

New entry points for Fare-Free

Novos pontos de contato para Tarifa Zero

Manuela Kropp¹

1 - Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels, manuela.kropp@rosalux.org, 



JOURNAL OF
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN
MOBILITY

ISSN 2763-5171

v.3, n.1, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.53613/josum.2023.v3.005>

Recebido 30/01/2023

Aprovado 13/02/2023

Publicado 20/03/2023

Tempo total 49 dias

Abstract

This essay discusses five currently ongoing struggles that open new windows of opportunity for the necessary mobility turnaround in our cities. The first is the currently pending regulation of platform work in the EU, which will also affect the mobility provider UBER. This will determine whether UBER will remain a dangerous public transport competitor or not. Secondly, the current crisis of rising costs of living is intensifying the discussion about public transport for fare-free or greatly reduced prices. Measures that some EU member states have taken are discussed. The social justice dimension is also reflected in the context of area justice and urban heat waves. Thirdly, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the financing of public transport to such an extent that it opens a window of opportunity to gain new allies for fare-free. Fourthly, the discussion about the war in Ukraine also opens up the possibility of taking a new look at public transport, as it can contribute significantly to energy savings. Last but not least, the current discussion on industrial policy as a reply to the American Inflation Reduction Act is an opportunity to strengthen public transport and fare-free public transport discourse.

Keywords: mobility, platforms, inflation, justice, pandemic.

Resumo

Este ensaio discute cinco lutas, atualmente em andamento, que abrem novas janelas de oportunidade para a necessária reviravolta da mobilidade em nossas cidades. A primeira é a regulação, atualmente pendente do trabalho de plataforma na UE, que também afetará o provedor de mobilidade UBER, que determinará se a UBER pode se tornar uma concorrente perigosa para o transporte público. Em segundo lugar, a atual crise de aumento dos custos de vida está intensificando a discussão sobre o transporte público a preços bem mais baixos. As medidas que alguns Estados-membros da UE tomaram são discutidas. A dimensão da justiça social também se reflete no contexto da justiça espacial e das ondas de calor urbanas. Em terceiro lugar, a pandemia de COVID-19 tem desafiado o financiamento do transporte público a tal ponto que abre uma oportunidade para ganhar novos aliados para o transporte gratuito. Em quarto lugar, a discussão sobre a guerra na Ucrânia também possibilita um novo olhar para o transporte público, que pode contribuir, significativamente, para a economia de energia. Por último, mas não menos importante, a discussão atual sobre política industrial como resposta à Lei Americana de Redução da Inflação é uma oportunidade para fortalecer o discurso sobre o transporte público e o transporte público gratuito.

Palavras-chave: mobilidade, plataformas, inflação, justiça, pandemia.

Introduction

The traffic situation in our cities is increasingly deteriorating and thus repeatedly the question of how public transport should be better expanded and financed is raised. The issue at stake is the Right to Mobility in times of climate change. In the course of these debates, the question of whether fare-free is an alternative to ticket-financed public transport has been discussed intensively since the 1970s. Many civil society movements such as *Tarifa Zero* and *Movimento Passe Livre* in Brazil, for instance, replied positively to this question.

The arguments in favour of fare-free are convincing: It provides access to an essential service for free and says goodbye to financing public transport from revenues generated by ticket sales. The costs of maintaining ticket vending machines and ticket inspections are thus eliminated. For instance, in the German city of Hamburg, social profiling was revealed in the context of ticket checks: they are conducted more frequently in poorer neighbourhoods (GERSIE, 2023). A clear discrimination of badly off people that could be ended by fare-free. Transport should be a *public good* since for other services, such as using an elevator, libraries and schools, tickets are not used either.

So why not make public transport fare-free? It can be an important measure in the fight against mobility poverty, brings financial relief, challenges the “car consensus” and the “car-friendly city”, and ensures the Right to Mobility for all.

Not only in Brazil but in the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), the movement for fare-free is gaining momentum. For instance, in the US city of Boston, mayor Wu is taking steps to expand fare-free bus service (THOMPSON, 2022). The successful left party in Belgium, PTB, calls for fare-free public transport because it is a social and climate-friendly alternative (PTB, 2020). The left party in Germany, DIE LINKE, is on the same page and demands fare-free as well: it is argued that 61 per cent of regular car users would switch to public transport if the connections were better and tickets were more affordable (DIE LINKE, n.d).

In many regions of the world, fare-free public transport is already a reality: e.g. in 45 municipalities in Brazil as well as in dozens of cities in the EU, such as, for example, in Aubagne in France, Athens in Greece, Cascais in Portugal and Belchatow in Poland (KROPP, 2022) (FARE, n.d). In some German cities, fare-free is implemented for a certain period, at least (VCD, 2012). Over 100 cities worldwide have made public transport fare-free already and show how it can be financed and implemented successfully (WEBB, 2021).

The current diverse crises, such as climate change, the pandemic and inflation provide a new background for a broader discussion on fare-free. It becomes clear that we need it more urgently than ever. To cut greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector, cool our cities during heat waves and relieve people from the financial pressures of the rising living costs.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally called into question the financing of public transport, it follows that fare-free can be part of the solution.

In such a way, climate and social issues can be brought together: more public transport leads to more climate protection, but *fare-free* results in more climate and social justice simultaneously. Furthermore, can thus attract more people to switch to this kind of ecological transport mode.

