



EASTERN PARTNERSHIP
CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

EaP CSF Position Paper

NEVER WASTE A CRISIS: HOW EAP COUNTRIES CAN CAPITALISE ON COVID-19 TO IMPROVE URBAN MOBILITY

#Transport

June 2021

Authors

The recommendations contained in this report were developed by Vladyslav Samolienko and Tymofii Nahornyj within the context of a series of COVID-19 policy papers published under the EaP CSF #PrepareEaP4Health Campaign and by Gela Kvashilava, Chairman of the Partnership for Road Safety, Georgia. The report was consulted with transport experts among members of the EaP CSF Working Group 3 thanks to the facilitation of Tatiana Mihailova, Automobile Club Moldova. The report was compiled and edited by Tania Marocchi and Calum Thomson at the EaP CSF Secretariat.

Never waste a crisis: how EaP countries governments and cities can capitalise on COVID-19 to improve urban mobility in the long term

June 2021

EaP CSF position paper

Introduction

The pandemic has revealed weaknesses in EaP countries' planning and management of transport systems, especially in cities. Pre-COVID-19 weaknesses, such as a lack of (adequate) bicycle networks or the inadequate service provided by public transport, had a direct impact on EaP cities' resilience to the challenges created by COVID-19 and highlighted the need to adapt urban transport to global threats.

COVID-19 has had a number of effects on urban mobility: on the one hand, lockdowns and teleworking provisions have drastically reduced the number of people moving out and about. At the same time, people have been reluctant to use public transport – due to the increased risk of disease transmission in closed spaces with poor ventilation and infrequent sanitisation – and more inclined to walk, cycle, use micro-mobility options (such as electric scooters) or drive their private cars. According to the national statistics offices of Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, in 2020, public transport recorded a ridership decline of about 40-50% compared to 2019. This has caused a significant loss of revenues for public transport companies. The Kyiv Metro alone reported a loss of more than 620 million UAH (18,5 million EUR) due to the closure that occurred between March 17 and May 25, 2020.¹

So far, in EaP cities, the widespread use of bicycles has been prevented by the absence, or small number of dedicated cycling infrastructure, and the danger of cycling in the city near cars travelling at speeds above 50 km/h. However, according to calculations done by the NGO 'UCycle'², in 2020, the number of cyclists on the streets of Kyiv increased 2.5 times, even if the infrastructure continues to be considered unsafe. These figures point to a momentum for cycling and alternative urban mobility which has been created by the pandemic and that should be capitalised on further. As alternative modes of transport become more of a global trend, particularly in big cities, where micro mobility has been increasing through the emergence of sharing services such as electric scooters, several elements suggest that trends seeing an increase in the use of bicycles and other sustainable transport options will intensify in 2021 and beyond. EaP countries should ride this wave and ensure that the new healthy and sustainable urban mobility habits taken up in 2020, favoured by lockdowns and other pandemic-related concerns,

¹ Hmarochos, *Kyiv Metro and Kyivpastrans ask the city to compensate them for "quarantine losses"* <https://hmarochos.kiev.ua/2020/07/23/kyivskyj-metropoliten-ta-kyivpastrans-prosvat-misto-kompensuvaty-vim-karantynni-zbytky/>, 23.07.2020

² U-cycle, *Report on the count of cyclists in Kiev*, <https://u-cycle.org.ua/articles/pidrakhunok-osin-2020/>, 22.10.2020

have a solid future beyond the current circumstances. The redistribution of street space for the creation of bicycle and bus lanes, the promotion of active mobility and the integration of modes of transport are options that must be considered, along with the adoption of tax incentives for micro mobility operators, support for public transport companies, a reduction of taxes on the import of bicycles and the adoption of strategies and provisions for the development of sustainable urban mobilities.

