Committee of Deputies

CONCLUSIONS OF ROUND TABLE 123:
VANDALISM, TERRORISM AND SECURITY IN URBAN PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT

This document is presented under item 6 of the Agenda of the Committee of Deputies of 24th September 2002, for information.
The ECMT held its 123rd Round Table on transport economics on the theme "Vandalism, terrorism and security in urban public transport" on 11 and 12 April 2002. The Round Table was chaired by D. Bayliss (UK) and opened with papers by Mmes S. Di Serio (I) and J. Stafford (UK) and Messrs A. Caire (F) and T. Feltes (D).

The main conclusions reached at the Round Table are described below.

1. **Mistaken perception of the degree of risk**

Subjective perceptions of the security risks involved in using public transport are high in all European countries. However, comparison of the number of robberies or assaults committed in public transport environments with those committed within the urban area as a whole shows that, while genuine, such fears are nevertheless exaggerated. There is a far greater risk of being attacked, robbed or sexually assaulted within an urban area as a whole than within a public transport environment. Indeed, three-quarters of all assaults take place within the home. Despite these figures, however, surveys show that a majority of public transport users do not feel safe when they use public transport services at night.

People feel threatened in a public transport environment and railway and underground train stations are focal points for their anxieties. While objective reasons for this fear exist, for example, poor station lighting or long corridors which create a feeling of claustrophobia, such factors are exacerbated by the presence of certain types of individual such as youths or foreigners who are perceived as potential sources of aggression.

Objective factors are therefore compounded by subjective factors, and this combination can make people fearful. A group of youths talking loudly in a station whose walls are covered with graffiti can be particularly intimidating. Graffiti are interpreted by underground users or train passengers as a sign that the public transport operator has no control over the public spaces he manages. This is a direct consequence of the fact that people do not have a high opinion of public transport in general, an attitude that is reinforced by any shortcomings in the latter. It is the association of different perceptions that creates a feeling of unease. A chestnut vendor plying his trade against a backdrop of graffiti-covered walls, for example, is not perceived as a threat in the same way that members of an ethnic minority might be under the same circumstances.

Graffiti or station premises that are not impeccably clean are external manifestations of incivilities which create a sense of insecurity. Familiarity with a given location or space can be reassuring. The presence of large numbers of police in full public view will not necessarily reduce the anxiety that public transport users may feel; on the contrary, they may be seen as evidence that a danger actually exists and therefore may not necessarily help to calm users' fears. The presence of the transport operator's staff, on the other hand, does reduce the degree of anxiety felt by some users. Perceptions are therefore extremely important and women, due to their vulnerability, are the first to feel this sense of insecurity, however, the victims of assaults usually tend to be young men. In general, surveys of public transport users reveal that a sense of insecurity is prevalent among older members of the population, as would only seem logical, but it is also widely felt among young people. The latter do not feel safe on their trips to and from school or in the places they use for recreation. This is a worrying situation in that it may encourage them to use a car instead of public transport once they become financially independent.

The media also contribute to this situation in drawing attention to certain news items that help to create a sense of insecurity. Fears therefore arise outside the transport environment but strike a chord within that environment. This is particularly true in the case of public transport, where the risks to users
receive far more attention than the risks of being involved in a potentially serious accident as a result of travelling by car.

Security is a central issue in the social debate and concerns the whole of society. Insecurity has a direct cost, namely, that of the measures taken to increase security; it also has an indirect cost, which in the case of transport can be measured in terms of the number of people who prefer not to use public transport because they are afraid to do so, resulting in loss of revenue and reduced use of more sustainable means of transport.

2. Major sources of anxiety

The Round Table considered a number of factors that play a major role in creating a sense of insecurity.