In addition, the war in Ukraine, the necessity to create jobs in the production of climate-friendly vehicles, and the expensive private mobility platforms such as UBER provide further arguments for an introduction of fare-free.

Area justice – key for climate justice and social justice

In this chapter, it is argued that area justice in our urban areas can provide convincing arguments for fare-free.

Cars in our cities cause harmful air pollution from exhaust fumes, tyre wear and the resulting particulate matter; they consume land for roads and parking and generate noise and stress. The sheer number of deaths on the road and due to air pollution demonstrates how dangerous the automobile is.

In 2019, 307,000 people died prematurely in the EU due to polluted air (EEA 3, 2021). 20,000 people lost their lives in road accidents in the EU in 2021, and most deaths of vulnerable users in urban areas resulted from collisions with cars (EUROCITIES, 2022).

The dominance of the automobile in our cities did not come about by chance, but was politically intended, supported by its strong lobby, and is reflected in the planning of cities as "car-friendly". In the post-war period, and especially from the 1950s onwards, there was a broad social consensus on how land in our cities should be distributed in favour of motorised private transport (CANZLER, 2019).

Thus, public space in our cities is highly unevenly distributed, so that in Berlin, for example, a full 58 per cent of all traffic space is dedicated to the car, although only 30 per cent of all travels are made by automobiles (KONZEPTWERK, 2022, p. 1). Yet public space has huge potential for other uses: for playgrounds, habitation and also green spaces, which are urgently needed to cool cities.

2022 was marked by extraordinary heat waves which also put people, in urban areas, at great health risk. In the US, Europe, Japan and China, these weather phenomena lasted for weeks: 90 cities worldwide declared a so-called heat alert (UNEP, 2022). Cities are, on average, between 5 degrees and 9 degrees Celsius hotter than rural areas, making them the focus of debate on how to provide adequate cooling in summer. Data from the United Nations Environment Programme show that planting trees in urban areas could achieve cooling of one degree Celsius, and 77 million people worldwide would benefit from this. Our cities need to be transformed with more space for vegetation, less asphalt, more water features and passive cooling strategies for the building sector (UNEP, 2022).

So here we see that urban space urgently needs to be redistributed: away from motorised private towards more public transport, which consumes significantly less land. This current debate about the necessary cooling of our cities can support the political discourse on fare-free.

Area justice not only plays a role in the relationship between motorised private and public transport but is also a question of social justice. Thus it has a class and gender dimension: areas in cities where people with low incomes live are particularly hard hit by heat waves. A study of 108 US cities can clearly prove this point (HOFFMAN; SHANDAS; PENDLETON, 2020, p. 1). Similar results can be seen in Europe: in Berlin, it is precisely those city districts where low-income households live that are more often affected by heat and pollution: Environmental protection is thus a pressing question of social justice because in these areas only little greenery and an unfavourable microclimate exist (KOHLICK; GRINGMUTH-DALLMER, 2022).

Therefore, urban areas urgently need to be unsealed, taken away from motorised private transport and made available for plants. The social dimension of area justice can be a good entry point to promote fare-free public transport in the political discussion.

The right steps are being taken in some cities: In Copenhagen, Denmark, the cycling infrastructure was massively expanded and the car traffic reduced. In Barcelona in Spain, superblocks were introduced and car traffic taken out of some streets. In Paris, France, the objective is to achieve the 15-minute city and as a first step, the cycling infrastructure is developed, and motorised individual transport pushed out of the city.

Positive results can be found already: in Barcelona, for example, the closure of through roads and the establishment of neighbourhood blocks (superblocks) have brought positively affected people's health. The Public Health Agency of Barcelona was able to demonstrate in several studies that the well-being of the people improved because the burdens of noise and pollution decreased (SUPERILLES, n.d).

Area justice improves health, reduces the impacts of heat waves and can bring more social justice. Thus, it provides solid arguments for fare-free, which consumes much less area than the private motorised transport. The recent heat waves of 2022 further underline the urgency.

The rising cost of living - tackling poverty through fare-free and affordable public transport

The rising cost of living crisis puts financial pressure on people with low and middle incomes, making access to well-developed fare-free public transport all the more important.

Studies for the EU show that especially people with low incomes suffer from poorly developed and expensive public transport. They are denied access to social participation, leisure activities, services and opportunities in the labour market.

Here are some examples from the different EU member states (2014 data): in Hungary, 21 per cent of people with low incomes cannot afford regular public transport use, in Bulgaria it is 18 per cent, in the

Netherlands 7 per cent, in Germany 9 per cent, in Spain 7 per cent (BAPTISTA; MARLIER, 2020, p. 75). As this data is from 2014, it can be assumed that the situation for people on low incomes has worsened even further.

The latest data from Eurofund (January 2023) show that even the current increases in statutory minimum wages in the various EU member states, in many cases, are too small to compensate for the loss of purchasing power (EUROFUND, 2023). It is therefore clear how important a well-developed fare-free public transport system or greatly reduced fares is to combat mobility poverty and ensure social equality.