The strategic documents of the EU and the World Bank, including the Sustainable and Intellectual Mobility Strategy, approved in December 2020, push countries toward the global goals of sustainable mobility, where the transport ecosystem must develop harmoniously with attention paid to: accessibility, safety, efficiency and environmental friendliness. Eastern Partnership countries have not yet adopted targeted policies to improve urban mobility. To achieve such goals, all EaP countries will need years, but the crisis caused by COVID-19 offers the opportunity to set up the necessary measures to achieve security, efficiency, accessibility and environmental friendliness in the EaP Region as well. A comprehensive approach to urban mobility decision-making based on interdisciplinary research should replace the current approach, based on authorities' subjective perceptions and preconceived ideas. The digitisation of services, introduction of intelligent transport systems, and e-tickets in all capitals of the Eastern Partnership countries should not be postponed further. Decision makers at the national and local level should cooperate closely and actively seek synergies with international and non-governmental organisations. Governments and cities should work together to strengthen the resilience of the urban transport system in the short and long term. Governments should adopt protocols on state and local government infrastructure policy in the event of epidemics and introduce appropriate tax incentives. Cities should take advantage of the conditions created by the pandemic to rethink their spaces and services to improve urban mobility and make it more sustainable. The governments of the Eastern Partnership countries should change rules governing spatial planning, simplifying some procedures. In addition, incentives should be introduced for the creation of green corridors, park areas, tax benefits for businesses, including those engaged in passenger transportation, maintenance and the production of bicycles.

Recommendations to EaP countries' governments:

At the national level, the parliaments and governments of the Eastern Partnership countries are recommended to:

Foresee now, strategies for future pandemic-like events:

1. **Adopt a law or governmental act that would approve a protocol on state and local government infrastructure policy in the event of epidemics. Procedures for approvals and construction of transport infrastructure for periods of quarantine should be simplified.** Given the lack of laws or governmental acts that would provide a protocol of mandatory and recommended measures for mobility and infrastructural changes during the epidemic, they should adopt the necessary official documents. Procedures for approvals and construction of transport infrastructure during periods of quarantine should be simplified.
2. **The Eastern Partnership countries have the opportunity to work with the EU to support the development of relevant acts and this opportunity should be used in the interests of security and mobility for citizens.** With



many countries riding violent third waves and vaccination campaigns moving forward slowly, the COVID-19 state of emergency can be expected to last several more months. Moreover, with climate change advancing and the pace of globalisation increasing, the occurrence of mass diseases can be expected to rise in the future, with consequences affecting urban mobility. Emergency procedures and protocols should be formulated to regulate possible emergency scenarios in the future, including recommendations for city services, business and the public.

Adopt measures that support the growth of the public and urban mobility sector:

3. **Develop comprehensive mobility/transport plans or SUMPs (Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans) at the municipal level.** Although the elaboration of SUMPs should be the responsibility of local authorities, this process should be streamlined and central governments should set up the proper legal and regulatory framework in which cities will develop their mobility plans, incorporating local sustainability goals in line with national goals and targets. New legal requirements should be introduced to ensure that municipalities with a population greater than 20,000 develop comprehensive mobility strategies and plans by 2025.
4. **Provide economic support to public transport companies to ensure they can survive the loss of income due to reduced ridership:**
 - a. provide carriers with temporary support (subsidies);
 - b. adopt simplified credit programmes for obtaining loans to cover losses, refinancing of previous loans for the acquisition of assets directly related to transport activities (rolling stock, equipment);
 - c. offering lending programmes for fleet renewal at low or zero interest rates;
 - d. extending the terms of repayment for regular payments on loans / lease agreements.
5. **Promote the development of micro mobility and shared mobility services, adopt measures that would create a temporary reduction of the tax burden on businesses operating in the sector and adapt the infrastructure accordingly.** Create conditions for the operation and regulation of sharing mobility services such as bike or scooter sharing, as well as their maintenance. Sharing mobility services are environmentally friendly but many currently operate in legislative grey areas and suffer from a lack of regulation. Increasingly popular with the public, these services are unfortunately involved in many accidents, particularly those involving scooters as these are often less familiar to members of the public than bicycles, requiring better balance to operate safely. Their design is typically unsuited to uneven and potholed road surfaces common in the EaP, making it all the more necessary to invest in the renovation of biking and micro mobility infrastructure at the same time.

Adopt measures that incentivise cycling and make it a safer option for citizens:

6. **Establish national standards and strategies for the design and construction of non-motorised transport (NMT) modes, particularly cycling.** Most EaP countries do not have national policies or strategies in place to support the development of cycling, as well as clear standards for cycling infrastructure planning and construction.



