



International Association of Public Transport
Union Internationale des Transports Publics
Internationaler Verband für öffentliches Verkehrswesen
Unión Internacional de Transporte Público

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Mr. Artūras ZUOKAS
Mayor
Vilnius City Municipality
Konstitucijos pr. 3,
09601 Vilnius, LITHUANIA

Brussels, 10 May 2013

Dear Mr. Mayor,

On behalf of the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and the whole public transport community, I would like to express my concerns with the latest plans of Vilnius Municipality Administration to significantly diminish the trolleybus system in the capital.

Vilnius is regarded as one of the biggest trolleybus network in Eastern Europe. With a 300-strong vehicle fleet, it carries more than 300.000 passengers daily on 21 routes with a total length of nearly 500 km. As in other Eastern European cities, Vilnius trolleybuses enjoy high modal split and are genuinely perceived by citizens as meeting rising urban mobility requirements: affordability, regularity, safety, environment-friendliness and quality of life.

Initiatives aiming at reducing the trolleybus system in Vilnius seem not to be in line with the current level of understanding of emerging urban mobility trends. Even though a number of cities worldwide decided to remove electric transport networks in the 1950s and 1960s, they were forced to restore these systems in the later period. One of the most important factors behind reopened, newly created or modernized trolleybus networks was their cost effectiveness and the reduced environmental impact of trolleybuses. If the municipal plan of multiple lines closures and vehicles reduction will become a reality, Vilnius, with the population of 523.000, should expect dramatic increase in carbon footprint and car ownership as well as a higher congestion level based on a partial or even temporary transfer from trolleybuses into diesel bus lines.

It is worth mentioning that UITP regards trolleybuses as an important element of the PTx2 Strategy of doubling the global market share of public transport trips by 2025. Nowadays, in a number of cities worldwide, trolleybuses serve as the city's "business card" and are the best 'green' transport mode available. However, this demands both fleet modernization and infrastructure upgrading, but also the building of a positive image of public transport as an attractive, affordable and quality-driven mean of urban mobility.





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In case of Vilnius, there are a number of EU structural funds and bank loans available that could be used to renew rolling stock and invest in necessary infrastructural works and image-building campaigns. Funding rather expensive tram networks is just a partial solution, particularly in a city, where the trolleybus system has been successfully operating for nearly 60 years. It is worth emphasizing that electric mobility has been recognized by the European Commission as the future of urban public transport (see the EU Directive 2009/33/EU on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles). The trolleybus scheme fits perfectly into this picture.

Especially trolleybuses prove very often to be a flagship of sustainable mobility in many Eastern European cities, the best example of which is Gdynia, Szeged or Brno. However, this positive trend also involves better urban development strategies, new managerial culture, customer-driven approach and political commitment. All of these ensure that electric urban public transport can prevail as the fundament of green and sustainable urban mobility.

Under the auspices of UITP's Bus Committee, a standing international trolleybus working group has been established in 2004. This group works on many technical and operative themes, focusing on international exchange and peer to peer project teams under the active chairmanship of Dr. Sergey Korolkov from Moscow.

On behalf of the whole public transport community, including 3,400 member organizations in 92 countries, I would be pleased to offer you our full support and assistance regarding the future of the trolleybus system in Vilnius. Your beautiful, young and dynamic city deserves a cost-effective, green and sustainable transport solution that trolleybuses offer. It is a ticket for a better future.

Looking forward to your hopefully positive answer, I remain

Yours sincerely,



Alain Flausch
UITP Secretary General





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To the attention of:

Mr. Romas Adomavičius, Chairman of the Board, UAB Vilniaus Viešasis Transportas
Mr. Rimantas Sinkevičius, Minister of Transport and Communications, Republic of Lithuania

