



SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP ON «URBAN MOBILITY IN ISTANBUL, DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS» STUDY

June, 27th 2008 at Istanbul Technical University

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Sophia Antipolis
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Summary of the presentational workshop for the Blue Plan study on «Urban Mobility in Istanbul, developments and prospects»

June 27th 2008 at Istanbul Technical University

The Istanbul case study was drafted by two national experts (Haluk Gerçek from Istanbul Technical University and Orhan Demir from Plan Ofis) and was presented at the hand-over workshop on 27th June, 2008.

The workshop would discuss its content and debate its conclusions.

1. Organisation of the workshop and participation

The workshop was organised by the Blue Plan, assisted by Haluk Gerçek, at Istanbul Technical University. Some twenty participants contributed to the discussion, representing the town and transport planning departments of Istanbul Metropolitan Council (IMM), the Ministry of the Environment, the AFD (French Development Agency), several universities and the World Resource Institute through Embarq.

By way of introduction, the Blue Plan and AFD presented the framework for the Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development and the work undertaken in Turkey respectively.

The speakers then presented the results of their 3-part study- urban development by Orhan Demir and mobility by Haluk Gerçek in the morning, followed in the early afternoon by Philippe Vallouis on the environment.

Participants' views were sought after the first two presentations and initial reactions noted. Istanbul City Council expressed reservations, pointing out that they would have preferred to have been more involved in the procedure, rather than finding out about the exercise through the presentation. The Council felt that it was more of an academic exercise and suggested that the authors should approach the departments in charge. Some of their representatives were not able to stay for the second part of the workshop.

The afternoon began with the environment chapter and Rami Semaan of Sitram Consultants (Beirut) acted as moderator for the final discussions. The workshop concluded at around 5:00pm.

2. Discussion points on the outcome of the study

Alarm bells for the future operation of the city

The overview more than illustrates Istanbul's marked urban growth (3%/yr), the consistently strong pull of the city and the resulting concentration in terms of population, employment, creation of wealth (GNP), vehicles and congestion. The authors of the study question the continuation of this process and its sustainability. Land use maps over time show a dense, polycentric urban structure extending in linear fashion, with a major drop in density in the outlying districts.

Istanbul is facing serious problems of congestion, even though car ownership rates are relatively low (115 cars/1000 inhabitants), albeit rising fast (forecast to rise by 63% between 2007 and 2023). Certain projects are underway, which are intended to extend the network of self-standing types of public transport (tram, light railway and metro), but in parallel there is also major investment in road projects, raising the issue of consistency between policies.

Seven key questions were asked as a yardstick for the sustainability of current policies:

- Is environmental performance in transport progressing?
- Is transport demand being channelled towards better modal distribution?
- Can town planning be better coordinated in order to limit transport demand and improve accessibility?
- Does the fare system include external costs?
- How is new technology for improving vehicle performance introduced?
- Is optimal use being made of the transport infrastructure and is it focused on inter-modality?
- Are environmental monitoring tools of use for policies?

Haluk Gercek pointed out the authorities' shortcomings on these various points and recommended a series of indicators which could be monitored in order to track progress.

A road option challenged by the academic world and NGOs

The list of questions was completed by the project for a road tunnel under the Bosphorus, a local bone of contention (opposed by professional bodies, the academic world and NGOs) since it would bring about a marked increase in both traffic and congestion.

After some prompting, the representatives of the local council's Transport sector joined in the exchange. As part of the preparatory work for the transport master plan, their department was conducting several other studies, also including goods transport, the conclusions of which were more inclined towards road projects. Their work would be made available upon completion.

Tricky urban control

IMM's town planning department is working on the assumption of a population of 16 million in 2023 (currently 13 million), although forecasts point to a population of 22 million in Istanbul by that date. Planned measures at local level aimed at discouraging industrialisation, for example, could help check the rural exodus, but the context of national land planning policies needed to smooth out regional disparities is not addressed.

