

## **Mobility solutions everywhere and for everyone with a reduced carbon footprint: from solo driving to car *socialization***

Our priority must be to lead the country towards the necessary decarbonization of our travel, while 30% of our emissions still come from transport (excluding international air transport), a significant and growing part of which is for goods. But we must also combat "two-speed mobility" by providing solutions for those who find themselves under house arrest all year round. These are the two main thrusts of a social-ecological policy for mobility in France in 2020: mobility solutions everywhere and for everyone, with a reduced carbon footprint.

Upstream of transportation organization, we need to think about space management, and therefore urban planning, land use planning and time management. In urban areas, the "quarter-hour city" must be an objective to be achieved in that it takes over the work of time policies and time offices<sup>1</sup>.

Although the mobility orientation law (LOM), promulgated in December 2019, enacted a "right to mobility for all", it has already been overtaken by the health crisis and confinement. Our world of daily and occasional hectic lifestyles has stopped for two months and is not starting up again "as before". While house arrest was much more pleasant in the countryside than in the heart of the city, imposing telework and tele-education on millions of our fellow citizens has shown that it was possible to be less subject to forced displacement. Their development and even their institutionalization will completely overturn the organization of our individual and collective mobility. This forces us to rethink and redefine them and gives substance to sociologist Bruno Marzloff's concept of "demobility": it is possible to move less but better in the sense that mobility can increasingly be chosen rather than suffered.

At the same time, we've been witnessing an explosion of cycling and new mobility in urban centers in recent years, with exponential growth in recent months thanks to local elected officials - and socialists first and foremost! - who have created new dedicated infrastructures, the famous "coronapists".

The observation is there: since the Second World War, rural areas have gradually been deprived of both rail and road public transport (intercity buses). First because of the rural exodus, and then by neoliberal policies that gradually cut the least busy lines and forgot to maintain them. Above all, the car has very often become their only mobility solution. Rural mobility has remained an unthought-out, even misunderstood, issue for governments since the post-war period. The most recent example is the Rural Agenda launched in the fall of 2019, which does not mention this issue in its action plan.

However, motorists are pilloried in the fight against global warming by their neighbors in large cities, which benefit from abundant and efficient public transportation in the centers. Of course, the 120g CO<sub>2</sub>/km suburban *solo car driver* is not very efficient; but if barely one-third of Parisians own a car, it is because they have a wide range of mobility solutions for their daily lives. What is valid for the hearts of large cities is no longer valid in many suburban or even smaller urban areas where the modal share of the car is just as important as in rural areas, precisely because of the lack of sufficient public transportation. The whole issue is to have a range of mobility solutions!

### **Comforting the existing mesh**

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<sup>1</sup> Tribune "Individuals, organizations and territories: for a right to time", *Libération*, May 23, 2020.

Rather than constantly trying to reinvent hot water, let's use, renovate and comfort what already exists, as our regional elected officials do and propose.

If we want our citizens to change their habits, we must give them the opportunity to do so. Let's build a transportation architecture in which intermodality between modes is central and is organized around the most structuring intermodal nodes: rail and bus stations and carpooling areas. Let's put each mode of transportation back into its area of relevance by intensifying the offer through the technique of timing when there is a minimum flow, as our Swiss neighbors have done remarkably well. Let's go so far as to integrate the incredible and very dense school transport network with other passengers!

Of course this has a cost that is shared between the community and the user. But we know that the primary determinant of the shift from cars to public transport is not price but the quality of the offer. To encourage people to switch to less carbon-intensive travel, the challenge is therefore to offer regular trains and buses everywhere, on time, guaranteeing a seat, an electrical outlet and an Internet connection so that travel time can be used for work or relaxation. And on this point, our Regions have no reason to be ashamed of their achievements, given how much investment has been made in TER trains in recent years. Their ability to innovate to attract more passengers is well established.

Our rail network has lost 20,000 km since 1945, returning with its 29,000 km to the 1880s level, and 9,000 km of "short lines" are still threatened. Let's dare to innovate with light, low-carbon, lower-capacity trains, which are more than enough to meet transportation needs.

- our TERs are sometimes oversized for certain lines -, and offer new services in stations to make life easier for users. At the same time, let's complete the high-speed network to complete the rail link between major cities.

### **Opening up to competition, a debate behind us?**

The railway is a long time policy. In 2018, the government hastened the opening to competition by wanting to pay for the end of the status of railway workers, while the separation between networks and operators, the opening to competition, and the signing of a branch collective agreement were negotiated and deliberated by the laws of 2014 and 2016.

This is not the time for haste. Contrary to the right-wing regions that are rushing down this path so that in the end the SNCF will end up keeping the vast majority of contracts - as we see with our European neighbors - we reaffirm that there is no question of us selling off our common heritage to the highest bidder. Let us not repeat the mistake of the freeways. Our model is much closer to the one in force in local governments, which can choose to set up their own agencies or delegate public services. This public control of public services makes it possible to go further in terms of service provision, based on solidarity-based pricing and a minimum transportation offer adapted to all regions. This is the position we were already defending in 2018 in a forum in *Libération*.

