guidelines

As a metropolitan region with over five million inhabitants and a steady growth in population and GDP, we experience the challenges of an overstressed transport system for passengers and goods - not only on road, but also on rail. Congestion as well as ecological and health costs of the current mobility system are challenges, that have to be tackled with a shift to a more sustainable way of mobility. The revision of the SUMP Guidelines matches with an increased awareness and pressure to act in our region.

The basic SUMP principles thereby mirror the factors we consider as central for such a mobility change: an integrated approach, taking all modes as well as goods into account; a participatory and cooperative process committing all relevant actors; a common vision with derived clear goals and objectives leading to an effective implementation plan; and especially the user-centric mobility perspective. The SUMP-concept is therefore a very useful toolkit to inspire action on the ground.

Given the vastness and diversity of the Metropolitan Region FrankfurtRheinMain as well as only very weak and informal governance structures, the "Regionalverband FrankfurtRheinMain" as the more formal supra-municipal organisation in the metropolitan region's core started a process towards a "Masterplan Mobility" for the regarding 75 municipalities with 2,3 million inhabitants. Last summer a first conference brought together the municipalities, counties and regional transport corporations. At the beginning of this year a special staff team for the "Masterplan Mobility" was then set up to design the regarding process. In the light of the draft revision we'd like to raise the following thought as a more concrete feedback to the SUMP 2.0 concept:

- ★ We highly welcome the **broadening of scope beyond big cities and urban cores**. Though the current challenges are most obvious there, the regarding congestion and pollution roots in the structure of the transport system in a bigger functional area. Especially the topic guidance on SUMP in metropolitan regions is a very welcomed complement. In this context the increased importance of governance structures and participatory processes, but also the even bigger challenge of agreeing on a shared vision and the cooperative development of "key projects" with clear responsibilities can't be stressed enough.



- ★ The special definition of a “metropolitan region” following the **OECD/EU/Eurostat classification is not suitable to grasp the real nature of some functional metropolitan areas**. Though there is a references to the 2014 Poly-SUMP documents, the perception of metropolitan areas as an urban core with a commuter belt is quite dominant in the topic guidance. This does not fit the structural reality in cases like ours – neither in what we perceive as the metropolitan region, nor in the core region FrankfurtRheinMain organized via the “Regionalverband”. E.g. the very crucial debate about new “tangential” public transport linkages in a poly-centric region and the integration with an Europe-wide relevant air and rail node in the core shows, that our structural challenges are different from the patterns that can be described under the mentioned oversimplified definition.
- ★ This point also highlights, that the **crucial role of metropolitan regions** in their nature as functional areas and as the **decisive level of action for a sustainable mobility change** is still underestimated in the national and European debates and actions. That might be especially true with regard to the German case, were this intermediate level between “local” (understood as cities or municipalities) and regional (mainly understood as the “Länder”) is too often neglected. In addition the Metropolitan Region FrankfurtRheinMain covers municipalities of several “Länder”.
- ★ Such a perspective sheds further light on the typical **peri-urban transport aspect of metropolitan regions** also mentioned in the topic paper, meaning that they incorporate urban as well as rural characteristics. Spaces with a more rural nature are e.g. still characterised by a high proportion of motorised individual traffic – not at least because there is a lack of alternative mobility offers today. This prevalent user preference in favour of the private-owned car then leads to a high car-transport volume in the everyday commuter traffic in the urban cores. The question of an infrastructure for alternative fuels but as well the need for a renaissance of public transport through new or renewed connections gets even more significant in this regard. A better multimodal offer can, seen through the peri-urban glasses, not only be restricted to digital solutions, but also needs a better physical connection through a regional network of mobility-hubs, making the frequent shift from car to rail or bus, but also to walking and cycling, easier. In a peri-urban regional transport perspective, the support of active mobility through the setup of fast-track biking lanes as a regional cycling backbone and maybe more creative solutions like cable railways get attention. In this regard, we also welcome the plan of publishing a topic paper on SUMP in small- and medium-sized towns at the end of this year.
- ★ Last, but most important, we highly support the analysis, that a strong **connection of mobility planning and the bigger regional development strategies** is key. Especially a **close alignment of multimodal transport planning and the land-use planning** (also with a combined implementation) is absolutely necessary, if we want to address - besides technical innovations and behavior shift - also the very basic question of traffic-avoidance and making different modal choices more attractive. This is the real added value a **regional-SUMP approach** can create. Knowing the big fundamental challenges that the implementation of this principle brings with it in our region, we hope even more, to see this thought also stressed in the European debates in the future.