2.1 Graffiti

The perpetrators of graffiti are clearly seeking fame and notoriety. This is explained by the fact that there is an entire culture, including a commercial infrastructure, that has grown up around graffiti. Information about the equipment required can easily be obtained from the Internet and paint manufacturers have pages on their websites where people can chat and ask questions. Graffiti artists also wear their own distinctive type of clothing and rap music is a rallying cry for taggers. The people engaged in graffiti are mainly young -- although a few are not exactly young any more, which shows the longevity of this phenomenon -- and crave fame. The fact that some media have portrayed graffiti as works of art has clearly had a considerable impact, as shown by the exposure given to certain perpetrators in the printed press. The context in which these acts are carried out therefore needs to be examined.

In an attempt at sociological analysis, some public transport networks have drawn a distinction between different categories of graffiti artists. Firstly, there are, so to speak, the professional artists. Aged between 20 and 30 and with a talent for the graphic arts, they seek notoriety. Others attempt to emulate their elders. Possessing little talent, they simply mimic the first category. They are aged between 12 and 18 and identify with rap culture. Another category consists in dilettantes who occasionally engage in graffiti and who simply seek excitement, even though they are socially well-adjusted. Lastly, there are the genuinely anti-social elements, marginalised individuals who have no real concept of what is lawful and who do not necessarily include representatives of ethnic minorities.

Graffiti are not a new phenomenon and can also be found in Eastern Europe. Often associated with a political message (Solidarnosc is one example that springs to mind), graffiti are not a purely Western phenomenon. In Paris, the number of graffiti has increased five-fold over the past seven years. Swift action by transport operators to remove graffiti from the sight of passengers can ensure that there is no perception among users that the phenomenon has spread. This rapid response deprives taggers of the publicity they seek by ensuring that their markings and pieces are not lasting. Rather than works of art, graffiti are first and foremost damage to property and damage that can sometimes involve high levels of risk-taking when perpetrators cross railway lines without due attention. Those engaging in graffiti sometimes carry weapons, particularly at night in order to escape from guards, which also represents a very high level of risk.

Graffiti clearly degrade the environment for public transport users; they give the impression that public spaces are unmanaged and that transport operators have no control over their premises. The direct economic cost of graffiti is high, particularly if the operator pursues a policy of systematic removal and clean-up. Another problem is “scoring”, which is the practice of etching glass windows in buses and trains.
with a message or a name. It is a particular problem because it cannot be effaced and the only real solution is to replace the glass, which is costly. The cost of providing security guards for plant and infrastructure is also extremely high.

2.2 Acts of vandalism such as theft or assault

Acts of vandalism other than graffiti marking cover a wide range of offences ranging from stealing money from vending machines to throwing missiles, dropping objects onto public transport lines or damaging windows in buses or carriages. While it is not only young people who are responsible for these acts, the average age of offenders is often below the legal age of majority. Statistics on the nature and number of acts of vandalism vary substantially from one country to another in Europe, and it is therefore difficult to obtain a clear picture of the situation. The scale of vandalism is clearly underestimated in modern societies, however, since only a small number of incidents are reported. For example, the verbal abuse of women is a form of incivility that always has an impact but is virtually never reported. Statistics on theft, on the other hand, are far more consistent in that victims file complaints with the police. The number of thefts reported does not appear to be rising in all European countries.

In some European countries, the perpetrators of thefts are often children from non-EU countries working under the instructions of adults. In view of their young age, they cannot be restrained through prosecution and this type of offence is growing at a worryingly fast rate. In addition to such offenders, there are also adults who are extremely adept at robbing individuals in underground or railway stations. They can acquire very large sums of money in this way and in 90 per cent of cases they are criminals with prior convictions. The statistics available for Paris show that 20 per cent of these offenders had over 30 prior convictions, which casts doubt on the effectiveness of the penal system. The worst thing is to take such incidents for granted. The impression of public transport, that both the victims of such offences and those who simply hear about such robberies from others have, cannot fail to be poor.

