

RTPI for travellers  
in Clermont  
Ferrand, France

| Ligne                            | Destination | Passage |
|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| A                                | Champratel  | 3 Mn    |
| A                                | Champratel  | 11 Mn   |
| à la voiture aux parkings-relais |             |         |

# Smart city demos

POLIS is urging the EU to support a new ITS platform, and is putting its weight behind a number of new initiatives

**T**he EU should support a new ITS platform, to help European cities raise awareness and speed up deployment of ITS solutions, European cities and regional network POLIS is urging. The members of POLIS, which is led by local authorities for local authorities, believe this would encourage wider dialogue on the interoperability and standardisation of new technologies.

In the process, it would also ease their market deployment and highlight the potential of ITS for delivering sustainable urban transport planning. Not least, the platform would be a technology watcher, acting as a reference source on which cities and local authorities could draw, in developing pre-commercial procurement strategies.

Additionally, it would serve as the basis for a reference framework and implementation roadmaps for European cities to use in deploying their preferred ITS solutions. One key element would be a methodology designed to help decision-makers choose and implement the tools that are best suited to their local needs.

In parallel, POLIS is also urging the EC to consider development of a new European standard.

This would cover delivery of cities' own ITS software, for example for e-ticketing, 'over the air' to travellers' mobile phones.

In a third initiative, POLIS wants the EU to fund comprehensive traveller information demonstrations in one or more European 'smart cities'. These calls to action come in POLIS' recently-published response to the EC's consultation on the green paper: *Towards a new culture for urban mobility*. POLIS members are urging strong European initiatives in the mobility arena for three main reasons:

- The improvement of urban mobility is critical to the achievement of key EU objectives, for example on dealing with climate change and boosting the competitiveness of member states' economies;
- Existing European legislation and programmes directly affect both urban mobility and policies aimed at achieving it; but they do not automatically provide the tools necessary to ensure compliance with legislation as effectively as possible; and
- There is significant scope for identifying important European urban mobility initiatives

that need not restrict the freedom of individual urban administrations, and so fully respect the central EU principle of subsidiarity.

Member authorities, says the response, are also stressing the impact of land use on mobility, and the potential of integrated land use planning in achieving key environmental objectives. These include:

- The reduction of car dependency;
- A modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport; and
- The development of clean and energy efficient urban transport using innovative policies, practices and technologies.

## EU roles

POLIS sees four main roles for the EU in delivering its goals:

- Encouraging stronger coordination of all European initiatives that are relevant to, and likely to influence, urban mobility;
- Encouraging development of the legal and technical tools necessary for supporting implementation of the most effective solutions at local level;



**Traffic information is one element in the integrated traveller support service that POLIS wants to see demonstrated in European 'smart cities'**

- Developing tools for efficient benchmarking of activities between cities and regions, and encouraging dissemination of best practice beyond simple information exchanges; and
- Reviewing the allocation of European funds, with the aim of securing greater support for urban mobility projects.

#### **ITS applications**

Achieving the desired levels of urban mobility depends on the availability of relevant ITS tools for integrated network management, information exchange, and electronic payment for the use of mobility services and transport infrastructure. But the full integration of these tools is being prevented by technical barriers.

Many of these can be removed, given European-level adoption of the required standards and interoperability norms for the development of future systems. This, in turn, could help the deployment of new solutions and bring down prices, so speeding up market introduction.

At the same time, stresses POLIS, it is important to take into account the costs of existing implementations for cities and regions that have already invested heavily in ITS. These need time to reap the benefits foreseen in the business cases made for their original investments.

ITS also needs to focus more on the movement of people and goods and not only, as it is often the case, on vehicles. Achieving this is particularly dependent on data exchange between real-time passenger information (RTPI) systems, urban traffic management and control (UTMC) installations and electronic parking management; as well as on deployment of cooperative systems and applications for nomadic devices.

For urban freight delivery, POLIS highlights the importance of efficient information exchange between businesses and public authorities or infrastructure managers. These, too, will require a harmonised European platform.

Above all, says POLIS, interoperability of the key components of complex ITS arrays at European level – including traffic management systems – is essential for rapid technological deployment. Also critical are European-level ini-

tiatives to accelerate the certification of equipment used in individual countries – which would be another major contribution to the removal of barriers to effective implementation.

#### **'Over the air'**

Payment modes should be as simple as possible for the user, hence Europe needs to move towards common payment tools for all mobility services, in contrast to the current situation, in which the ticketing policies and systems in individual European cities are very diverse.

Any initiatives need to take into account the interoperable standards being implemented by the industry, and the new solutions being offered by mobile payment system suppliers. At a European level, POLIS members would welcome harmonised technical standards and interoperability for electronic public transport ticketing covering all modes and journey lengths, for congestion charging and road pricing, and for cash-free payment for services.

POLIS is also urging the EC to consider a new European communications standard. This would enable cities to deliver ITS software, particularly that for e-ticketing, 'over the air' to suitable contactless mobile phone handsets.

Cities and regions could then package their own ITS applications in the most appropriate way and make them available through national mobile network operators for downloading by visitors on the Internet or at local information kiosks before and during their stay. The EC, says POLIS, "is ideally placed to engage with mobile operators on a pan-European basis".

Again, the EC could do much to encourage the

use of mobile phones to pay public transport fares or parking charges Europe-wide.

#### **European 'smart city'**

To accelerate deployment of advanced RTPI services, the EU should fund major demonstration projects in one or more European 'smart cities'. These would provide travellers with a complete range of information services customised to their specific needs and personal situations at any given time.

The information provided should cover traffic conditions, 'soft modes', public transport, travel costs, the environmental context, and the environmental impact of the planned journey. The EU should encourage the development of interoperability in traveller aid services, enabling information to be fed directly into satellite navigation systems, backed by common standards for downloading and display, including the harmonisation of pictograms.

#### **Best practice exchange and dissemination**

Finally, says POLIS, the proposed ITS platform, and European ITS dissemination efforts generally, need to define target groups and customise dissemination activities to reflect their special interests. It should stress the functional and economic benefits of ITS solutions both for users, politicians and decision-makers, highlighting non-technical and technical issues and benefits.

*This article summarises the main ITS-related content of the POLIS response. The whole document is available from the POLIS website.*

[www.polis-online.org](http://www.polis-online.org)

## **Green paper on urban transport**

The EC's green paper on urban transport aims to open a debate on, and set a new European agenda for, central urban mobility issues. It aims to support the search for solutions by, for example, sharing best practice and optimising funding availability. The EC intends to publish an action plan on urban mobility in autumn 2008. For each proposed action included, it will indicate a time line for implementation and identify the responsibilities of specific actors.

POLIS is a network of European cities and regions supporting innovation in local and urban mobility. It has welcomed publication of the green paper.