

Summary

The transport system has developed at a slow pace since the current transport policy objectives were adopted by the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) in 2009. Transport of both goods and passengers is covering its own costs to a greater degree than previously, and certain kinds of transport even appear to be “over-internalised”, meaning that the taxes and levies imposed by society exceed the costs of the transport itself. The non-internalised costs are still considerable for other kinds of transport, such as shipments of goods by heavy vehicles in urban areas.

The conditions surrounding passenger travel and commercial shipping have remained essentially unchanged since the adoption of the objectives, although more municipalities are meeting all eight of the Swedish Transport Administration’s criteria defining accessibility than was the case in 2015. In addition, now only one municipality does not meet any of the criteria of acceptable accessibility. Reliability and customer satisfaction are roughly the same. Sweden stands out in international comparisons as one of the leading countries in terms of logistics and trade. At the same time, purchasers of goods shipping services continue to view the Swedish transport infrastructure increasingly less favourably, indicating that strengthening the infrastructure could bolster Sweden’s competitiveness.

The major differences in how men and women use the transport system still largely persist. Public transport use by men appears to have increased, although women still travel more by public transport, while men dominate automobile use. Equal gender representation (interpreted as not less than 40% of either gender) prevails in the boards and management groups of the state transport agencies and state-owned corporations.

The process of adapting public transport vehicles to increase accessibility for individuals with functional impairments continues. Major regional differences exist in terms of how large a share of the vehicle fleet has been adapted. Accessibility for the functionally impaired is also being improved through measures undertaken at stations and stops, although many regional public transport authorities have yet to identify lines and transfer points that must be fully accessible. Regarding the means of transportation available to children, the accident statistics from recent years indicate that fewer children are dying in traffic accidents, but travel habit surveys indicate that younger children are increasingly unlikely to use the transport system by themselves. Travel by car to school and leisure activities is instead increasing.

Regarding traffic safety, the number of road fatalities has stopped declining in recent years. Given this trend, the intermediate objective for 2020 will not be achieved. For rail traffic, preliminary statistics for 2016 indicate that a total of 89 people died in accidents or by suicide, the lowest number since the objectives were adopted. In terms of maritime traffic, 28 people died in recreational boating accidents, while there were no fatalities from commercial maritime operations. Three people died in aviation, two on commercial aircraft.

Greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector decreased somewhat in 2016 compared with previous years, despite an increase in total miles travelled. The most important explanation is an increase in the use of biofuels in the form of biodiesel (i.e., hydrotreated vegetable oil). Road traffic is becoming more energy efficient as new, more efficient vehicles enter the vehicle fleet even as older ones are being scrapped. Emissions have decreased since 2009, but the rate of decrease is far too low to achieve the intermediate target for 2030 proposed by the All Party Committee on Environmental Objectives in 2016.

Regarding the contributions of the transport system to other environmental quality objectives and public health, the situation is generally comparable to when the objectives were adopted. The performance of both goods and passenger transport is still contributing to the exceeding of environmental quality standards for urban areas, while the process of adapting the infrastructure to reduce barrier effects and fragmentation is moving at a slow pace compared with the necessary actions that have been identified.