Another form of vandalism consists in assaults on public transport employees during ticket inspections. The number of such incidents is increasing in most networks, although they are not systematically reported. Other victims of assault are passengers in underground networks and drivers in the case of rail networks. These are acts of violence directed against institutions and can take a variety of forms. Mainly committed by young people who bear a grudge against society, and who are therefore liable to act aggressively towards its representatives, these acts of aggression are sometimes directed towards passengers who appear to belong to another social category or towards the representative of the transport operator present at the scene. These acts increase the sense of insecurity that public transport users feel when they are either the victims or witnesses of such violence, and result in the network being brought to a standstill until the problem is resolved or a strike being called by the operator in response to the incident. Hearing about such incidents also adds to the negative image of public transport.

The experts at the Round Table stressed that acts of vandalism committed in public transport networks were often a stepping stone to more serious offences. It would therefore be advisable to learn more about offenders in terms of where they come from, their past history and their motives. A sociological study in this area would undoubtedly be useful.

2.3 Basic qualitative factors such as lack of information

During discussion of the causes of anxiety among public transport users, the Round Table drew particular attention to not only actual acts of vandalism but also more qualitative factors such as the feeling of isolation felt by users when no information is provided. The frequent failure to inform public transport users of incidents, delays or unexpected changes adds to their sense of insecurity. It makes passengers feel that they have been more or less abandoned and left to their own devices. Even though public transport
operators operate mass transit systems, they need to give the impression that their supply and their communications are addressed to the individual. There is no such thing as an "average user" for service suppliers who must accommodate rush hour traffic flows as well as recreational trips.

Public transport networks are not a place where the individual can take care of his own needs. It is therefore clear that the user will entrust that task to somebody else. If the provision of care is inadequate, the passenger will not feel safe. The response must match the seriousness of the incident when something untoward takes place. Public transport operators must compensate for their inability to provide a rapid response to the individual needs of users by providing high-quality information, which is one area where there are many failings and omissions. The fear that prevails in the public transport sector is due to a lack of communication. The public transport environment is often an inhospitable one. People kept waiting without information quickly start to feel unsafe.

While urban public transport systems are a fundamental part of life in society, many people do not appreciate this. The outcome is that use of public transport is perceived as an imposition, almost as a necessary evil. Public transport is still not associated strongly enough with positive societal values such as protection of the environment, with the result that using public transport is not necessarily a positive experience. In turn, this simply adds to the image of social inferiority that continues to beset public transport.

This disproportionate sense of insecurity encourages people to use their car instead of public transport, which is contrary to the public interest. Hence the importance of any measures that can combat this feeling of insecurity.

3. Solutions to perceived and genuine insecurity

The Round Table distinguished between solutions to genuine insecurity, and the resultant perception of insecurity, at the level of the firm and at the local, national and international levels.

3.1 Solutions at the level of the firm

Ideally there should be no lasting trace of acts of vandalism such as graffiti and, more generally, damage to property. This requires a policy of rapid removal of the visible consequences of offences. Such a policy is extremely costly to implement and also calls for preventive measures such as guarding rolling stock at night and "hardening" potential targets with resistant surfaces. However, the cost of such action is partly offset -- although it is not possible to determine by how much -- by the increased patronage resulting from users' feeling of being in a public space that is properly maintained.

Station design must give priority to creating areas that have clear lines of vision and that are open, bright and uniformly lit; there must be no places where an individual might be trapped and the landscaping of grounds must ensure that there is no place for a potential attacker to hide or areas of shade. Architects, planners and operators should meet to discuss their ideas and share good practices, which would make it possible to identify problems and remedy critical situations. The Washington D.C. Metro provides an excellent example of designing a metro from the outset to be safe and graffiti free.

Technology is of great assistance to transport operators and the potential impact of new technologies in the transport sector is considerable, ranging from tried and tested techniques, such as graffiti-proof seats or protective films on windows, to more specific technologies such as the use of closed-circuit television cameras to monitor stations or buses and automatic incident detection software. It is striking that, on new public transport lines with dedicated routes and in stations where lighting of uniform
intensity has been installed as well as CCTV surveillance and large numbers of emergency help points, vandalism is far less rife than it is on conventional lines. The feeling this engenders in passengers is that the operator has full control over public spaces, thus creating a sense of security. In some respects, improvements such as these are seen by those committing acts of vandalism as a challenge laid down to them by transport operators to find the weak points in the new systems put in place. The use of technology can nevertheless keep operators one step ahead, particularly in view of the wide range of possibilities it offers. Radio transmitters linked to GPS systems, for example, can allow security personnel to respond rapidly to attacks on bus drivers or other incidents on buses and partly reduces the need to consider increasing the number of staff in vehicles, a policy which admittedly has positive aspects but which is extremely expensive for public transport operators, constantly struggling to balance their budgets.