With the exception of Belarus – which has a National Concept for the Development of Cycling – and Ukraine – which approved a standard for the construction of cycling infrastructure in 2020 and began to develop a national strategy for cycling – there are no official strategies in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and Moldova. Such policies are essential in creating alternatives to public transport with no risk of increasing car usage. Contemporary technical standards are mandatory for planners and builders, without them, the construction of cycling infrastructure risks not being included in street development and reconstruction plans, or being of poor quality.

7. **Support and promote the development of non-motorised transport (NMT) modes**, by planning and designing an NMT network that is *coherent* (based on demand and travel purposes), *direct* (fastest route possible), *comfortable* (minimum width and adequate pavement), *attractive* (surrounded by a good environment) and *safe* (adequate signalling, maintained and with police presence if necessary). Implementation should begin with the development of a pilot project on the planned network. Pilot projects should receive funding from the central and local governments at the initial stage, as best practices have shown from other countries.
8. **Amend traffic rules to ensure a reduction of speed limits in cities to a maximum of 30 km/h, especially in areas around schools, which would increase the safety of various road users.** In EaP cities, cars are allowed to drive at 70-100 km per hour, posing a significant danger to pedestrians and cyclists. Speed is recognised as a key factor in the occurrence and gravity of accidents and numerous studies have found that the effects of hitting pedestrians or cyclists at speeds above 55 km/h are inevitably serious injury or death. Reducing speed in urban areas will contribute to road safety, reducing accidents and deaths. School zone traffic calming measures should also be introduced. This proposal is likely to be met with some resistance as 30km/h is much slower than the typical speed at which motorists in EaP cities travel. Implementing the 30km/h limit around schools is seen as an achievable stepping stone that will gradually pave the way for 30km/h limits in other parts of the city. To improve the speed management system, the existing practice in Eastern Partnership Countries of having speed enforcement tolerance levels of 15 and 20km/h should be replaced by 10% over posted speed limits.
9. **Adopt measures that simplify the movement of cyclists, making cycling more attractive**, taking into account the proposals of experts and public activists. These measures can include allowing cyclists to move in columns, turn left at intersections, etc.

Adopt indicators that would make progress measurable and adjustable

10. **Establish concrete indicators and set ambitious, yet realistic targets that would support evidence-based policy making and a clear assessment of results.** Indicators should be used to measure progress towards sustainability, for benchmarking, and for evaluating the effectiveness of policies and actions towards sustainable urban transport. Targets are needed for the formulation of strategies and action plans, as well as to monitor progress in achieving objectives. The key objectives, clustered under the four dimensions of sustainability (social, environmental and economic sustainability and degree of participation of civil society) are listed below. The list is not exhaustive and should be periodically updated.



SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
<p>a. Improve transport safety and security:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of road traffic accidents; ii. Number of fatalities/ injuries from road traffic accidents; iii. Incidence of travel related crime; <p>b. Ensure inclusiveness of the transport system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coverage of the Public Transport (PT) network; ii. Number of vehicles with provision equipped to transport disabled persons; iii. % of seats for people with reduced mobility (pregnant women, disabled and elderly persons); <p>c. Foster the development of transport modes that are both socially inclusive and environmentally sound:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Modal split (share of daily trip by public transport/non-motorised transport out of the total daily trips; 	<p>d. Reduce negative effects on human health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. % of population living in areas affected by local air/ noise pollution (e.g., PM10 concentration, GHG emissions) – where levels are higher than acceptable norm; <p>e. Reduce noise pollution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. dB (decibels); <p>f. Reduce transport contribution to climate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Per capita emission
ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY	DEGREE OF PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY
<p>g. Prioritise investments in socially, economically, and clean transport modes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Annual transport investments by mode (pedestrian routes, personal vehicle, public transport, NMT, micro mobility); 	<p>h. Improve Institutional reform for better delivery of transport policies and projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Level of coordination between governmental tiers; <p>i. Involve various stakeholders in the decision process for transport policies and projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Number of stakeholders involved; ii. Number and effectiveness of existing institutional mechanisms for public participation and consultation.