The alternative to public transport, car ownership, is costly and simply not affordable for many people in the EU. The highest rate of car ownership is found in Luxembourg (682 cars per 1,000 inhabitants), the lowest rate is in Romania (379 cars per 1,000 inhabitants) (EUROSTAT, 2022). Poorer households are much less likely to own a car – for example, in the UK in 2017, 18 per cent of the poorest fifth of the households did not have access to a car, compared with just 5 per cent of the wealthiest fifth of the households (THE HEALTH FOUNDATION, 2021).

The rate of car ownership has nevertheless increased in recent years in the EU indicates the lack of alternatives and the enforcement of the so-called "*car culture*" (EEA 1, 2021). Figures from 2018, just before the start of the cost of living crisis, show what a large expenditure item "mobility" is for people in the EU: 13.2 per cent of household income was spent on it on average - the second largest item after housing costs (CERNY, 2022). Fare-free public transport would thus immediately lift a-substantial economic burden from families.

In some EU member states, things are moving: in Austria, the *climate ticket* (Klimaticket) was introduced in October 2021 (a ticket for public transport and rail for 1,095 EUR per year). In Luxembourg, fare-free public transport started in March 2020, and in Malta in October 2022.

The Spanish government took steps in the right direction by introducing fare-free for regional trains (until the end of 2023) and financing this by levying an excess profits tax on banks and energy companies. A system of direct subsidies for urban and intercity transport was established and allowed to make the regional trains fare-free. The results are very positive: of all the free tickets issued 77 per cent were for suburban rail travel – these trains largely replace daily trips to work by private car. Furthermore, this measure lowered the amount of greenhouse gas emissions: 360,575 tons of CO₂ could be saved (ÁLVAREZ, 2022, pp. 18 – 19). According to users, this led to significant financial relief (TRUJILLO; THYKJAER, 2022).

In Germany, the 9-Euro-Ticket was introduced for three months in the summer of 2022, allowing the use of public transport for 9 euros per month throughout the whole country. This ticket was undeniably a resounding success: it was sold 52 million times, which means more than half of the population in

Germany benefitted from it (BEIGEL, 2023). In addition, it brought a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector of 1.8 million tons of CO₂ (BEIGEL, 2023).

Recent research shows that this measure had significant positive effects on social inclusion as well: people with low and medium incomes (especially single parents, young people and pensioners) responded in surveys that they felt *freer* and could participate much more in social life. The aspect of "*freedom*" was often mentioned and should not be underestimated. An interesting aspect because usually private car ownership is associated with "freedom" (HILLE; GATHER, 2022, pp. 2 - 43).

Such a ticket can therefore contribute to much more well-being, satisfaction, social inclusion and mental health. In this survey for almost half of the users, the 9-Euro-Ticket led to more mobility and more frequent use of public transport. 10 per cent of the ticket buyers did without at least one trip by private car per day. At the same time, it became clear that the successor, the planned ticket for 49 euros, is simply too expensive for people with low incomes. Some ticket users called explicitly for fare-free public transport in the comment section of the questionnaire (HILLE; GATHER, 2022, pp. 2 - 43).

A similar result is presented in another survey on the costly successor of the 9-Euro-Ticket: the new ticket users have to pay 49 euros per month. But only 15 per cent of the persons who were interviewed responded that they would opt for this offer regularly, because it is not affordable, experts are concluding (BEIGEL, 2023). A very good entry point to argue for fare-free.

The 9-Euro-Ticket had a positive impact on the volume of motorised private transport as well – it was reduced because in 23 out of 26 cities surveyed, the number of traffic jams went down. 36 per cent of the buyers of the 9-Euro-Ticket announced that they bought it because they are planning to use their cars less often. These figures show that price adjustments do have an impact on mobility behaviour and thus lead to higher use of public transport (REISERER; GEHRS, 2022, p. 5). Here as well: a valuable entry point to promote fare-free.

Templin, a small town in the East of Germany, has made it into the national media coverage several times in recent months (on 13 January 2023 and on 15 August 2022) - showing the growing interest in the problem of rising ticket prices all over the country (ARDMEDIATHEK, 2023). The small town of Templin offers its citizens an affordable 44-euro ticket (for a whole year). It can thus make a significant contribution to increasing people's satisfaction with life, as mayor Detlef Tabbert (from the left party DIE LINKE) explains in an interview on 15 August 2022 in the national broadcasting station Deutschlandfunk (DEUTSCHLANDFUNK, 2022).

Spain, Luxembourg, Austria, the 9-Euro-Ticket in Germany and the example of Templin show how public transport at significantly reduced prices or fare-free can contribute to more climate protection, life satisfaction, more mobility, and significant relief in times of inflation (THE BRUSSELS TIMES, 2022). Excellent points to push for fare-free.

COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action

The following part discusses how the COVID-19 pandemic lends new arguments for fare-free.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further weakened the financial situation of public transport and raised the question of how it should and can be financed at all in the future: the losses for urban public transport across the EU amount to EUR 40 billion for 2020, which corresponds to a decline in revenue of 90 per cent. At the same time, transport operators maintained between 70 and 100 per cent of services during the lockdowns. In most EU member states, these losses have been compensated by payments from public budgets (LOZZI, 2022, pp. 10 - 17). And have thus shown that financing from the public purse is reasonably possible and does not have to be financed through ticket sales. This is a good entry point to support the introduction of fare-free.

