



Press release

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SECURING THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVE TRAVEL IN EUROPE

The urban mobility network Polis calls for action on active travel and health in a position paper produced following the roundtable discussion on Transport & Health held at the 2011 Annual Polis Conference. The paper stresses the urgency of emphasising the link between transport and health in certain EU policy areas, and the need for more initiatives, including by the EU institutions, to actively promote the health benefits of active travel.

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Background

A shift to active mobility and public transport combined with improved land use can yield immediate health benefits, much greater than those achievable by focusing only on improving air quality and the local environment through greater fuel and vehicle efficiencies. More walking and cycling can generate important economic benefits through large public health gains (which are not offset by accident costs). While physical activity deficiency is one of the leading risk factors for ill-health in the WHO European Region, it is now recognized that more trips by bike or foot are an easy and accessible way for individuals to raise their levels of physical activity.

Recommendations

1. References in European policy documents to improving health through active travel should form the basis of shared objectives, policies, work programmes and investment to increase levels of walking and cycling.
2. A leader for the work on active travel and health should be clearly identified in the European Commission.
3. Stakeholders from the health, environment and transport sectors should be consulted to explore the opportunity of further European initiatives on this topic.
4. Initiatives on the internalisation of external costs in transport should aim at ensuring that all health costs are taken into account, including physical inactivity.
5. The economic dimension of active mobility, and the long-term savings it can generate in healthcare costs and environmental benefits, should be taken systematically into consideration when appraising transport and urban development plans and policies.
6. Institutions at the European level may wish consider funding activities to securing the benefits of active travel in Europe.

Read the full paper here: [click here](#).



For more information, please contact Polis:

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Notes to editors:

Polis is a network of European cities and regions working together to develop innovative technologies and policies for local transport.

Our aim is to improve local transport through integrated strategies that address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of transport. To this end, Polis supports the exchange of experiences and the transfer of knowledge between European local and regional authorities.

In Polis, decision makers are provided with the necessary information and tools for making sustainable mobility a reality. Within the Political Group of Polis, they formulate recommendations to the European institutions.

Polis members meet regularly in working groups organised in the framework of four pillars:

- Environment and Health in Transport
- Mobility and Traffic Efficiency
- Transport Safety and Security
- Social and Economic Aspects of Transport

The Italian city of Perugia holds the 2012 presidency of the Polis network. Polis has a permanent secretariat located in Brussels.

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