

Miami, 20 April 2007

A new "protocol" to be signed by the most important cities for a better Urban Environment is needed

Preliminary Remarks

1) More than 50% of the world's population (and more than 80% of the European population) lives in urban areas. Action in regards to people living in these areas is a priority to us due to the fact that reducing energy consumption of urban residents implies the reduction of CO2 emissions of those who produce (or are the cause of the production) more than 50% of global CO2 emissions.

2) On average, the energy consumption of urban residents exceeds that of rural populations. Thus, reducing the energy consumption of urban residents would result in the most efficient emissions reduction strategy.

3) The reduction of energy consumption by urban residents would result in a better quality of life with regard to:

- health issues and life expectancy (since CO2 emissions are often accompanied by smog, of great detriment to health);
- reduced traffic (smaller vehicles could reduce traffic increasing their speed and reducing emissions);
- increased bicycle use could speed up motor traffic (in many urban centres, such as Milan, the commercial speed is lower than 15 Km/hour), reduce pollution and provide a solution to a 'sedentary' lifestyle, also facilitating socializing;

4) Individuals make inefficient use of their personal vehicles (on average, each car is used by only 1.2 persons, with the result that 90% of cars in circulation could be 2 seaters) and vehicles are primarily parked on average 23 out of 24 hours a day. Moving from car ownership to car rental/car sharing could improve the efficiency car use. Less cars parked in streets would result in more space for circulation and less traffic. Long term flexible car rental contracts would provide citizens with the flexibility to use cars in accordance with their needs for size.

5) It should be clear to individuals when they purchase a new Vehicle (or a home) that it must comply with the future rules.

6) It is important to develop a scenario not only for the short term (3/5 years) but also for the medium/long term (10/15 years). Cities in the long term should become ideal places to live. Many cities the size of Milan would allow the use only of bicycles and small electric cars, in order to create environments without smog and noise pollution. Cities should no longer be perceived as places to 'escape' and 'evade'.

7) The majority of citizens are willing to accept rules limiting the emissions but it is unrealistic to assume that individuals would follow such principles alone: a framework is needed.

8) With the exception of London and a few other cities, since no significant measure to reduce the use of vehicles (in proportion to size and pollutant emissions produced) in the major cities has ever been taken, it is absolutely necessary to set up a **PROTOCOL** with common rules and guidelines to be applied simultaneously in a number of cities and to serve as an example to others. To further underline the importance of this initiative, this PROTOCOL should be inserted in the future replacement of the Kyoto Protocol.

The new protocol

1. Congestion and parking charges

Charges for vehicles circulating and parking in urban areas Proportionate to size and pollutant emissions produced.

2. Road tax

Road taxes should be proportionate to vehicle size and pollutant emissions produced.

3. Excise Duty

New excise duties on petrol, gasoil and other fuels should be set up in order to balance their CO₂ emissions (when burnt). Within 15 years, the money earned by public administrations through congestion and parking charges, excise duties and road taxes should finance "green certificates" balancing the CO₂ emissions of vehicles.

4. Real estate tax

Real estate taxes should also be proportionate to polluting emissions produced. We should aim at making all buildings "CO₂ neutral" in the next 15 years. This would encourage energy savings, use more efficient air-conditioning systems and implement "carbon trading".

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