In November 2021, the campaign “The future is public transport” by C40 Cities and the International Transport Workers’ Federation was launched, calling for much more public investment in public transport and making sure that every person living in an urban area has access to safe, frequent, affordable and accessible public transport within a ten-minute walk from their home (C40, 2021). The unions in the International Transport Workers’ Federation and the mayors in the C40 cities network are obviously strong supporters of the expansion of public transport and its affordability.

Rising energy prices also put public transport companies under economic pressure and posing the question of financing anew. In October 2022, UITP (the international association representing public transport stakeholders) made a clear call for a new approach to public transport funding to combat the cost of living crisis and climate change. UITP calls for the EU and member states to recognise public transport as a strategic priority and for revenue from the Emission Trading Scheme to be allocated to public transport. In addition, public transport companies are to be given priority in the supply of energy in the event of energy shortages (UITP, 2022).

To mitigate the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU presented the NextGenerationEU fund, a financial instrument to support member states with €723 billion (through grants and loans) (COM, 2021). This has been a remarkable step, as it involves collective borrowing at the EU level. However, a closer look at the National Recovery and Resilience Plans by the member states reveals that only a small part of this money is earmarked for the expansion of public transport (BELICKA; KRUPENKO; HINDRIKS; RODRIGUES; FUCHS, 2022, p. 22). A large part of the money spent on “sustainable transport” is focused on infrastructure for alternative fuels, i.e. charging infrastructure for electricity and hydrogen in the transport sector. By contrast, too little money is planned on public transport. The current discussion about the implementation of the NextGenerationEU fund must be used to call for a stronger focus on the expansion of public transport and fare-free.

A study by The Left in the European parliament demonstrates that member states could generate significant financial revenue by introducing an excess profits tax for multinationals: 4.8 billion with an excess profits tax of 10 per cent, 14 billion with a tax rate of 30 per cent (DUBININA; GARCIA-BERNARDO; JANSKY, 2021, p. 3). So the money is there: for fare-free which must be reliable and well developed. And it must be in public ownership to ensure integrated planning, good working conditions for the employees and excellent service for the citizens. Since the example of Glasgow (UK) shows impressively how privatisation in public transport leads to higher fares and poor service (KROPP, 2021). According to a recent Eurobarometer survey, 89 per cent of EU citizens favour higher investment in the development of public transport infrastructure (UITP, 2022).

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis of rising living costs and the question of area justice lend more weight to the demands for fare-free. This is reflected in the results of the Eurobarometer survey.

War in Ukraine – the need for energy savings

The war in Ukraine and the necessary energy savings to reduce geopolitical dependencies provide additional arguments to call for fare-free.

Public transport naturally consumes much fewer resources than cars. The European Commission is aware of this and, after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, called on member states of the EU to *save energy* in its “Repower EU” plan (COM 2, 2022).

For the transport sector, the European Commission urgently recommends electrification to achieve less dependence on fossil fuels (COM 2, 2022, p. 9). That is a first good step, but it is mainly targeted towards *more electric vehicles* and not electrified public transport. However, it is proven that electric cars are not really an energy-saving alternative — because they are very energy-intensive to produce (during the extraction of rare earths and the production of batteries) (EEA 2, 2018, p. 7). And it is clear as well that public transport is, of course, less energy-intensive per passenger kilometre than motorised private transport (PEREZ-MARTINEZ; SORBA, 2010, p. 579).

Furthermore, the valuable renewable electricity, which will be used to run electric cars, should not be wasted in motorised private transport, but used where it is really needed.

“Renewable energy sources accounted for 21.8% of gross final energy consumption in the European Union in 2021, a decrease of 0.3 percentage points compared to 2020, according to data published by *Eurostat* on Thursday, 19 January. This is the first decline ever recorded, warns the EU’s statistical office.” (AGENCE EUROPE, 2023)

This quote highlights how low the share of renewables in the EU's energy mix remains and how valuable this source of energy is, which should be saved by expanding public transport.

Thus, we need a massive development of public transport to save energy and become less dependent on imports of fossil fuels and raw materials. In the current situation, the European Commission's argument of "saving energy in times of war" can help push for the expansion of public transport in general. And, especially *in times of inflation*, for fare-free in particular.

In conclusion, the war in Ukraine and the need to save energy are additional arguments to promote fare-free. Besides the points explained above, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis of rising living costs and the issue of area justice.

Private mobility platforms – expensive and climate-damaging

This chapter argues that the current public debate on how to regulate private mobility platforms can give weight to the calls for fare-free.

Private ride service providers such as UBER threaten the solidarity-based mobility turnaround which is so urgently needed. UBER leads to an increase in traffic jams and thus more noise, stress and pollution by cars. In many cases, it is more expensive than public transport or the taxi service and thus provides good arguments for fare-free. It keeps the data generated during its service in private hands which are thus lost for public traffic planning. Furthermore, it offers problematic working conditions to its drivers which are denied full workers' rights. Moreover, UBER is a competitor and leads demonstrably to a decrease in the use of public transport.

These are undesirable effects in order to achieve climate protection and social justice. All these current ongoing debates about UBER and other private mobility platforms can be a good entry point to promote fare-free.

In 2016, UBER was already operating in 400 cities in 68 countries worldwide (in Europe in Germany, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal), undermining public transport and taxi companies (BHUIYAN; MILMO, 2022). For this reason, taxi drivers in Germany have already taken to the streets and complained that UBER offers dumping prices (WALDNER, 2019).