Another possibility afforded by technology, for example, consists in replacing tickets with a contact-less card, incorporating an emergency call system which allows the user to call for help in the event of an incident. Of course, no system is infallible; as in the case of surveillance cameras which do not necessarily improve security as much as might be thought, in that they do not guarantee the instant response by the operator that might be necessary in an emergency. Statistics show, however, that there are fewer or less serious assaults in public spaces protected by this kind of technology.

Technology also offers other possibilities, such as the ability to draw up highly detailed maps of unsafe areas and to monitor the trend over time of levels of insecurity in such areas. Different types of offence, for example, assaults and graffiti, can be cross-matched in order to concentrate resources on the most exposed areas and thereby ensure a more effective response.

Technology can only replace investment in human capital to a limited extent, however, and it is essential that operators train their staff in conflict management. Women are known to be better than men at defusing tense situations, and yet they tend not to be assigned to posts where there is a high exposure to conflicts. It is therefore preferable to form work groups in which they can make full use of their qualities. In this respect, deploying staff in larger numbers is reassuring when a different approach is adopted towards passengers, that is to say, when staff play a role that does not consist primarily in deterrence but also in helping people. The effectiveness of such action is not always fully understood by staff, but is nonetheless real.

As noted in the section of this report dealing with the sources of passenger anxiety, one fundamental area in which public transport must make progress is that of communication with users. Failure to inform passengers of delays and operating incidents gives the impression that the transport operator is not in control of his network and/or is indifferent to the needs of passengers. Unlike a trip by car, passengers rely on the operator. It must therefore be kept clearly in mind that it is essential that public transport operators considerably improve their communications with users if they wish to avoid the latter being prone to anxiety. This is part of a strategy aimed at encouraging users to see public transport as a partner. Safety and a high standard of passenger service are essential components of an overall approach.

3.2 Solutions at the local level

3.2.1 Prevention

The measures that are effective at local level are those which consist in putting problems in a broader context than that of the public transport operator alone. This can be achieved by setting up partnerships at the local level, notably as part of a crime prevention effort.

The experts at the Round Table stressed that in many cases not enough effort had been put into prevention. Prevention must start at the earliest stage possible by going to schools, local associations and
youth clubs to explain the role played by public transport and the essential social function it provides in the life of a city. One possibility is to hold open days, when visitors can see public transport operations from the inside and, in particular, the number of people who work to ensure the safety and security of passengers and to remove the traces of vandalism. Another possibility is to devote a few hours in the school timetable to the life of the city, during which children can be made aware of the role played by public transport. Staff from public transport companies could attend these lessons to explain to children the consequences that acts such as spraying graffiti on rolling stock or attacking public transport employees have on the company. Here, too, the role that public transport operators have to play in communicating with the public fits neatly into that of schools.

A difference of opinion emerged in the course of the Round Table between those who felt that an effort should be made to capitalise on the values expressed in graffiti by their perpetrators by channelling them in other directions and those who felt that it was totally impossible to capitalise on such values. In the view of the latter, graffiti culture was tribal in nature. It was a language containing codes and rituals used for communication between tribes and not with the general public. Other experts felt that, while admittedly there was a hard core of repeat offenders, young people should not be demonised and excluded from society. In their view, graffiti and other incivilities reflected a desire in young people to express themselves and to find a place for communication in a "system" that has nothing to offer them. It should be seen as a societal problem which, at the local level, should be addressed by increasing the number of neighbourhood projects, renovating derelict property and maintaining neighbourhood public services, that is to say, a series of initiatives that reflect a genuine urban policy at the local level. The aim would therefore be to rehabilitate rather than isolate people and to avoid dividing the world into "us" and "them". The approach required must be based on the fact that young people are a part of society. While, admittedly, it was a problem that concerned society as a whole, the Round Table felt its solution primarily required action at the local level. The policies pursued by the municipality only made sense if relevant measures were put in place at the local level with the help of young people, schools, associations (football clubs, mountain bike clubs, leisure centres, sports centres, etc.) and all those who informally exercised social control. Furthermore, the social reintegration of young people from poorer housing estates, by creating jobs for them in crime prevention in public transport networks, was one measure that had already proved its worth.

