

ICPS newsletter[®]

Public Transport: Quality means equality

After the collapse of the socialist system, public transport in CE and FSU countries deteriorated significantly. The public transit systems had to face problems similar to those faced by transit systems in western and developing countries. The latest Local Governance Brief looks into the issue of fairness in public transit. The Brief presents the best experience for the use of countries where public transport needs a major overhaul

In early 1990s, transit systems were under the constant bombardment of change and growing demand for services. New suburbs developed in all major cities, growing mobility made it possible for people to move from place to place, and private carriers mushroomed across many countries.

At the same time, public funding from both local and State Budgets shrank rapidly, leading to serious problems in the use and repair of both stations and vehicles. The quality of public transit services deteriorated, as did the territorial coverage of these services in CE and FSU countries.

A question of social support

Meanwhile, a new urban lower class formed in this region. The number of people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia who lived on less than US \$2.15 per day grew from 1.9% in 1981 to 19.7% by 2001. To find better jobs, poorer people urgently need access to good quality public transport.

For the disabled, the main obstacle to access to transport is the poor quality or even complete absence of specialized vehicles. The provision of such vehicles requires additional funding.

Equality of travel in public transit means that those who do not have a private car can travel around without hindrance. Such vulnerable groups as the elderly and the disabled should always have easy access to comfortable and convenient transport vehicles.

The difficulties faced by municipal transit systems in CE and FSU countries are a repeat of similar problems faced in other developing countries. This means that the

experience and lessons learned by other countries could be useful for the countries in this region.

Three approaches to the problem

1. Plan stations or stops and services to reflect demographic realities. For example, the surface rail system in Recife, Brazil, was built so that trains cover the poor districts maximally and bring people to their places of work. In addition to access to transport, the train stations also provide passengers free community services, such as improving literacy and basic healthcare. Unlike many western systems, which treat transport as a profit-making type of activity, the transport system in this Brazilian city is the basis for social services and operates free-of-charge.

2. Optimize links among rail, bus and subway systems. The subway system in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico, consists of 135 stations and is connected to other parts of the city via 19 trolley routes, a 30-kilometer tram route, and a network of minibuses. The most utilized subway stations serve residents from remote districts. They use public transport to get to their jobs at industrial enterprises. The subway in Santiago, Chile, is one of few subway systems in the world that works without government subsidies and is linked to a good network of bus routes that cover most of the city's districts.

3. Develop innovative methods of financing public transit systems and providing incentives for poorer people to use it. Elderly and disabled passengers in the United States pay reduced fares and have the right to

FTA Roundtable coming up

The International Centre for Policy Studies will hold a roundtable on "The EU-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement: Tackling the investment climate" on 6 July 2006 from 10:00 till 13:00. ICPS economist Borys Bordiukh will present analytical materials for discussion.

The event will take place as part of the "Public Consultations on the EU-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement" project implemented with the support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative (LGI) of the Open Society Institute (OSI). To participate, contact Project Manager Olha Shumylo by phone at (380-44) 484-4400/01 or via e-mail at oshumylo@icps.kiev.ua.

special transport services upon request. These services are funded mainly by transfers from the central budget to municipal budgets, that is, state subsidies. In many Latin American cities, the poor either travel for free on the basis of a special ticket or pay with subsidized vouchers. ■

The latest issue of "Gosudarstvennoye upravlenie v perekhodnykh ekonomikakh"—the Russian version of the Local Governance Brief—looks at the problem of affordable, accessible and good quality public transport in Central European and FSU countries. The articles in this issue present the experience of Budapest, Chisinau, Sofia, and Yerevan, which can be useful to other one-time socialist cities.

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GALILEO offers a chance to develop aerospace in Ukraine

The European project called GALILEO has enormous economic potential. Preliminary estimates are that this project could create 150,000 highly-skilled jobs in Europe alone. The annual volume for satellite navigation systems on the global market is expected to reach EUR 275bn by 2020. The GALILEO project should provide opportunities to support a broad range of add-on services: traffic control, highway toll collection, rescue systems, and so on

The Ukraine–EU agreement on cooperation in civilian satellite navigation systems was signed during the Ukraine–EU Summit 1 December 2005. This established the political and legal framework for future cooperation that will allow Ukraine to:

- maintain and develop its hi-tech sectors—space, radio industries and so on—and to create new jobs in these sectors;
- attract EU funds allocated by the 7th Framework Program for research and applied sciences;
- directly participate in identifying GALILEO development policy and in the GALILEO regulatory authority;
- integrate fully into the European program, which will constitute another serious step in the country's integration into the EU.

Although the signing of this agreement is regularly mentioned in speeches by Ukrainian officials as a noteworthy event in relations with the EU, so far, no real steps have been taken to capitalize on these opportunities. For instance, the draft Concept for a National Space Program for 2007–2011 mentions GALILEO only in the context of the Navigation project to set up “ground-based differentiated sub-systems for position, time and navigation support.” Other Government programs also give no mention to participation in this program.

ICPS specialists say that to maximize the opportunities offered by the 1 December 2005 agreement, Ukraine needs to take a number of steps:

- to include participation in GALILEO in the final version of the National Space Program, especially such steps as involvement in research financed by the EU's 7th Framework Program;

- to resolve the issue of Ukraine's membership in the GALILEO Supervisory Authority. For this, Ukraine must allocate funds in its State Budget to contribute to the statutory fund. This EUR 10–40mn should not be viewed as an expense but as an investment that will return in the form of orders for the output of Ukrainian scientific institutions and businesses and contributions to joint ventures;
- to analyze what is needed and initiate the harmonization of its legislation with EU legislation on the use of satellite navigation systems;
- to consider using GALILEO in plans for transport infrastructure development, monitoring systems and traffic control systems for land, air and sea transport, similar to transport-related EU initiatives. This fits well with Ukraine's integration into Pan-European transport networks and the Single European Sky. ■

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The impact of NGOs on political platforms: Preliminary conclusions

A key element in the March 2006 election campaign, which became the main event in Ukraine this spring, was the way that local NGOs and party organizations worked together on the election in the regions and shaped local policies. The International Centre for Policy Studies and its regional partners in the “Impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of political platforms” project contributed considerably to making this election process transparent and democratic.

The goal of this project was to engage NGOs and voters in four regions of Ukraine and to prepare them to have a real impact on the development and implementation of party platforms. This goal was partly achieved.

The project, due to be completed in 2007, involved more than 30 NGOs in Donetsk, Mykolayiv, Poltava and Vinnytsia to thoroughly analyze the election platforms of influential local political organizations. They also evaluated the situation in their regions before and after the elections.

The results were then openly discussed with leaders of local party organizations, the media, local governments, and other

interest groups. During the election campaign, these NGOs offered party organizations advice that helped improve their election platforms.

A series of public debates called “Voter concerns and how they are addressed in election platforms of political parties and blocs” was held in the four selected regions. These debates involved candidates for local office, leaders of local party organizations and the general public.

In addition, project participants organized meetings with various political forces and members of local electoral commissions. They reviewed voter lists and provided ongoing information to voters about the progress of the election campaign in each of these four Ukrainian cities.

The International Centre for Policy Studies is implementing “The impact of NGOs on the formation and implementation of political platforms” project with the support of the Ukraine Citizen Action Network (UCAN) and the Institute of Sustainable Communities (ISC). For additional information, contact Project Manager Petro Udovenko by phone at (380-44) 484-4400 or via e-mail at garant_kvali@icps.kiev.ua.

icps newsletter is a weekly publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies, delivered by electronic mail.

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