Internal e-mails and text messages from UBER prove that its business model is above all aimed at achieving a dominant position in the market through social dumping at the expense of the drivers (BHUIYAN; MILMO, 2022). The platform acts as an intermediary between drivers and customers, but earns money on every ride. Platforms like UBER are not geared towards making a profit in the short term, but rather towards expanding their power through the expansion of markets in the long run (SCHOEGGL, 2019).

This means if UBER has once achieved a dominant market position and led to a lower share of public transport in the traffic volume, it will become even more difficult to promote climate-friendly solutions. That is why the legislators must act quickly and restrict this kind of business model.

This is a good entry point to argue for fare-free because the urgent question of how to achieve a mobility turnaround which is affordable for everyone is high on the agenda, particularly in times of inflation.

The question of how UBER and other platforms need to be regulated already receives wide media coverage. It is therefore an opportunity for bringing fare-free public transport into the public debate. This was shown by the vibrant discussion which took place in the European Parliament (on 18 January 2023) on the dubious lobbying activities of UBER. The occasion was the upcoming vote (on 1-2 February 2023) on the European Directive regulating platform work, which would also restrict UBER's business model. If this directive could give full employees' rights to the drivers, then this can be called a success.

Nevertheless, UBER fights against the new legislation with problematic lobbying practices: Whistleblower Mark MacGann had given over 124,000 pages of documents proving this to the Guardian in July 2022. The files also contain references to a closeness between French president Emmanuel Macron and UBER — an interesting detail given that the French government in the Council of the EU is dragging its feet on regulating platform work at the European level (BOURGERY-GONSE, 2023). In October 2022, a hearing on the so-called "UBER-files" even took place in the employment committee of the European Parliament, where the whistleblower Mark MacGann was a prominent speaker (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2022).

The Socialists, the Greens and The Left in the European parliament are campaigning for UBER drivers to be considered full employees and thus to benefit from all workers' rights. This would prevent the unfair competitive advantage UBER gets from its social dumping practices and could protect the market shares of public transport.

Unfortunately, UBER not only denies full labour rights to its drivers and rivals with taxi companies but also competes with traditional public transport. UBER causes a decrease in the use of public transport and an increase in traffic jams, as a study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) from 2021 shows. The researchers looked at US cities in which UBER and Lyft are active and the results are sobering: in the US cities studied, the volume of traffic has increased by 0.9 per cent, the duration of traffic jams rose by 4.5 per cent, and the use of public transport has plummeted, by as much as 8.9 per cent (SZYMKOWSKI, 2021).

Another study demonstrates similar results: on 77 areas where UBER had entered, the authors found that bus passenger trips dropped between 7.3 and 8 per cent (FREEMAN, 2022). These are good arguments to call for more public transport and fewer car-based mobility platforms because they increase the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and lead to more traffic.

UBER is, in many cases, more expensive than public transport — a good opportunity to call for fare-free. For example, in several cities in Canada and the US, the public transport system has been

completely replaced by publicly subsidised UBER rides, with the negative result that both the cities and the users had to pay significantly *more* in the end (PIETRON; RUHAAK; NIEBLER, 2021, p. 28).

The pricing model of UBER also makes it costly: the so-called “dynamic pricing” leads to soaring fares when the demand for rides is growing, for example during a thunderstorm when potential passengers look urgently for a transport option (DELANEY, n.d).

All these points show that privately owned platform-based ride service providers such as UBER do not contribute to a solidarity-based mobility turnaround in our cities. But they rather lead to higher environmental costs (more traffic jams, emissions, noise, stress, area consumption), partly to higher fares and less use of public transport – these are all negative impacts which must be avoided. Thus, the ongoing debate about UBER could be a good opportunity to call for fare-free, especially during times of inflation.

Fare-free to create jobs in the manufacturing sector

This chapter argues that the need to create climate-friendly jobs in the EU can be another entry point to promote fare-free.

The EU has set itself the goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. That is why currently in the EU the question is hotly debated how new, climate-friendly jobs in the manufacturing sector can be created. This discussion strengthens the arguments for fare-free. Because in order to push ahead with the necessary expansion, a higher production of vehicles for public transport (buses, rail vehicles) and rail infrastructure is necessary. Here a lot of new jobs could be created, with the help of a European industrial policy, for instance.

In the study “The need for transformation” by the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels, it became clear during the interviews with stakeholders (trade unionists, urban planners, climate activists) that

“long term planning strategies to support public transport is urgently needed, although still missing. By contrast, this need is not translating into actual demand because there is a lack of incentive systems, rail infrastructure and public transport services to make the switch from individual motorised transport to public transport.” (ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG BRUSSELS, 2021, p. 12)

In some areas, the EU is already successfully pursuing industrial policy: for batteries (among other things, for electric cars), green hydrogen (for the climate-friendly production of steel), semiconductors and critical raw materials. Now, the discussion is gaining momentum because the US is massively promoting its own industry (especially the automobile sector) with the Inflation Reduction Act. As a reply, the EU will set up a Sovereignty Fund, which will support the European industry and strengthen its “strategic autonomy” (COM 3, 2022).

But that means: If an active industrial policy is doable in these areas, it should be implemented for rail vehicles, trains, buses and infrastructure as well. With such an industrial policy, at least 214,000 jobs

could be created in Germany alone, as is demonstrated in the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung's study "Spurwechsel" (ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG, 2022).