### 3.2.2 Partnerships

All social actors involved with safety are in favour of the partnerships which were recommended by the Round Table and which have already been discussed in the section on crime prevention. The aim is to adopt an overall systemic approach. In determining who is responsible for ensuring safety, the discussion should be broadened to place it within the context of the city as whole, since the problem faced by public transport operators was a social one.

The partnerships proposed by the Round Table call for the creation of high-level forums in which all the experts involved would meet at regular intervals. Strategic decisions could be taken at this level and would commit all actors in the areas of crime prevention, policing and law enforcement. These actors must be represented at a high level so that the decisions taken will subsequently trickle down to all levels in a given unit. The aim is that each of the actors will ultimately assign resources and take measures in accordance with shared objectives. There, therefore, needs to a high-ranking spokesperson for the cause defended by these partnerships in each unit. Some experts suggested that all social groups should be represented in these partnerships and not simply the elite. Partnerships were designed to serve the community and were not intended to be an alliance against a threat to their community. This view was based on the premise that all people within a given community are equal in terms of the service provided by public transport.
It might be advisable in such partnerships to establish local security contracts, uniting all actors working in the area of safety in a shared commitment, under the responsibility of a mayor, for example. Only a few years ago, little interest was generally taken in transport security and to remedy this situation the aim was to introduce contracts targeting the transport sector. To this effect, the first step in the process is to establish the facts of the situation through continuous reporting of delinquency statistics. The forms that delinquency takes are evolving and the situation needs to be kept under close scrutiny. There must then be an exchange of views on the response being taken to delinquency and the new approaches adopted. The aim is to co-ordinate all the actors in pursuit of a common goal, rather than leaving them to take action individually. The purpose is also to define the level at which each institution intervenes and therefore to establish a framework for decision-making. In this respect, meetings must be held at regular intervals and it might be expedient to set quantified targets for reducing delinquency. This can focus efforts on the new measures introduced.

It may be difficult to set a quantitative objective in local security contracts in cases where such contracts include preventative measures, such as training classes for young people in schools, given that there is no precise way of measuring the positive effects of such actions. The Round Table clearly recognised the difficulty of estimating the impact of each individual safety measure but nevertheless did not dismiss the need to set precise objectives which could help to encourage actions and which also made it possible to measure the progress made. In addition, setting objectives was a way of communicating with the public, which was expecting to see an improvement in the situation.

Lastly, rules that are too strict help to fuel insecurity. For example, a public transport fare structure that does not provide major reductions for young people is a factor in fare-dodging offences and, as a result, assaults against the operator's staff during ticket inspections. Local public authorities must therefore provide some form of compensation for operators who provide cheap fares for young people, and one way in which to do this is through partnerships.

