
18. Memorandum of Graz – To Avoid Suffocating of Our Cities in Traffic

The MEMORANDUM OF GRAZ is the result of the "3rd International Congress on Old City Centers and Building Culture" (Thursday June 7 to Sunday June 10, 1990). The general topic was "Will Traffic Suffocate our Cities?".

After three days of exchange of experience, 333 participants from 15 European countries and the USA passed the MEMORANDUM OF GRAZ for a humane city-friendly traffic policy.

It is both a warning and an appeal directed to the officials responsible and decision-makers in governments and parliaments

(cities, regions, laender, states) authorities and planning offices, local transport undertakings and railway administrations, automobile and public transport associations, representatives from automobile and mineral oil industries, scientists and researchers

economic bodies such as chambers of industry and commerce, publicists and journalists of all media (news-papers, radio, TV)

The Automobile Threatens the Habitat City

Disturbed Symbiosis

City and traffic form a symbiosis. It is severely disturbed by excessive motor traffic. One way out of the

dilemma would be to avoid traffic. Before each journey its necessity should be critically reviewed.

Driving Force Automobile

The desire to own a car and to use it is based on structures inherent in man's psyche. The automobile extends individual potentials yet curbs collective quality of life - especially in the city.

Unbridled Motorization

The trend towards unbridled motorization goes on. On June 6, 1990, Carlo Ripa de Meana, EC Minister for the Environment, reported in Brussels that currently 220 million private cars are on the road in Europe; by the year 200, this number is expected to be augmented by another 40 million. The danger exists that cities less affected so far will equally be overrun by an avalanche of cars.

Victims of Traffic

A high proportion of traffic accidents occurs in the cities; people are killed or injured; the victims are to be found especially among pedestrians, children and elderly people.

Noise and Exhaust Emissions

Noise and exhaust emission values are high above the permissible levels; polluted air jeopardizes the health of people living and working in the cities. Historical buildings and monu-

ments which are centuries old, fall into decay within a few years. Heavy traffic with its emissions and vibrations contributes to this situation.

Progress Outdone

The progress achieved through catalytic converters is outdone by the great number of newly registered passenger cars and trucks, flourishing city tourism, greater mileage, and more powerful engines.

Restricted Freedom of Movement

The freedom of movement of pedestrians and sojourns in streets and on squares are grossly restricted by moving or parked automobiles. Roads users increasingly obstruct one another, aggressions are mounting.

Urban Exodus and New Burdens

These negative developments encourage urban exodus, new waves of commuters create new burdens.

Objectives of a Humane and City—Friendly Traffic Policy

No Time to Lose

The Congress in Graz has been ample proof that there is no time to lose. We all bear responsibility, also for future generations. Traffic reduction for the benefit of man and to save our cultural heritage are undoubtedly some of the most important tasks of local government policy. "soft mobility" is in, a new attitude towards traffic begins in our heads.

Consonant Mobility

High mobility is integral to high quality of life as long as it is compatible with society, city and environment.

Sharing of Tasks

It is important that tasks be shared both among traffic authorities and means of transport and that net-

works also exist between cities and their environs.

Urban Means of Locomotion

Genuine relief can only be provided by energysaving, environmentally friendly, urban means of locomotion — one's own feet, bicycles, trams, trains, buses.

Limitation and Alternatives

Individual motor traffic must be limited to the extent necessary to maintain functioning of the city (delivery, loading, service, transport of handicapped persons). These limitations are imperative since increasing the attractiveness of public transport is no sufficient incentive to make use of it.

Shopping Paradise City

Discouraging individual traffic will result in more safety and freedom of movement for pedestrians, cyclists and public means of transport and their users, lower traffic, which in turn will heighten the quality of residential areas in city centers and adjacent quarters, extended handling space for deliveries to city centers and shopping streets. This creates incentives for the increasingly popular "shopping paradise city" as alternative to the gigantic supermarkets in no-man's land.

City of Short Distances

In future planning and urban construction, the focus must be on creating a "city of short distances", furnished with diverse amenities and sufficient free space for encounters. For easier management of everyday routine — this applies specially to women and children — safe routes to school, kindergartens etc. are indispensable. Underpasses must be avoided, a pedestrian's due place is

above ground. Pedestrian zones must be extended, pedestrian friendly streets with well-dosed motor traffic are to be fostered.

From Road to Rail

A well-functioning integrated transport system is the main prerequisite for the necessary shift of journeys and transport of goods from road to rail. An optimal network must be established between cities and rural regions. Suburban trains, park & ride systems, cycle and pedestrian tracks as well as any other possibilities of public, short—distance passenger traffic must be given priority.

Narrow Limits and Reversion

Narrow and stringent limits must be set to the expansion and further development of facilities for individual motor traffic. Frequently previous urban developments will have to be "reversed". Streets and squares are public space, which requires sophisticated design efforts and is of high utility value for the residents.

More Autonomy, More Funds

For the quick realization of humane, energy—saving, and environmentally friendly traffic, cities need more autonomy, new financial resources and more public funding. In the future motor traffic will have to foot its own bill — this includes expenditures for noise protection and reduction of exhaust emissions as well as accident costs not covered by insurance premiums.

Courage Will Be Rewarded

Reduction of motor traffic ensures higher quality of life. The politicians, who are called upon to make this decision, will have to show considerable courage, provide adequate

information and act consistency. But it has already become apparent that the citizens of many a city have rewarded this perseverance with their ballots.

Broad Consent

280 experts received and basically approved already on the first day the theses contained in the MEMORANDUM OF GRAZ. 21 experts from different countries came forth with additional ideas, which were included in its final version. The editorial committee, which was elected unanimously, comprised the following seven members: Dipl—Ing. Erich Bramhas, Architect, Vienna; Dr. Dietmar Habermeier, City Councillor for Law and Environmental Protection, Vienna; Georg Herberstein, President of "Austria Nostra", Vienna; Prof. Max Mayr, President of "International Forum of Towns in Graz", Graz, Werner Pillmeier, City Councillor for Construction, retired, St. Gallen; Prof. Dr. Ing. Hartmut Topp, University of Kaiserslautern, Department for Traffic and Transport, Kaiserslautern; Prof. Dr. Roland Wiedenhoeft, Littleton, Colorado, USA.

Graz, June 9, 1990.