It follows that the discussion on creating industrial jobs in the EU can be linked to the debate on fare-free. The metal workers' industry trade unions can be won as political allies here because fare-free public transport will create new, climate-friendly jobs.

In conclusion, the creation of employment can be another entry point to support fare-free - besides the need to save energy in times of war, to regulate the mobility platforms, to tackle the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to fight the inflation and address the issue of area justice.

Final considerations

The current crises provide a new backdrop for the debate on fare-free. There is a bunch of pertinent arguments in favour: fare-free is affordable for all, lowers the pressure from inflation, leads to more life satisfaction and social inclusion (as demonstrated by the examples from Spain and Germany), creates jobs in the industry and saves energy in times of war. Therefore, new political allies can be won here: people with small and medium incomes, trade unionists and the climate movement.

However, it is also clear that fare-free alone is not enough to achieve the modal shift away from motorised private towards more public transport. At the same time, other measures must be taken to reduce car traffic in our cities as well. In addition, to be fare-free, public transport as a whole must be expanded: it must be reliable, attractive and available not only in urban but in rural areas as well (UITP 1). Then the Right to Mobility for all can actually be realised within the planetary boundaries. Fare-free is an excellent measure to achieve this goal.

CRediT:

Manuela Kropp , Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels, manuela.kropp@rosalux.org,
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8676-3532>
Project management, writing, review, editing

REFERENCES

ALVAREZ, Yago. **Capping Prices, Taxing Profits**. An analysis of the Spanish government's response to the cost-of-living crisis. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. 30 November 2022. pp. 18 – 19. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.eu/kontext/controllers/document.php/975.3/f/6903aa.pdf>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

ARDMEDIATHEK. **Was macht eigentlich Angela Merkel?** Livenachneun. 13 January 2023. Available at: [https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/live-nach-neun/was-macht-eigentlich-angela-merkel/das-erste/Y3JpZDovL2Rhc2Vyc3RILmRIL2xpdmUgdmFjaCBuZXVvLzU2YmU5OTc5LTl2ODktNGZkYi05NzA2LT-A0MGU1YWY1YTBkMQ](https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/live-nach-neun/was-macht-eigentlich-angela-merkel/das-erste/Y3JpZDovL2Rhc2Vyc3RILmRIL2xpdmUgdmFjaCBuZXVvLzU2YmU5OTc5LTl2ODktNGZkYi05NzA2LT-A0MGU1YWY1YTBkMQ.). Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

AGENCE EUROPE. Energy: **share of renewable energy in EU's energy mix fell in 2021**, according to Eurostat. 23 January 2023. Available at: <https://agenceurope.eu/en/bulletin/article/13105/24>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

BAPTISTA, Isabel; MARLIER, Eric. Access to essential services for people on low incomes in Europe. An analysis of policies in 35 countries. **European Social Policy Network (ESPN)**. Brussels. European Commission. 2020. p. 75. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/o/portal-service/download-handler?identifiant=9b16d965-090e-11eb-bc07-01aa75ed71a1&format=pdf&language=en&productionSystem=cellar&part>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

BEIGEL, Laura. **Günstig und gut fürs Klima?** Was das Deutschlandticket dem Klimaschutz bringt. Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland. 8 February 2023. Available at: <https://www.rnd.de/wissen/deutschlandticket-startet-am-1-mai-hilft-es-der-verkehrswende-und-dem-klimaschutz-A5BXLUHRNRFCHABB56JJBXR3IQ.html>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

BELICKA, D.; KRUPENKO, D.; HINDRIKS, I.; RODRIGUES, M.; FUCHS, G.; **Research for TRAN committee** – The future of transport in the context of the Recovery Plan. European Parliament. Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. 2022. p. 22. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/733089/IPOL_STU\(2022\)733089_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/733089/IPOL_STU(2022)733089_EN.pdf). Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

BHUIYAN, Johana, MILMO, Dan. Embrace the chaos. A history of Uber's rapid expansion and fall from favour. **The Guardian**. 15 July 2022. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jul/15/embrace-the-chaos-a-history-of-ubers-rapid-expansion-and-fall-from-favour>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

BOURGERY-GONSE, Théo. France: Mobility apps and cab drivers agree on minimum ride pay. **Euractiv**. 18 January 2023. Available at: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/gig-economy/news/france-mobility-apps-and-cab-drivers-agree-on-minimum-ride-pay/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

CANZLER, Weert. Voraussetzung für einen wirksamen Klimaschutz: Die Verkehrswende in den Städten. In: LOZAN, J. L.; BRECKLE, S.-W.; GRASSL, H.; KUTTLER, W.; MATZARAKIS, A. (ed.). **Warnsignal Klima: Die Städte**. pp. 286-292. Available at: https://www.klima-warnsignale.uni-hamburg.de/wp-content/uploads/pdf/de/staedte/warnsignal_klima-die_staedte-kapitel-6_14.pdf. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

CERNY, Philipp. Will high costs stop Europeans' mobility in its tracks? **Green European Journal**. 30 November 2022. Available at: <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/will-high-costs-stop-europeans-mobility-in-its-tracks%EF%BF%BC/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

COM. European Commission. **NextGenerationEU**. 2021. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/eu-borrower-investor-relations/nextgenerationeu_en. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