3.2.3 Policing

The police must work in collaboration with the operator's own staff and transport police where there is an in-house force and organise patrols in areas most at risk in accordance with rotas that offenders are unable to predict or guess, since offenders must be caught in the act. This poses the problem of appropriate punishment. Young people must be made aware of the consequences of having a criminal record. In addition to which, the possibility of repairing the damage caused, particularly in terms of financial compensation, must be explored with the courts. There is a basic issue here, which is that of making courts aware of the cost of damage. Similarly, the banning of persistent offenders from the system, as has been done on the London Underground, was seen to be an undue infringement of personal liberty in many European countries. There is always a danger that rising levels of delinquency may breed a form of familiarity that ultimately leads to lighter sentencing. In this respect, the experts at the Round Table felt that, at the local level, operators had to establish contacts with magistrates and the judiciary to ensure that the latter take a firm approach to offences committed within public spaces used by public transport operators. The experts thought that the judiciary was not lenient as a general rule, but did feel that there were differences from one court to another that could be eliminated if operators were to maintain regular contacts with the local judiciary. In many cases, rather than increasing the severity of penalties, the legal system, particularly in the case of young people, had to be seen to move swiftly. To increase the speed of the legal system, it might be helpful to involve the courts in local security partnerships, since the courts cannot always be counted upon to treat transport offences with the seriousness they deserve.

The idea of zero tolerance was discussed only briefly at the Round Table. First introduced in New York, such an approach does not seem suitable for Europe, in that forms of policing in which there are no exceptions can easily become too repressive and any police excesses would lead to a public outcry.
The view in Europe is that, rather than treating the symptoms, it is better to look at the causes and pursue an overall strategy based on prevention.

3.2.4 Role of the media

The transport operator must also communicate with the local media whose role must not be restricted solely to reporting bad news about insecurity, but must also consist in informing the public of the policy pursued by the operator and local authorities to remedy the situation. The media must be treated as partners and operators must forge a close relationship with them so that the latter can inform the public about the costs to the operator of dealing with vandalism, the preventative measures taken and the success of the operator's actions. As a general rule, local media have a role to play in portraying public transport operators as key players in the life of society. In many cases, this message is conveyed more successfully through the local, rather than national, media.

3.3 Actions at the national level

Ministers of Transport also have a stake in the measures to be adopted, in that the price to pay for insecurity in the public transport sector is that of fewer passengers and, consequently, lower revenues. The increased car use that results from this situation also has implications for government in terms of the economic and environmental sustainability of transport. In the final analysis, the person who foots the bill for declining use of public transport, higher costs of repairing damage to property or higher external costs of ensuring mobility is the taxpayer. This aspect is exacerbated by the fact that non-use of public transport leads to increasing car use and increased risks of accidents, all of which are of direct concern to both the community and government. Only a reliable and safe public transport system can meet the expectations of the community, and society must not be broken down according to whether or not individuals have access to a given form of transport. The issue of social equity is therefore another reason why government must not ignore these problems.

Furthermore, ensuring security is one of the sovereign duties of the State. Government must therefore take basic actions that will create synergies between initiatives at the local level. Local security contracts, agreed between local partners, could therefore be overseen by the representative of the State's authority at the local level, such as the prefect in the case of France. Government must remain firmly in control of the issue of public safety.

In terms of exchanges of experience on best practices, many of the actions that can be considered at the national level have been presented as falling within the remit of international bodies. In many respects, the actions taken by governments, particularly with regard to information, transcend national borders and increasingly take on an international dimension.

3.4 Actions at the international level

3.4.1 Exchanges of information

The main point to emerge was the need to share information at the international level. The experts at the Round Table suggested that lists of documents of interest to transport operators be drawn up and published, either in the form of manuals or on websites. The aim of this would be to explain the procedure for initial assessment and problem analysis, and there are clearly a number of relevant items that need to be taken into account. The first step is to identify problems, after which it would be useful to have a list of techniques that could be used to alleviate the problems encountered. Descriptions of both successful and unsuccessful measures would undoubtedly be instructive, and it would also be helpful to establish criteria for judging whether measures are relevant to local situations and the extent to which
given techniques are appropriate in specific contexts. Lastly, it would be helpful to provide information on methods that can be used to assess results.

The pooling of experiences mentioned earlier consists in creating a network in which information can be exchanged. Best practices must be presented in the light of the knowledge that has been acquired about urban transport safety and the factors that help to create a sense of insecurity. This overview, as the first part of this report emphasizes, is not restricted solely to objective factors. It also takes account of unseen factors that can have a positive or negative effect, one example being the existence of a corporate culture. It is therefore important at this level that all factors are taken into account by all networks to improve the public transport travel experience and maintain and enhance ridership. Such an approach should be based on a sociological analysis of both subjective factors, that is to say, what users feel, and the assessments made of the impact of measures. With regard to the latter point, the Round Table felt that it was better to work on small models of creative measures rather than full assessments of large-scale programmes.