### **Let's socialize the car**

A successful transition will not be possible without the car. The much decried car - and sometimes its users with it - is everywhere and is often the only mobility solution. That's why, in parallel with the ongoing decarbonization of motorization, we need to start a revolution in our relationship with the car. We need to change the way we use them, stop demonizing them as objects, and massify the use of what already exists: going from 1.3 to 2.5 passengers on average per vehicle and per trip will almost halve carbon emissions... just as lane congestion has a multiplier effect in terms of emissions.

Its socialization is undoubtedly the challenge for the future of mobility in low-density areas: carpooling, car sharing, transportation on demand, cabs under contract, mobility in solidarity with our seniors and disabled people.

The boom in long-distance carpooling over the last 15 years has triggered this change in the relationship to the car. Thanks to digital technologies, let's take this logic even further by institutionalizing it as "individual public transportation". Let's develop the carpooling lines of daily life. This innovation is already being taken up by companies and regions with successful experiments. The principle is simple: virtual carpooling lines are defined in conjunction with the relevant local authority. Carpooling stops are positioned like bus stops and, thanks to digital technologies, alerts are sent to registered drivers so that they can take charge of the passenger and "carpool like you take the bus". And the role of local authorities remains crucial in defining the relevance of the routes, organizing complementarity with transportation services, installing signage and providing financial incentives to drivers.

## **Pedals!**

Cycling is becoming more and more popular in urban areas but is lagging behind in the countryside. We need to develop this culture of bicycle use. The regions are fully competent to propose cycling plans, in conjunction with other communities. In France, more than half of everyday trips are less than 5 km long, a distance that can be covered by anyone with the ability to pedal, especially with the development of electric-assisted bicycles (EAB). The main obstacle is the lack of suitable and safe infrastructure on country roads and in many residential areas.

As elected municipal and inter-municipal representatives, let's generalize speed reductions to 30km/h and let's commit ourselves to the creation of bicycle and pedestrian links in and between our municipalities, either on the existing ones or by creating new greenways, accompanied by the indispensable secure bicycle garages. And because the change of practice must be initiated from a very young age, let's equip students who live less than 5km from their school with a classic bike or VAE.

## **Let's really put communities in charge**

The LOM defines the regions-intercommunalities pair as "mobility organizing authorities" (AOM). It is therefore at these scales that territorial policies must be determined and coordinated in order to create the synergies and linkages that promote the intermodality that we are calling for: public transportation, TER, park-and-ride facilities...

They are also responsible for promoting the offer, supporting change and training everyone in the use of new technologies, so that the essential knowledge of all mobility solutions in the regions is as broad as possible. Thanks to multimodal information systems, mobility is becoming a global service integrating all types of mobility existing in a regional area: active mobility (walking, cycling), shared car mobility (carpooling and car sharing), mobility organized in networks (train, bus, streetcar, etc.). Let's not leave this to the GAFA!

But we cannot formulate proposals without pointing out the lack of resources for the communities we are calling for action. This is the biggest void in the LOM. The Regions have not been compensated for the exercise of their new competences and some inter-municipalities are becoming AOMs without sufficient fiscal resources because they are not well equipped with companies to raise the "mobility payment", this tax on the wage bill which is one of the bases of the French-style mobility system by coming directly to finance public mobility policies in the territory concerned and which the MEDEF, which qualifies it as a production tax, hopes to see disappear.

This is a real break with republican equality: being legally obliged to organize mobility without having the means to do so!

The government has refused, and still refuses, the proposal of the socialist parliamentarians of a shift from the TICPE (fuel tax) to the communities that exercise the mobility competence. And this despite the fact that the Senate, with a right-wing majority, had voted for it in the LOM!

While the recovery plan will compensate and give operators and local authorities a bit of leeway, it is imperative that this financing be sustainable to ensure the sustainability of the measures and thus allow for a truly global transition.

But above all, since the dogma of debt has just been shattered, let us reconsider the policy of public investment in mobility and infrastructure: upgrading rail and river networks, regaining the small lines that still have sufficient population potential, creating secure bicycle routes and lanes throughout the country...

Finally, let's bring about an equalization between modes: let's make use of the mobility infrastructures that bring in revenue (freeways, airports, parking lots and large train stations - which must be returned and remain under public control) to finance what is expensive but indispensable on a daily basis (TER, urban and school transport).

## **Conclusion**

Socialists, as spearheads of the social and ecological transition in the territories, are the first to know that we cannot change the world for just a few. Because metropolises need the vital forces of the territories that move there, let us create new territorial solidarities so that our entire society moves towards the same horizon.

If the region is the architect of this new situation, it is the alliance of territories and actors that will ensure the success of the response to the triple challenge of spatial (equitable coverage of the entire territory), social (no one must be forgotten) and environmental (increasingly urgent) that is before us.

Because we want to respond to each individual situation, we must put the user at the center of our mobility policy.

For this reason we plead to think globally on the territory but to act locally, to think "useful" to avoid unnecessary or suffered displacements, Think "shared" to ensure complementarity between modes, Think "sustainable" to make the transition a success, Think "connected" to offer an efficient mobility chain, think "simplified" to obtain a ticket, Think "accessible" to everyone, Thinking "close" to make daily life easier, Thinking "united" with an adapted pricing.

## Signatories

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