Work with civil society on awareness raising campaigns:

11. **Invest in awareness raising campaigns promoting sustainable types of movement and safe behaviour on the roads.** So far, officials have provided advice on keeping distance, washing hands, and avoiding crowds. This advice should be complemented with campaigns explaining how to use public transport and urban mobility options safely, as well as the benefits of walking and cycling. In this domain, cooperating with civil society organisations can be extremely effective to ensure wider societal outreach and increase people's use of sustainable mobility options.

Recommendations to EaP countries' cities and municipalities:

At the local level, Eastern Partnership countries' cities and municipalities are recommended to:

Improve the policy and administrative set-up that can lead to effective urban mobility planning

1. **Develop urban mobility plans for cities.** Standard measures for sustainable urban development plans include mandatory support for eco-programmes, improved pedestrian accessibility, cycling and public transport. Such plans do not exist at the moment and should be adopted.
2. **Introduce the position of cycling officers, a structural subdivision in city administrations responsible for the development of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure.** Municipalities should have dedicated officials who would be responsible for the development of cycling infrastructure, cooperating with international and non-governmental partner organisations.
3. **Adopt measures that ensure continuous data collection, research facilitation and evidence-based action.** Future development of pedestrian and cycling infrastructures should be based on evidence and data-driven. Data should be collected on popular routes, modal splits and locations to adapt public transport and increase pedestrian and cyclists' accessibility accordingly.
4. **Develop a core network of high-quality on-ground public transport lines (incl. high frequency, dedicated bus and tramway lanes, navigation system with maps and timetables on stops), green corridors, information on places for renting micro mobility vehicles.** This solution will make it easier for people who are poorly oriented in the area to find information about transport;

Adopt measures that will improve pedestrian and cycling infrastructure

1. **Increase pedestrian accessibility and develop barrier-free space.** Examples of cities in the United Kingdom and Spain have shown that it is possible to create temporary pavement extensions and increase the width of existing ones. Chisinau and Baku do not have pavements everywhere, and in all EaP capitals pavements remain narrow or in poor condition, making it difficult, particularly for less mobile groups, to move independently.
2. **Increase the length and connectivity of the cycling infrastructure network:** due to the insufficient distribution of cycling infrastructure for safe travel in all cities of the Eastern Partnership countries, temporary cycle paths should be installed while new, permanent cycling routes are built. The experience of Kyiv shows that a simple



- change in the organization of traffic in different parts of the city can significantly increase the density of the bicycle network.
3. **Create green corridors from residential areas to business areas of cities.** Green corridors can connect different areas of cities with parks and forests. Due to the eco-friendly environment and barrier-free space, such corridors are convenient and safe for pedestrians and cyclists. Such routes should be inserted in larger plans aimed at protecting the green areas surrounding cities which are currently threatened by intensive urban development.
 4. **Provide for the construction of bypass roads for transit traffic around cities.** This measure will lead to a reduction in transit traffic, including freight transport, which will result also in reduced safety risks for all road users – particularly pedestrians and cyclists – as well as in a reduction of emissions.

Conclusions

The pandemic has revealed weaknesses in EaP countries' transport systems, making more evident the need to develop SUMPs and urban mobility plans for cities. Decision makers at the national and local level should cooperate closely together, working in synergy with international and non-governmental organisations to strengthen the resilience of the urban transport system, adopting protocols and frameworks for the development of non-motorised transport modes. EaP governments in particular should simplify procedures and facilitate the coherent development of urban mobility across their countries.

This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.



Funded by
the European Union

About the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) is a unique multi-layered regional civil society platform aimed at promoting European integration, facilitating reforms and democratic transformations in the six Eastern Partnership countries - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Serving as the civil society and people-to-people dimension of the Eastern Partnership, the EaP CSF strives to strengthen civil society in the region, boost pluralism in public discourse and policy making by promoting participatory democracy and fundamental freedoms. For more information, please visit the EaP CSF website at www.eap-csf.eu

Secretariat of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
Rue de l'Industrie 10, 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. +32 (0)2 893 2585; email: info@eap-csf.eu
www.eap-csf.eu