In conclusion, the Round Table confirmed that international bodies and organisations should give high priority to the comparison of research results. The experts asked for comparisons of programmes to be made at the international level and for access to be granted to the results of such comparisons. The dissemination of knowledge was of paramount importance and an analytical framework had to be established in order to determine whether measures were transferable from one network to another, primarily by placing measures firmly in context. It was also necessary to establish a common vocabulary to allow data to be cross-matched.

3.4.2 Safety in a context of liberalisation

With regard to possible action by governments at the international level, the Round Table also addressed the question of the potential impact of the liberalisation of public transport that EU bodies have, to some extent, recommended.

It should first be noted that changes of operator, and therefore rates of staff turnover, in a fragmented industry are inevitably higher. This suggests that a record should be kept of the actions taken and the reasons for the introduction of given measures, in that a failure to keep such records forces firms to repeat the learning process and means that decisions are based on superficial analyses. A database must therefore be set up and there is clearly a general need for such a database at either national or international level. Obviously, the demands placed on an operator and his staff must remain in place during the handover of responsibilities and the transition from one regulatory regime to another. This is as true of efforts to curb vandalism as it is of the fight against terrorism.

The issue is complicated by the wide variety of actors, customers and contracts involved. Each party must have a clear idea of what to do, since the aim is not only to share the costs but also to determine which institution should intervene and at what level. It is therefore necessary to establish a coherent framework that can be used to determine both the outcomes of partnerships and the breakdown of charges and responsibilities. In the event of an incident, it is often difficult to determine who is primarily responsible.

The Round Table did not provide a clear answer to the question of whether safety should be a barrier to liberalisation. Determining who was responsible for resolving societal problems and who should intervene need not necessarily delay the opening-up of competition in service provision. The area of competence of an enterprise must be clearly specified in the transport contract. Competition between public transport undertakings would not be desirable in the area of safety, however, in that internalising the safety costs in fares would inevitably price them out of the market. The process of competition should not put expenditure on safety and the priority it is given at risk. Safety is one of the major reasons why it is not possible to auction off parts of a public transport network unless responsibility for safety is transferred to
an operator outside the publicly funded network. While it is perfectly feasible to create a separate institution responsible for safety, the operator would no longer have control over all aspects of the network, even though such control is not necessarily a prerequisite.

In conclusion, the experts at the Round Table considered that safety should not determine how public transport was organised. On the other hand, if it was thought that solely a public monopoly could be given subsidies to ensure the safety of services, there is always a danger that such money might not be used properly, particularly in the light of the efficiency losses associated with public monopolies. An exchange of best practices might therefore be appropriate with regard to liberalisation.

4. Terrorism, a factor raising specific issues

The first reaction of the experts at the Round Table was that terrorism and vandalism in the public transport sector were separate issues. They acknowledged, however, that because the public transport sector was frequented by large numbers of people, it was often singled out as a target for terrorist attacks aiming to maim or kill. In addition there were clearly areas where terrorism and vandalism overlapped, one example being preventative measures, such as calls for public vigilance or the use of video surveillance cameras.

The distinction that can be drawn between terrorism and vandalism is that while operators could address both the causes and consequences of vandalism, through preventative measures aimed at young people, there is much less they can do on their own account to counter terrorism. To combat terrorism it is first necessary to know who the enemy is, and this is the domain of specialists who have specific knowledge that must remain confidential. This issue therefore lies outside the field of competence of public transport operators.