The chronic deficiencies in how planning is actually carried out in Istanbul triggered a lively exchange (academics/representatives of the council's town planning department). Master plans have never managed to take account of the dynamic nature of both unregulated housing and small-scale industry also in the unregulated sector and as such the population figures foreseen for 2023 look optimistic to say the least.

In spite of their divergent positions, quite a number of participants stressed two major difficulties:

- The **lack of effective coordination** between the various institutions in charge of planning (town, transport, etc.). Despite a bill having been drafted on the subject, Istanbul still has no body to coordinate planning;
- The **inadequate implementation of the master plans**.

Two further issues were implicitly raised:

- The lack of any ex ante environmental impact assessment for mega road projects;
- The lack of forward vision, taking account of the various options, their cost, their benefits and possible impact upstream of planning

Relative improvement in the environment, sometimes outstripped by traffic growth

Whilst the number of road accidents has dropped considerably over the last 10 years as a result of a drive to regulate and control, the environmental context is deteriorating.

Despite improved transport efficiency, the overall volume of CO₂ emitted by road transport in Istanbul increased by 37% between 1990 and 2007, and concentrations of pollutants regularly exceed the standards for particles, NO₂, ozone and CO.

The only drop is in SO₂ concentration thanks to the efforts of industry, motor vehicle regulation and an increase in the number of LPG fuelled vehicles.

3. Conclusion

This workshop revealed the gap between the major challenges identified by the study and the responses which seem to be forthcoming.

The main results of the study conducted by H. Gerçek and O. Demir provided a basis on which to discuss the sustainable development issues of mobility, urban development and transport in Istanbul. They also pointed to the need to involve new tools at decision-making level, particularly by taking external costs into account.

The Blue Plan acted as moderator for the lively debate which took place on controversial issues also being discussed between local players.

The workshop will provide input for the Mediterranean forum planned for 2009 and will illustrate the need for coordination and monitoring in urban planning and travel management issues.

4. Annex - List of participants

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| Mr Metin Çancı | IMP | Urban Planning |
| Mr Atilla Alkan | IMM | Head of Transport Planning |
| Mr Uğur İnan | IMM | Director Urban Planning |
| Mr İhsan Yılmaz | IMM | Deputy Dir. UP |
| Mr İbrahim Demir | IMM | Environment |
| Professor Emine Ağar | ITU | Transport |
| Professor Nuran Zeren Gülersoy | ITU | Urban Planning |
| Professor Tülay Kılınçaslan | ITU | Urban-Transport Planning |
| Associate Professor Fatma Ünsal | MSGSU | Urban Planning |
| Associate Professor İsmail Şahin | YTÜ | Transport |
| Assistant Professor Azime Tezer | ITU | Urban-Transport Planning |
| Dr.(PhD) Alper Ünal | Embarq | Environment |
| Ms Gülsun YEDİRLHÜYÜK | MoE | |
| Ms Bahar ERKOPANESER | MoE | Urban planning |
| Ms Özlem KARAKURT | MoE | |
| Mr Patrice Ros | AFD | Chargé de mission |
| Mr Ozgür Sevilgen | AFD | Chargé de projet |
| Professor Haluk Gerçek | ITU | Transport |
| Mr Orhan Demir | Planofis | Urban planning |
| Mr Rami Semaan | Sitram Consultants Beirut | Transport |
| Mrs Silvia Laria | Plan Bleu | Urban development |
| Mr Philippe Vallouis | Plan Bleu | Transport/environment |

Mrs Sibel Tilev Translator

Tema : The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation, and the Protection of Natural Habitats
 MSGSU : Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University
 ITU : Istanbul Technical University
 YTU : Yıldız Technical University
 IMM : Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
 Embarq : The WRI Center for Sustainable Transport
 MoE : Ministère de l'Environnement
 AFD : Agence Française de Développement