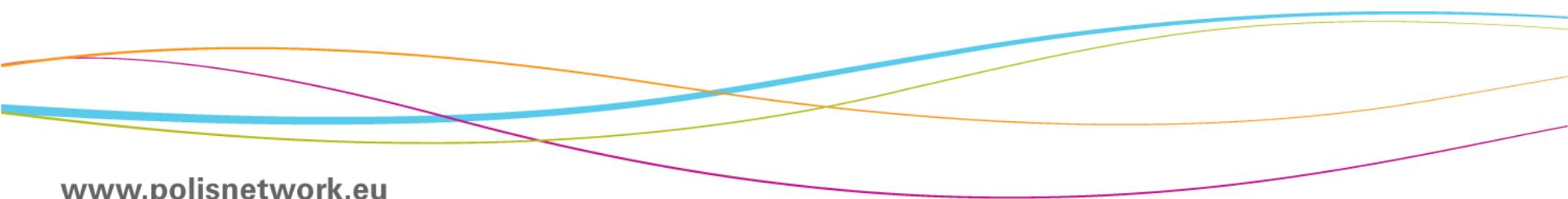




EUROPEAN CITIES AND REGIONS NETWORKING
FOR INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

Position paper on the health benefits of active travel

www.polisnetwork.eu



Definition

- **Active travel relates to regular physical activity undertaken as a means of transport. It includes travel by foot, bicycle and other non-motorised vehicles. Use of public transport is also included as it often involves some walking or cycling to pick-up and from drop-off points.**

Anticipating future challenges

- Introduction on the evolution of urbanisation and urban mobility.
- 1 out of 10 deaths in Europe can be attributed to the lack of physical activity.
- " " " " are spent in public health to treat non-communicable diseases (NCD) due to sedentary lifestyles, obesity among children and adults, and exposure to noise and air pollution.
- These trends can be reversed.
- A shift to more active travel can shield higher health benefits in the short term than improving the performance of internal combustion engines to reduce NO_x and other emissions or the transition to alternative fuels. Meeting minimum levels of physical activity on a daily basis would considerably reduce by 30% the risk of all premature deaths.
- We need to make walking and cycling safer: of 92,000 deaths per year in Europe pedestrians and cyclists are road users most at risk, they constitute 31% of all road death.

Benefits of active travel: economic and social benefits

- Reduce future costs for public health systems.
- Reduce risk of premature deaths.
- Contribute to achieve the objectives of European policy.
- Direct economic benefits related to jobs creation and the cycling economy.

European policy recommendations

- **Integrating references to health in the work on SUMP.**
- **Outlining Health Impact Assessment (HIA) methods to integrate health indicators into land use plans.**
- **Encourage authorities to change appraisal guidance to move away from a focus on the journey time benefit and instead include HIA and health factors from increasing walking or cycling.**
- **Encourage suitable policy frameworks to design inclusive neighbourhoods for liveable communities where active travel modes are prioritised.**
- **Establishing mechanism to internalize external costs in transport including physical inactivity.**

European policy recommendations

- *Promote the use of HEAT for the appraisal of health benefits in transport projects.*
- Take into consideration the potential of the economic dimension of active travel, long-term savings in healthcare costs, environmental benefits, and creation of green and healthy jobs when appraising new land use and transport projects.
- Exploiting new and existing platforms and networks for the dissemination of methods and tools (i.e. ELTIS, Covenant of Mayors, Polis, Healthy Cities network), and enabling knowledge exchange and training opportunities among peers, including across continents (U.S.).
- Promote the use of other THE PEP tools: Clearing house, toolbox.