When not aimed at killing people, the aim of terrorists is to draw attention to their cause through their actions. The Round Table noted that while the vast majority of bomb alerts were false alarms, they could nevertheless cause severe disruption to services. Prior to 11 September 2001, the risk of being the victim of a terrorist attack was very low and the main impact of terrorism was therefore to create a loss of confidence and instil a feeling of fear in the population that is comparable in all respects to the impact of vandalism. In this respect, terrorism and vandalism are similar in that they result in a loss of confidence in public transport services and a loss of patronage that cannot easily be reversed. Since 11 September 2001, however, we know that terrorism can kill on a massive scale and that it can have a major impact on social and economic relations.

With regard to the publicity attracted by terrorists mentioned previously, it should be noted that anti-terrorist forces use procedures to distinguish between false alarms and plausible attacks in certain kinds of terrorism, such as long-running sectarian terrorist campaigns. Messages from terrorists are decoded according to established procedures and protocols. Here, too, there is a corpus of experience and knowledge that differentiates terrorism from vandalism. However, some other kinds of terrorism, often “international” in nature, rely on the element of shocking surprise and aim to kill and sometimes use suicide tactics. This kind of terrorism has been seen recently in Israel and, of course, in the infamous attacks on New York’s World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001.

In view of the above, it is clear that measures must be taken to protect the potential targets of a terrorist attack. In many cases terrorist attacks are not aimed at targets perceived to be the locations most at risk. In all cases, trained personnel such as the operator's staff, firemen, police or medical personnel are needed in order to limit the damage caused by attacks. Legislation is needed to regulate the surveillance of
public spaces, particularly video surveillance. Public transport users also need to be kept informed and advised in order to ensure that they remain vigilant and co-operate actively in anti-terrorism measures.

Lastly, international co-operation, based on shared development costs, would be welcome with regard to research into new technology for detecting explosives or large-scale bacteriological attacks. Here, too, the pooling of experience can prove vital.

5. Conclusions

Greater safety in the public transport sector can be assisted by greater use of public transport during off-peak hours, lower costs of repairing damage, declining levels of staff absenteeism and less disruption to services. In addition, educational measures aimed at preventing delinquency can also be of benefit to the community. Governments therefore cannot afford to disregard the problem of vandalism in public transport. Furthermore, since public transport uses spaces through which thousands of people pass every day, government must exercise some form of control.

In addressing the problem of vandalism, it is first necessary to gain insight into its causes, the places where it occurs, the main forms it takes and how it evolves. It is then possible to establish primary objectives. It is essential, for example, to respond immediately to offences, since speed of response is a factor that will be taken into account by offenders. Infrastructure and rolling stock must also be better designed in order to make them less vulnerable to acts of vandalism. The use of modern surveillance and information technologies can also help to alleviate the problem. However, the measures that need to be taken are not solely of benefit to the transport operator.

The Round Table therefore recommended the creation of local partnerships between all actors involved in crime prevention, policing and law enforcement. Working under the supervision of government authorities, they would seek to focus efforts on common high-level objectives that would be translated into specific measures to be taken by each actor.

At a more general level, providing local units with shared experiences, practical guidelines on crime prevention and infrastructure design, as well as information about the successes and failures of specific measures, would allow them to properly target their actions. One of the tasks that national and international authorities urgently need to address is, therefore, the classification of individual measures and their interrelationships.

There are two key factors that emerge from an overview of this area: firstly, the need to understand the reasons behind acts of vandalism; and secondly, the need to involve the public in efforts to combat this phenomenon. The public need to be involved because the impression that public transport belongs to nobody can only be countered by fostering a sense of civic pride, which in recent times has been significantly eroded. Over the years, tolerance thresholds for anti-social behaviour have been imperceptibly rising. All actors in civil society must therefore support the actions of government and once again make citizens responsible for their acts. Parents, for example, are directly responsible for their children, and this is one area where further analysis and reflection are essential. The causes of vandalism are to be found in changes within society and in society's ability to integrate all its members. This is a long-standing problem relating to the social policy of governments, but one that should be reconsidered in the light of developments in certain cities.

Terrorism, in view of its distinctive nature and the changes it has undergone since the attacks of 11 September 2001, must be dealt with on a much broader basis and therefore requires special treatment. Here, too, there is clearly a need for international co-operation.