COM 2. European Commission. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European economic and social committee and the committee of the regions. **REPowerEU Plan**. COM(2022) 230 final. 18 May 2022. p. 9. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:fc930f14-d7ae-11ec-a95f-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

COM 3. European Commission. **A European Sovereignty Fund for an industry "Made in Europe"**. Blog of Commissioner Thierry Breton. 15 September 2022. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_22_5543. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

C40 CITIES AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION. **The future is public transport.** Public transport global coalition statement. 10 November 2021. Available at: <https://www.c40.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Global-coalition-statement-ENG.pdf>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

DELANEY, Dave. **Surge pricing:** Why a rainy day ride will cost you more. No date. Available at: <https://eu.tennessean.com/story/money/2016/05/29/surge-pricing-why-rainy-day-ride-cost-you-more/84922758/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

DIE LINKE. **Mobilitätswende jetzt!** Bus und Bahn für alle – kostenfrei und ausgebaut. No date. Available at: <https://www.die-linke.de/themen/mobilitaet/konzept-fuer-kostenfreien-oePNV/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

DIERKS, Benjamin. Günstiger Nahverkehr in Templin – **Interview** mit Bürgermeister Detlef Tabbert. 15 August 2022. Available at: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/guenstiger-nahverkehr-in-templin-interview-mit-buergermeister-detlef-tabbert-dlf-788e4fb4-100.html>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

DUBININA, Evgeniya; GARCIA-BERNARDO, Javier; JANSKY, Petr. **Excess Profit Tax.** Estimating the potential tax revenue gains for the European Union. THE LEFT. 2021. p. 3. Available at: <https://left.eu/content/uploads/2021/11/FISC-v1.pdf>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

EUROCITIES. Unbreakable: **the link between road safety and sustainable mobility.** 19 December 2022. Available at: <https://eurocities.eu/latest/unbreakable-the-link-between-road-safety-and-sustainable-mobility/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

EUROFUND. **Statutory minimum wages.** 20 January 2023. Available at: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/data/statutory-minimum-wages-2023>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

EEA 1. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. **Size of the vehicle fleet in Europe.** 11 May 2021. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/data-and-maps/indicators/size-of-the-vehicle-fleet/size-of-the-vehicle-fleet-10>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

EEA 2. EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. Electric vehicles from life cycle and circular economy perspectives. **EEA Report. No. 13/2018.** p. 7. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/electric-vehicles-from-life-cycle/download>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

EEA 3. European Environment Agency. **Air quality in Europe 2021.** Health impacts of air pollution in Europe, 2021. Available at: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/air-quality-in-europe-2021/health-impacts-of-air-pollution>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. **Hearing on Uber files.** 25 October 2022. Available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/hearing-on-uber-files-lobbying-and-work/product-details/20221019CHE10769>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

EUROSTAT. **Passenger cars in the EU.** July 2022. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Passenger_cars_in_the_EU. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

FARE FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT. Cities. No date. Available at: <https://freepublictransport.info/city/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

FREEMAN BUSINESS. **Is Uber killing public transportation?** Fall 2022. Available at: <https://freemanmag.tulane.edu/2022/02/05/is-uber-killing-public-transportation/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

GERSIE, Hagen. **Social Profiling** im Nahverkehr? Taz. 10 January 2023. Available at: <https://taz.de/Fahrscheinkontrollen-in-Hamburg/!5904897/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

HILLE, Claudia; GATHER, Matthias. Ergebnisbericht. Mit dem 9-Euro-Ticket zu mehr sozialer Teilhabe? **Institut Verkehr und Raum der Fachhochschule Erfurt**. October 2022. pp. 2 – 43. Available at: https://www.fh-erfurt.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/IVR/IVR_Schriftenreihe/Band_29_final/IVR_Band_29_9EuroTicket.pdf. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

HOFFMAN, Jeremy S.; SHANDAS, Vivek; PENDLETON, Nicholas. The effects of historical housing policies on resident exposure to intra-urban heat: a study of 108 US urban areas. **Climate** 2020. 8. 12. 13 January 2020. p. 1. Available at: https://mdpi-res.com/d_attachment/climate/climate-08-00012/article_deploy/climate-08-00012.pdf?version=1578904373. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

KOHLICK, Anne; GRINGMUTH-DALLMER, Götz. In diesen Berliner Kiezen sind die **Umweltbelastungen** am größten. Rbb24. Available at: <https://www.rbb24.de/politik/beitrag/2022/08/berlin-umwelt-gerechtigkeit-karte-kieze-laerm-hitze-luftverschmutzung.html>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

KONZEPTWERK NEUE ÖKONOMIE. **Bausteine für Klimagerechtigkeit**. Autofreie Städte. December 2022. p. 1. Available at: <https://konzeptwerk-neue-oekonomie.org/bausteine-fuer-klimagerechtigkeit/autofreie-staedte/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

KROPP, Manuela. COP26 Counter summit – **The future is public transport**. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels. 6 December 2021. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.eu/en/article/2059.cop26-counter-summit-the-future-is-public-transport.html>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

KROPP, Manuela. **Right to mobility on both sides of the atlantic**: Brazil in the run-up to the presidential elections. Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung Brussels. 25 August 2022. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.eu/en/article/2148.right-to-mobility-on-both-sides-of-the-atlantic-brazil-in-the-run-up-to-the-presidential.html>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

LOZZI, G.; CRE, I.; RAMOS, C. **Research for TRAN committee** – Relaunching transport and tourism in the EU after COVID-19 – Part VI: Public Transport, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies. Brussels. 2022. pp. 10 – 17. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/690899/IPOL_STU\(2022\)690899_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/690899/IPOL_STU(2022)690899_EN.pdf) Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

PEREZ-MARTINEZ, Pedro J.; SORBA, Ivan A. Energy consumption of passenger land transport modes. **Energy & Environment**. Vol. 21, No. 6, 2010, p. 579.

