

# **UITP POLICY BRIEF ON FULL FREE FARE SCHEMES IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Beat Mueller**

# Definition

- **Full** Free Fare Public Transport:
  - It is applicable to most part of the network,
  - It benefits most users,
  - It encompasses most of the time that the system is running,
  - It has last lasted for longer than 12 months

## Partial Free Fare PT:

Temporary	Temporally-limited
Limited duration such as trial period, 'crisis' situation or particular event	Specific periods of time
Spatially	Socially
Specific parts of the network	Specific users

# Background

**Target:** Decision makers, politicians, transport authorities

**Timeline:**

1. TEC Workshop October 2018 Lisbon
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Working group meeting: May 2019 Brussels
3. OAC input : November 2019
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Working group: Nov 20, 2019 Brussels
5. TEC Committee: Dec 6, 2019 Shenzhen
6. Prescom: January 23, 2020 Brussels
7. Drafting of Policy Brief by working group
8. Policy Board approval: Spring 2020
9. **Final deliverable: Q3 of 2020**



► POLICY BRIEF

## FULL FREE FARE PUBLIC TRANSPORT: OBJECTIVES AND ALTERNATIVES

SEPTEMBER | 2020

### INTRODUCTION

*At a time when cities must prepare for and face serious environmental and societal challenges, sustainable urban mobility has never been this high up on the agenda. With the transversal role that public transport plays in terms of urban quality of life, increasing and facilitating its access is a major challenge. Following this line of thought, the concept of free fare public transport (FFPT) has been gaining traction in the public*

*services and infrastructure must remain the overarching principle throughout these discussions. It is therefore crucial to carefully consider the stated objectives which this measure is meant to achieve as well as its impacts, in order to decide whether or not it is the most appropriate use of public funds. In doing so, one must keep in mind that free public transport as such does not exist, as transport service and infrastructure has to be funded*

# Cases studied

- **Hasselt** (Belgium): a FFPT scheme was managed from 1997 to 2014
- **Tallinn** (Estonia): a FFPT was deployed in 2013 targeting residents only.
- **Frydek-Mystek** (Czech Republic): FFPT initiative begun in 2011 and still ongoing, benefiting 1.7m passenger yearly.
- **Lyon** (France): Best PT ridership in France despite comparatively high PT prices.
- **Luxembourg**: Nation-wide case started in 2020.
- **Dunkirk** (France): Begun a FFPT scheme in Sep 2018
- **Grenoble** (France): social, revenue dependent pricing since 2009 varying from 30 to 236 Euros/year



# Main objectives behind FFPT initiatives

- 1. Does FFPT shift modal share towards PT?
  - Address congestion and pollution/air quality
  - Address Climate change
  - Facilitating access/seamless mobility
- 2. Does FFPT improve PT Affordability and social integration?
- 3. Can FFPT enhance urban and economic development for cities?

# IMPACT AND CONSEQUENCES

- Capacity:
  - There will be a sudden surge of demand
  - Capacity has to be ready in time for FFPT
  - Capacity increases take time and money
- Financial
  - FFPT is more expensive than just loss of fares
  - Capacity increases need to be counted too
  - Indirect consequences on financing capacity and subsidies from other government layers have to be considered
  - Sometimes other revenues like more tax-paying city residents can finance FFPT (Tallinn)
- Other
  - Need to provide security otherwise than through fare evasion measures
  - Need to collect data otherwise than through ticketing

# UITP RECOMMENDATIONS

- The driving objectives behind full free fare public transport should be carefully considered, as there may **be more effective ways** of achieving potential alternatives.
- Increased public transport ridership and a modal shift in favor of sustainable modes can be delivered with a mix of push and pull measures. In this regard, **improvements in the public transport offer and its quality** are especially effective.
- Enhanced social inclusion can be better targeted by **social fares** and an accessible transport network, rather than implementing a full free fare public transport initiative.
- Focusing on **service and quality improvements** should be considered as a more efficient use of public funding.
- **Free fares may be best used as a marketing tool** for specific periods of time or specific events to promote the use of public transport, for example pollution peaks or major festivals.

# Reference

Available (for free) on

**[www.UITP.org](http://www.UITP.org)**

in 6 languages as pdf

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**trans**  
**missions**  
Conseil en mobilité engagé(e)

**Beat Mueller**  
Consultant senior

+41 79 226 27 05

[mueller@trans-missions.eu](mailto:mueller@trans-missions.eu)