The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy of the European Commission – A critical assessment

BMU Cluster Transport & PtX | Ronja Kwasniok & Ann-Margret Bolmer | 28/01/2021
1. **Background**: The Smart and Mobility Strategy is part of the EU Green Deal and aims to reduce transport emissions by 90% until 2050.

2. **Content**: How does the European Commission plan to achieve this?

3. **Critical Assessment**: Does the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy initiate necessary climate action within Europe’s transport sector?

4. **Discussion**
1. Background

The Smart and Mobility Strategy is part of the EU Green Deal and aims to reduce transport emissions by 90% until 2050.
The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy is part of the EU Green Deal.

- Transport sector of high economic and social importance for the EU:
  - 5% of the EU’s GDP
  - 10 million people
  - 13.2% of every household’s budget

BUT it’s responsible for almost a quarter of EU’s GHG emissions!

- EU Green Deal (2019) Action plan: Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility

EC 2020. Mobility Strategy | Mobility and Transport (europa.eu)
The EU Green Deal includes the target to reduce transport-related GHG emissions by 90% until 2050.

To meet this, the European Commission adopted the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy.

Even if existing measures are implemented as planned, EU’s transport emissions won’t decrease significantly!

The 90% scenario is far outside current trends.

Source: Own chart based on EEA 2020, Greenhouse gas emissions from transport in the EU — European Environment Agency (europa.eu)
2. Content

How does the European Commission plan to achieve this?
The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy includes an action plan interlinking 3 objectives, 10 flagships, 14 milestones and 82 initiatives. Example of Flagship 5. The full action plan and strategy can be found here.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FLAGSHIP 5 - PRICING CARBON AND PROVIDING BETTER INCENTIVES FOR USERS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M.9: Equal competitiveness between rail and water traffic and road transport</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.10: Fully covered external costs by transport users</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Revision of the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS), with respect to maritime transport; aviation; and CORSIA¹¹</td>
<td>2021</td>
</tr>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Revision of the Energy Taxation Directive¹²</td>
<td>2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Review VAT exemptions for international passenger transport</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Put forward market-based measures for shipping at IMO</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Establish EU framework for harmonised measurement of transport and logistics emissions</td>
<td>2022</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Issue guidelines for operators and platforms to inform passengers about the carbon footprint of their trip and to enable passengers to voluntarily offset it, and for wider use of eco-routing for (in-built) navigation software</td>
<td>2023</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Development of an environmental label programme for aviation by EASA</td>
<td>2022</td>
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Source: EC 2020 (resource.html (europa.eu))
An irreversible shift to zero-emission mobility.

**Reduce dependence on fossil fuels**

**By 2030:**
- M1: 30 mio. cars & 80,000 lorries with zero-emissions
- M6: 100 climate-neutral cities in Europe
- M4: Carbon neutral scheduled collective travel under 500 km

**By 2035:**
- M3: Zero-emission large aircraft ready for market

**By 2050:**
- M2: Nearly all vehicles will be zero-emissions

**Make alternative choices available**

**By 2030:**
- All large and medium-sized cities put in place their own SUMPs.
- M.8: Transport by inland waterways and short sea shipping will increase by 25%
- M.5: Traffic on high-speed rail will double

**By 2050:**
- M.7: Rail freight traffic will double

**Internalise external costs of transport**

**By 2030:**
- M.9: Equal competitiveness between rail and waterborne intermodal transport with road traffic in the EU

**By 2050:**
- M.10: All external costs of transport covered by transport users

01/02/2021

The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy of the European Commission
Achieving seamless, safe and efficient connectivity.

Unleash full potential of data.

By 2030:

M.11: Paperless freight transport and seamless multimodal passenger transport through electronic ticketing

M.12: Deploying automated mobility on large scale
A more resilient single European transport area for inclusive connectivity.

Build a strong and resilient single market
By 2030:
Core network of the multimodal Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) with high speed connectivity (M13)

By 2050:
Comprehensive network of the TEN-T (M13)

Ensure the highest safety and security standards
By 2050:
Zero deaths by all modes of transport in the EU by 2050 (M14)

Create a mobility system that is fair and just for all:
Affordable and accessible mobility in all regions and for all passengers
Improved conditions for workers
Massive investments are required for Europe’s transformation to sustainable and smart mobility.

- **Public and private investments** required at national level from 2021-2030:
  - €130 bn./year for vehicles and the deployment of renewable and low carbon fuels infrastructure
  - €100 bn./year to close the “green and digital transformation investment gap“ for infrastructure (incl. €30 bn./year to complete the TEN-T core network)

![EU Funding Diagram](source: Own illustration based on European Commission 2020a, p.17f.)
3. Critical Assessment

Does the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy initiate necessary climate action within Europe's transport sector?
Yes. In some areas, the strategy provides useful and promising approaches.

- Simplified mobility data exchange through the creation of a European mobility data space.
- The Rail Freight Corridor Regulation will be revised to improve a EU-wide rail (freight) network.
- Carbon Pricing mechanisms are increasingly promoted.
- Direct and indirect fossil fuel subsidies should end.
Kind of. On one hand, some targets are not ambitious enough, on the other concrete implementation strategies are missing.

- 30 mio. cars and 80,000 lorries with zero-emissions by 2030 are not enough.
- Increasing rail freight traffic by 200% until 2050 is unambitious.
- No proper shift to more sustainable and already accessible modes of transport initiated.
- The full potential of cities in the transition to climate-friendly transport is not exhausted.
No. Binding measures are missing and one key area of action remains unaddressed.

- No phase-out is scheduled for the sale of cars and vans with internal combustion engines.
- Strategy is based on a „tank-to-wheel“ approach only measuring CO2 emissions at the tailpipe.
- Building a “Fair and just mobility” is not considered in any initiative or milestone.
- Carbon neutral scheduled collective travel does not include a ban for short-haul flights.

Sources: IRU 09/12/2020; Greenpeace 09/12/2020
The conclusion is mixed.

Overall, the strategy is a step in the right direction but concrete implementation strategies are missing to initiate necessary climate action in the transport sector.
Sources

Official documents


Sources
Newspaper articles & press releases (Pt.1)


Sources

Images


Slide 12: Adrian Williams via Unsplash [image] Available at: https://unsplash.com/photos/jyd1S0QLpfE [Accessed 28 January 2021].