PIETRON, Dominik; RUHAAK, Anouk; NIEBLER, Valentin. **Öffentliche Mobilitätsplattformen**. Digitalpolitische Strategien für eine sozial-ökologische Mobilitätswende. Mai 2021. p. 28. Available at:

https://www.attac.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Kampagnen/Verkehrswende/Studie_Mobi-Plattformen/Studie_Mobilitaetsplattformen_Attac_RLS_Web.pdf. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

PTB. Une nouvelle étude le confirme: **le transport en commun gratuit** est l'alternative sociale et écologique de mobilité. 3 February 2020. Available at: https://www.ptb.be/une_nouvelle_tude_le_confirme_le_transport_en_commun_gratuit_est_l_alternative_sociale_et_cologique_de_mobilit. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

REISERER, Marissa; GEHRS, Benjamin. **Klimaticket**. Wie ein Anschluss an das 9-Euro-Ticket für mehr Klimaschutz und soziale Gerechtigkeit sorgen kann. Greenpeace. July 2022. p. 5. Available at: https://www.greenpeace.de/infomaterial/220718_Klimaticket_Kostenvergleich_0.pdf. Accessed on 8 February 2023.

ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG. **Hunderttausende neue Jobs durch echte Mobilitätswende möglich**. 21 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.de/pressemeldung/id/45768/hunderttausende-neue-jobs-durch-echte-mobilitaetswende-moeglich>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG BRUSSELS. **The need for transformation**. Challenges for the international automotive sector. Brussels. June 2021. p. 12. Available at: <https://www.rosalux.eu/kontext/controllers/document.php/891.a/e/aea7c8.pdf>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

SCHOEGGL, Astrid. Mobilitätswende: Nicht den Plattformen überlassen. **A&WBlog**. 12 November 2019. Available at: <https://awblog.at/mobilitaetswende-nicht-den-plattformen-ueberlassen/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

SUPERILLES. **Superblocks are having positive effects on health and well-being**. No date. Available at: <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/superilles/en/noticia/superblocks-are-having-positive-effects-on-health-and-wellbeing>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

SZYMKOWSKI, Sean. Yet another study says Uber and Lyft are worse for traffic congestions. **CNET**. 4 February 2021. Available at: <https://www.cnet.com/roadshow/news/uber-lyft-traffic-congestion-car-ownership-study/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

THE BRUSSELS TIMES. **Climate tickets and train travel rising in popularity across Europe**. 11 September 2022. Available at: <https://www.brusselstimes.com/world-all-news/287297/climate-tickets-and-train-travel-rising-in-popularity-across-europe>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

THE HEALTH FOUNDATION. **Trends in households without access to a car**. 19 April 2021. Available at: <https://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub/transport/transport-trends/trends-in-households-without-access-to-a-car>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

THOMPSON, Stacy. **Mayor Wu takes steps to expand fare-free bus service**. City of Boston. 19 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.boston.gov/news/mayor-wu-takes-steps-expand-fare-free-bus-service>. Accessed on: 8 January 2023.

TRUJILLO, Marco; THYKJAER, Christina. Spain is providing free monthly rail passes to try and tackle inflation. **World Economic Forum**. 2 September 2022. Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/09/spain-rail-travel-inflation-living-costs-public-transport/>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

UITP EUROPE. **UITP Europe statement.** Support local public transport in the energy crisis. October 2022. Available at: <https://cms.uitp.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/UITP-Europe-Statement-on-the-Energy-Crisis-2.pdf>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

UITP EUROPE. **Full free fare public transport:** Objectives and alternatives. Policy Brief. September 2020. Available at: <https://cms.uitp.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Policy-Brief-FullFreeFarePT-DEF-web.pdf>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

UNEP. **As heatwaves blanket Europe, cities turn to nature for solutions.** 22 July 2022. Available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/heatwaves-blanket-europe-cities-turn-nature-solutions>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

VCD. Verkehrsclub Deutschland. **ÖPNV zum Nulltarif** – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen. July 2012. Available at: https://www.vcd.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Redaktion/Publikationsdatenbank/Oeffentlicher_Personennahverkehr/VCD_Hintergrund_OEPNV_Nulltarif_2012.pdf. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.

WALDNER, Hermann. Taxi-Bundesverband: **Uber verzerrt den Wettbewerb.** Deutschlandfunk. 11 May 2019. Available at: <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/streit-um-us-fahrdienstvermittler-taxi-bundesverband-uber-100.html>. Accessed on: 29 January 2023.

WEBB, Richard. **Over 100 cities have made public transport free** – others should follow. New Scientist. 6 January 2021. Available at: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/mg24933160-100-over-100-cities-have-made-public-transport-free-others-should-follow/>. Accessed on: 8 February 2023.