

Project Group (82 Changing the Way We Move, Commute and Travel - Perspectives for Mobility Transition)

Comment

Authors of the Comment:

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Comment: *We can picture humanity as a hiker who has to decide between two different paths: They know that one of them will be extremely exhausting with a lot of unknown challenges, but the destination is worth it. On the other way, they are awaited by a monster that will eat them. This is a good metaphor for the two options we have when it comes to the climate crisis. In this regard the transport turnaround is a big step in the right direction. Traffic nowadays contributes heavily to the environmental pollution and therefore risks our health. Although the transport turnaround is a necessity, it involves challenges such as the sustainable public infrastructure and the mindset of the citizens. In our comment, we will focus on these two challenges for the transport turnaround in Germany.*

The current public infrastructure is not sustainable due to lacking in railroads, bus-networks, especially in rural areas, and not-enough e-charging stations, leading to the majority of the population to continue using vehicles powered by combustion engines. The public transport in Germany is too expensive, which makes people more inclined to use their cars. Improving and building new infrastructure is not an easy mission because of the high costs, limited resources, and limited space in cities, when it comes to, for example, lanes for cycling and e-charging stations. The German cities were planned with car traffic in mind. Widening bicycle lanes in cities would lead to narrower lanes for cars and therefore more traffic.

The second challenge is that many people are reluctant to leave their comfort zones and change their habits. In theory, adapting the cities for more bicycles is possible, but the mindset of the citizens must also adapt to commuting less with cars. Furthermore, the fear of the impact that such transformation could have on the economy (e.g. fossil fuel industry) and our lives (e.g. losing jobs) is a big challenge the transport turnaround faces. One could think of the case of reducing the consumption of animal products such as meat as a comparable issue regarding the mindset of the German society. To change this mindset that is not willing to give up indulgence, it is important not to expect a sudden change but rather step-wise usage reduction of conventional cars and increase in using sustainable means of transport, which refers back to the challenge of infrastructure.

In conclusion, these two challenges and any other that comes to mind are interconnected and dependent on each other. Even though changing the mindset of a person seems very difficult, it is important to not give up hope and go on. We recall the metaphor of humanity

as a hiker to conclude that the transport turnaround is unavoidable and not impossible to make happen. Which of the two ways are we as a society going to take?

Video Information

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Authors of the Video:

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