

Dear delegates of S'MUN 2030,

Next week the ECOSOC Commission on Sustainable Development will host the discussion on *achieving sustainability and reducing emissions through the development and regulation of transport* as you already know. Here are some developments that have happened in the last years that you should all consider and be aware of. Events such as the discovery and development of new technology, the usage of new natural resources to produce energy, but also the Covid-19 Global Pandemic have shaped the evolution of the topic in an important way.

One of the most important developments in the transport industry has been the creation and establishment of a great variety of self-driving vehicles from companies such as Tesla, Renault, Google, and Toyota, while many more are studying it (Japan Times, 2021). This is important because the development of new technology can be exported to other means of transport, such as trains, buses, trams, or the underground, which can lead to greater sustainability due to the transportation of large numbers of people (Brimont, Saujot & Sartor, 2017). It is also in this field that both FedEx and Amazon have been considering implementing self-driving road robots for short-haul deliveries, reducing the impact deliveries produce on the environment (Wired, 2020).

These changes taken by FedEx and Amazon have happened with the aim to reduce costs, be more efficient and sustainable but also due to the Global Pandemic. Covid-19 has also affected the transportation industry tremendously. Better and clearer air, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the decrease of traffic have been some of the consequences in the last months (New York Times, 2020). This event has not only led to a temporal improvement in the fight against climate change but also opened new discussions on whether which means of transportation should people use. The discussion on whether public transport is safe or not has been one of the main topics at the table. Public transportation has been stigmatized for its insecurity, although studies such as the one published by the Union Internationale des Transports Publics has shown that it is secure (UITP, 2020). However, it remains true that public transport is mainly used by low-income workers in most countries, making this part of the society more exposed to the virus.

One last consequence of the Covid-19 Pandemic has been that a great number of people have been either forced or advised to work from home due to the situation. Showing both companies and governments that many movements to workplaces can be reduced if they are not essential. Furthermore, a study conducted that 43% of the surveyed workers preferred to work from home and concluded that it was thanks to working from home, that the emission of greenhouse gases was reduced and the use of energy was 30% more efficient (Center for Technology, 2020).

The changes the pandemic has brought to our lives have shaped greatly the way we live and therefore the way we move around and the use we make of public transport. Considering the current global pandemic crisis and being aware that it's a temporary situation; the question that arises is: ***are these changes durable on a long-term basis?*** Although the continuity of these measures depends on many different factors, it is necessary to assess the many positive effects it has had on the environment and the contributions it may bring to the discussion. This is why, as much as possible, we must do everything we can with the common goal and aim to move towards a future where public transport is more sustainable, accessible, more varied, and above all, used by a majority of the population.

*Chairs at ECOSOC 1 & 2, S'MUN 2030
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