

EUROPEAN YOUTH DECLARATION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We represent the Youth of Europe.

We are 53 European Youth Delegates, young professionals or active volunteers out of the 28 EU Member States, and on the 28 and 29 November 2013, we gathered in Crotone, Italy, for the Fifth European Youth Forum for Road Safety (EYFRS) – co-supported by the European Commission (DG MOVE).

This is our declaration of the problem with Public Transport in Europe.

European public transport, does not currently meet the needs of young people. And we urge the Member States and their relevant agencies to adapt their Public Transports' strategies to address this.

The problem

Young people are the most vulnerable road users. Indeed, road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among young people aged between 15 and 24 in Europe. Every year, around 6,000 youngsters die on European roads and 60,000 others are seriously injured¹. More than half of the traffic fatalities occur after dark. Furthermore, most of the road accidents involving young people occur after parties, normally on a Friday or Saturday night, but nowadays often starting on Wednesdays too.

All of the delegates at EYFRS have their own campaigns to inform young people not to drink and drive. And we conclude that it becomes more complicated to convince our peers to opt for public transport instead of driving because of the lack of accessible public transport available or maladjusted to modern youngsters' habits. Through these road safety/health campaigns, we promote the use of public transport to young people as the best alternative to cars, also because of the environmental asset to build cleaner cities.

We have conducted research in our respective countries to observe this growing trend of young people opting for the car as a need, because there seems to be no other accessible services available or not adapted. There is often no transport in later evening and/or at night. Even in big European cities, there are none, or few options available to use public transport after a certain time. Also the services that are available sometimes have restricted itinerary with limited bus lines and no metro/tube at night (they often close at 11.30pm or midnight at the latest), which is one of the most effective/appreciated means of transport. This demonstrates why picking the safest transport does not even appear as a choice for young people.

How can we carry out effective road safety prevention, if the solutions we propose are not credible?

We also notice a strong difference between rural and urban areas. In fact, due to the demographical expansion in urban areas, there is a constant increasing demand for accessibility, mobility and flexibility. Mobility is an essential and characteristic phenomenon of the modern world in which the car is still too often the central object. Mobility also strongly affects access to resources of life in society, whether it concerns work or leisure. For many people, the car is not a choice but a requirement as their schedules get busier and they try to balance work and life schedule.

Finally, we believe in the good will of Central and Local Governments. We noted in some regions several improvements and higher training qualifications towards the drivers in the last few years. We do understand the issues and difficulties of rapidly increasing public transport; however, we need to be united and set priorities on practical solutions, by extending lines and schedules to the proper demand.

¹ CARE Database: Community database Accidents on the Road in Europe

OUR COMMITMENT

We have respect for our own life and for the lives of our peers. We call for awareness among our peers of the serious risks they run in becoming involved in road traffic accidents. Therefore we promote the use of public transport among young people. We also commit to promote respect for public transport, so that young people feel responsible for public transport.

As potential victims of road traffic accidents, we – the Youth of Europe – stand up for our peers and ourselves and call upon concerned stakeholders for the right to have better and much needed public transport links throughout Europe.

We must keep on collaborating to make travelling with public transport easier, more comfortable, faster, more regular and cheaper than the car, which is also needed for international transport, monopolizing lines hence becoming out of price and discriminative (e.g. Thalys, Eurostar, Bdz, etc).

We need to keep promoting Public Transport to young people as an excellent alternative solution to driving, in order to reduce fatalities on the roads leading up to 2020. But without efforts from both the Government and young people themselves, we cannot keep doing this.

We therefore urge you to:

- extend the hours public transport is available. Make these alternatives to the car possible in later evenings during the week and at nights during the weekends, both in rural and urban areas
- create better public transport links, day and night, in rural areas
- provide users with more information about schedules and traffic
- accept collaboration with Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) on awareness campaigns and give access to Government premises with the aim to develop further campaigns promoting public transport as a solution
- improve communication and transparency with your users
- keep your promises to get people where they need to go when they need to get there..

Adopted by
The 53 Youth Delegates of the European Youth Forum For Road Safety (EYFRS)
on the 29th of November 2013

