

# The future of public transportation



**Affordable car prices and hectic lifestyles have caused the ratio between those using public transportation and those using private cars to fall from year to year. This is not only a problem in Slovakia, but also in cities all over the world.**

City transportation is not simply about transporting tired and bustling people, there are also a lot of other aspects behind it. Have you heard that in France, as well as in other EU countries, the government had to make public transport free of charge for everyone, just because pollution in the city has reached a level that could harm people's lives? For several days, there were restrictions placed upon cars, and only cars with odd or even numbered license plates could drive in the city. People were asked to use urban public transportation, as it was the only possible solution to save the environment and stabilize the situation.

The environment is closely associated with city transportation and new alternatives are always exploited. So far, electric buses are only in operation in a few cities in Europe. However, transit operators everywhere should pay attention to these real-world examples of electric buses, as they perform well. Replacing diesel models with electric vehicles is a great way to reduce operating costs as electricity is a lot cheaper than diesel fuel, and also to clean up the air in

cities and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Electric buses in general are improving quickly and becoming more affordable. They have the potential to outclass old gas-guzzling models, especially if combined with fast-charging stations in the timeframe of just a few years from now.

For example, an electric bus made by a Chinese company that specializes in battery manufacturing and operating in Copenhagen, Denmark, drove for 325 km on a single charge, and even after such a long drive it still had 8% of its battery power remaining.

Due to the fact that none of the cities in Slovakia have a subway system, the tram and trolleybus network should be perceived as a fundamental pillar of the transportation system in larger Slovak cities in the future.

It is estimated that an additional 150,000 working people, along with 50,000 students, live or commute to Bratislava from other regions in Slovakia. As the capital, Bratislava is also the doorway for the majority of tourists and is the most visited city in Slovakia. In 2013 the city was visited by

947,730 tourists (650,000 foreign visitors and 300,000 from other parts of Slovakia). The way that Slovakia is perceived by foreign visitors is also affected by the standard of public transportation. The attitudes of citizens towards public transportation are more negative than positive for a number of reasons: vehicles are old fashioned and without air-conditioning, they are not suitable for older and handicapped people, and are overcrowded, all of which were proved by a questionnaire done in May – July 2014 by KPMG Slovensko in cooperation with Dopravný podnik Bratislava (DPB), which provides public urban transportation in Bratislava.

As can be seen from the charts below, the respondents (3,607) would prefer tram transportation, and would increase services and the quality of transportation system as well.

DPB makes every effort to achieve a higher level of comfort for travellers, but this improvement requires investment into both rolling stocks and the transportation infrastructure. For these purposes, DPB has

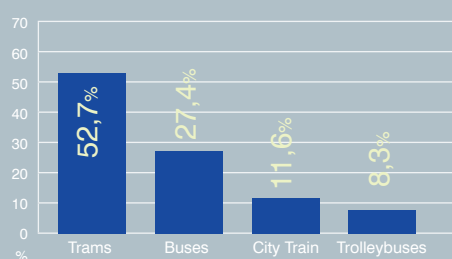
utilized EU funds and has been purchasing new trams and trolleybuses with air-conditioning and other advantages which ensure higher standards for passengers.

KPMG Slovensko has successfully assisted through the preparation of all the necessary documents and calculations, as the process of obtaining EU funds is very data-intensive and no errors are acceptable. Due to this cooperation, DPB will bring new vehicles into operation during 2014 – 2015.

Since 1989, Bratislava has recorded permanent growth of private car transportation (PCT) accompanied by a reduction in the use of public transportation. From 1989 to the present day, the ratio between public transport and PCT has declined from approximately 80:20 to a level of about 48:52.

To make public transportation more attractive and easier to use, it has become common for international train or bus tickets to be valid for public transportation as well, which makes city transportation much easier for tourists as they don't need to buy additional tickets. There is also potential to cooperate with museums and event organizers, etc., to arrange single tickets valid for an event and also for public transportation on that specific date. Publicity and advertisements could inform and motivate people to use public transportation, which apart from protecting the environment, offers many other advantages such as no problems with parking, a cheaper alternative compared to driving a car, and the time saved especially via tram transportation and others.

**If had an opportunity to choose, which one of the following transport possibilities would you prefer?**



**If DPB raised the ticket price, what service improvement would you require?**

- 67,7% Faster and smoother public transport (BUS lanes, low-floor vehicles)
- 65,3% Higher comfort and safety (homeless, thieves, vandals)
- 58,6% Air conditioning in all vehicles
- 56,9% Condensed intervals of the vehicles
- 41,9% Higher number of direct connections
- 36,3% Punctuality (not possible during rush hour)
- 25,6% Higher number of low-floor vehicles



*Katarína Košć, Senior Associate, Advisory, KPMG in Slovakia*

