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An entire bus fleet of sustainability

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The EU wants to be climate-neutral by 2050. Mobility – one of the biggest producers of greenhouse gases – is of particular relevance to this strategy.

Traffic is currently responsible for more than 25% of total CO₂ emissions in the EU. Road traffic accounts for 72% thereof, and traffic by air and by water for 14% each. No surprise, then, that the traffic sector holds a central place in the European Green Deal and that it has been given the working title “Sustainable Mobility”. In order to achieve the EU’s goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent, the greenhouse emissions of the traffic sector should be cut by up to 90% by the year 2050 relative to 1990.

Freight traffic is to be moved from roads and air largely to rail and ships. Subsidies for fossil fuels are to be abolished, and there are plans for the CO₂ emissions trade to be expanded from road to sea traffic.

Above all, the supply of sustainable alternative fuels is to be increased drastically. This means specifically that by 2025 1 million charging stations are to be set up so as to speed up the penetration of electric vehicles. [As explained in our ESG Letter on Mobility, the emissions of electric cars is up to 87% lower than that of combustion engines, depending on the electricity mix.](#)

Electric cars only second-best option

Despite these positive numbers one has to bear in mind that from an environmental perspective, electric cars are still only the second-best solution in motorised traffic: the emissions of public transport are still clearly below that of even the cleanest electric vehicles.

According to a study by the German Federal Environmental Agency, buses and trains represent by far the most environmentally friendly means of transport both in local and in long-distance traffic. Only walking or bicycles are cleaner.

The eco-balance of buses could be improved further if they were fitted with electric or hydrogen engines as opposed to, as is currently the case, diesel engines. China has realised that and is yet again way ahead of the rest of the world when it comes to environmental technologies.

For example, the entire public bus network of Shenzhen, a city with a population of 13 million, was electrified within four years. The total share of electric buses in China is now at 17%, which compares to a mere 0.2% in Europe. In a study, the consulting firm SCI Verkehr expects the European market for electric buses to increase by 40% by the year 2023; the study also suggests that about 12% of all buses newly registered in Europe will be electric.

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The [Swedish company Nobina](#) is building on this trend. Nobina transports one million passengers in Scandinavia in 3,700 buses every day, putting sustainability in the centre of its corporate philosophy.

The company will likely achieve its 2030 goal of operating 100% of its bus fleet with renewable fuels much earlier than planned. In 2019, renewable fuels already accounted for 82%. In addition, Nobina has also set itself ambitious targets for the use of other resources. 85% of the water used to clean the buses is to be recycled by 2023 at the latest.

Also, the company constantly develops new approaches aimed at improving its bus fleet, for example “Ecodriving”. All drivers are trained to drive economically and in doing so, are supported by the “The Green Journey App”, a software developed in-house. This app provides the drivers with feedback about their performance.

This way, the drivers can adjust their speed to the current traffic situation as well as traffic lights so as to avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration. This has led to a drastic reduction in fuel consumption.

Autonomous minibuses that can be called on demand per app are another interesting topic. This concept allows for increased efficiency especially in rural areas relative to a rigid timetable.

To us, Nobina is one of the most interesting and innovative companies in the area of public traffic. It is one of the top holdings of ERSTE WWF STOCK ENVIRONMENT in the field of mobility.

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