

**THE FORUM NEWS**

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**Manifesto : Preparing the mobility transition**

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The era of new mobilities has deeply changed our lifestyles, our bodies, our perception of space and time. The previous century introduced the reign of speed. The current century has seen the rise of telecommunications. Our relationship to the world is now all about freedom and intensity. There is indeed something exhilarating in our current ability, within the boundaries of our financial resources, to travel the world while remaining connected.

We believed in the benefits of increasing **mobility** through technology. And its attractive aspects cannot be denied. However, this kind of mobility is not a good in itself. Our current conception sells a desire (this obsession “to keep moving and connected at all costs”), deepens social inequalities, dictates new pressures, and conditions our lifestyles in unreasoned ways.

Above all, and this is the essential point that should be central to our entire reflective effort, contemporary forms of mobility continue to significantly destroy our environment. Finally, the most damning aspect is that nothing significant related to the promised transition has emerged: around the world, there are always more trucks, cars and airlines, always more infrastructures being built, always more commercial opportunities on offer, and always more polluting mobilities. On

the one hand, there's a business class that jets around the planet; on the other, there are ordinary mobile lives that are exposed to the nuisances of mass travel: persistent congestion, overcrowded subways at rush hour, frozen bodies in waiting, exhausting schedules and imposed rhythms every day, none of which we can control. Despite repeated reports of pollution peaks, despite solemn commitments or statements of principle, there is no serious comprehensive solution in sight, no effective programmatic plan, no public authorities supporting, with any real conviction or constancy, innovative and sustainable ways of life.

Why then do we continue to speak of mobility in a detached manner, ignoring its many social and political dimensions? How can we continue studying mobility without focusing on how travel impacts climate change and air pollution (particulate matter, CO<sub>2</sub>)? We must now allow ourselves to rethink freely the different ways in which we travel, with all their contradictions, by unpacking all their issues – ecological, geopolitical and social – including their most detrimental aspects. That is why our thinking must resolutely deconstruct the technocratic lie. Technological innovations and their futuristic visions are often presented as miraculous solutions (such as autonomous cars, or "intelligent" cities). But all these "solutions" are illusory, as they neglect the critical questions of waste, rare materials and energy – and they could actually lead to even more travel and even worse congestion.

We should not shy away from challenging our current travel patterns which have been shaped by the domination of the systems of automobility and aviation and their supporting industries and infrastructure.

Let's offer new mobility policies, breaking with the obsession of always going faster and further.

Let's imagine new ways of conceiving the scales and rhythms of life that more accurately reflect the legitimate aspirations of those who no longer want to suffer from a world that neglects ecological and social issues in the service of a blind pursuit of

growth.

Let's give everyone a chance to slow down, to better control their time, to reduce distances, to prioritize more harmonious environments in diverse territories.

Let's imagine achievable futures and alternative lifestyles, where we encourage people to ride bikes and walk, where we no longer need to live in a frenzied, anxious society.

We would benefit from it on all fronts: health, serenity, quality of life, and even public spending. Through extensive surveys and original research projects, the Mobile Lives Forum has been monitoring the situation for several years. It has studied the mobile lifestyles that are actually experienced by people, in their many difficulties but also their great ingenuity.

In continuing this effort, the Forum will focus on thinking up alternative solutions for a real ecological transition, taking into account people's desire in industrialized countries for slower-paced and more localized lives. These questions are so urgent that they cannot be left solely to the decision-making power of states, or to the contrasting findings of experts, and much less to the market and private enterprise. It is high time that we regain the initiative, to think together, in an open, engaged and committed way, based on scientifically established data, about new proposals and choices that emerge from public deliberations.

The transformation of our mobilities concerns us all. Let's make this topic a priority within the public debate.

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### Mobility

For the Mobile Lives Forum, mobility is understood as the process of how individuals travel across distances in order to deploy through time and space the activities that make up their lifestyles. These travel practices are embedded in socio-technical systems, produced by transport and communication industries and techniques, and by normative discourses on these practices, with considerable social, environmental and spatial impacts.

[More](#)

<sup>1</sup> <https://en.forumviesmobiles.org/marks/mobility-450>