
URBAN VEHICLE ACCESS REGULATIONS

To fight local air pollution and promote sustainable mobility, specific measures in cities/urban zones are often necessary. UPEI, the voice of Europe's independent fuel suppliers, welcomes the study on Urban Vehicle Access Regulations Schemes (UVARs) published in September 2017, and would like to share further views ahead of the publication by the European Commission of a non-binding guidance document on UVARs.

Urban access regulations mean that certain types of vehicles are regulated or restricted from entering a part of an urban area. They can help resolve issues such as air pollution, noise or congestion. There are three types of schemes: low emission zones (LEZs), urban road tolls and traffic restrictions.¹ More than 220 European cities have already set up LEZs.

We call on UVARs to be based on reliable information and objective criteria to achieve a sustainable, cost-efficient and technology neutral transition towards a more sustainable mobility, and suggest respecting the following principles when setting and implementing the schemes:

- Interoperability: while local authorities should remain fully responsible for operating the schemes, issues such as scheme design, monitoring, evaluation and enforcement should be coordinated at European level rather than at national or local level, to ensure a minimum level of consistency, allowing European drivers to travel smoothly across Europe;
- Technology neutrality: vehicles should be categorised according to their environmental impact, independently from technologies and fuels and without discarding options. For example, vehicles should or should not be admitted in a particular LEZ according to objective emission thresholds;
- State-of-the-art and science-based criteria: emission thresholds should be set based on the latest European norms and regulations on vehicles emissions, and regularly adapted. Beyond air pollution, if LEZs are thought as a tool to support climate objectives, they need to be properly designed, with consideration of the environmental impacts of different vehicles over their life-cycle;
- Predictability: UVARs decisions should to be stable over time, and not motivated by short-term political deadlines, and properly communicated, in order to give clear a signal to drivers as well as businesses involved with vehicles manufacturing, mobility services, fuel supply etc.

¹ <https://urbanaccessregulations.eu/>

UVARs should be associated with a range of measures to maximise their acceptance and effectiveness:

- Improvement and promotion of public transport, other modes of transport, as well as periphery low-cost parkings;
- Renewal of public fleet;
- Incentives for the renewal of private fleet, as new vehicles are significantly cleaner and more energy-efficient;
- Better control of vehicles maintenance;
- Traffic management and infrastructure improvement.

When setting up UVARs, local authorities shall be mindful of the following elements:

- Attention should be given to the needs of different social groups (residents, schools, businesses, disabled people, etc.). UVARs should be socially fair and affordable;
- Attention should be given to border effects: the size of the UVARs should be adequately chosen to avoid an increase of periphery traffic and therefore emissions;
- Urban traffic is not the only source of local air pollution: attention should also be given to complementary measures, such as requirements for the residential sector.

Periodic reviews should ensure that LEZs and other UVARs are fit for purpose, and constitute cost-effective measures to reach the objectives initially set, often linked to compliance with air quality rules.

Europe's independent fuel suppliers are closest to consumers, providing a service, not just a product. Effective UVARs must be explained and endorsed by citizens. Fuel suppliers are the face of this transition when it comes to changing behaviour towards more sustainable mobility, this is why retail stations can help communicating these measures to the consumers. On the other hand, retail stations activities are indirectly affected by LEZs and other UVARs. UPEI and its members will continue playing a pivotal role in the transition towards more sustainable mobility, and as such will further support efficient, balanced and ambitious policy-making, coordinating efforts at European, national and local level.

Contact: Cécile Nourigat, Secretary General | +32 2 7402020 | info@upei.org

UPEI represents nearly 2,000 European importers and wholesale/retail distributors of energy for the transport and heating sectors, supplying Europe's customers independently of the major energy producers. They are the interface between producers and consumers, using their own infrastructure and flexibility to supply existing demand for conventional and renewable liquid fuels, as well as non-liquid alternatives as part of the energy transition. They cover more than a third of Europe's current demand. The organisation brings together national associations and suppliers across Europe.

Independent fuel suppliers bring competition to Europe's energy market and are able to respond rapidly to changes affecting supply, contributing to security on a local, national and regional level. They have developed and maintain a comprehensive infrastructure for the sourcing, storage and distribution of transport and heating fuels, with a commitment to delivering a high quality service to all consumers, including those in remote areas.

Since 1962 UPEI has been advocating for a level playing field and fair competition to ensure an affordable, sustainable and secure energy supply for Europe's consumers. Today, in the context of the transition to a low carbon economy, UPEI and its members are also addressing the challenges of adapting the product range and meeting consumer demand through market oriented solutions.

With its strong track record in pioneering the supply of renewable fuels in the EU, UPEI's members remain committed to delivering and embracing new, cost effective solutions which further promote energy efficiency and reduce pollutants and emissions.