

POWERING CHANGE

INTERVIEW WITH
CÉLINE DOMECCQ

ELABORATED BY
THÉO FIEVET

EV car charging sign
Canva

How to make European and local levels work hand-in-hand for the **electric mobility transition**? Our interview with **Céline Domeccq** on the role of European and Local authorities in making the electromobility revolution an asset for cities and their inhabitants.

Théo Fievet: You have been chairing the Platform for Electromobility since January 2023. Can you tell us more about this coalition and the role cities play in it?

Céline Domeccq: The Platform for Electromobility is a multi-stakeholder coalition that includes industries, NGOs, associations, and city representatives like POLIS, which is an active member. We come together to address challenges and propose solutions to ensure a rapid, fair, and competitive electrification of transport across Europe. Including cities in our discussions is crucial, as mobility is both a priority and a challenge for most urban areas. We cannot think about electromobility without them. Very concretely, cities host various charging solutions—slow, fast, smart—in locations like public spaces, multi-dwelling buildings, and depots, catering to all types of vehicles, from cars to buses. Additionally, they link charging infrastructure to the power grid and integrate public transport, making them central to transport electrification.



Fievet: One of the main challenges in planning the electrical grid to support EV charging infrastructure is the uncertainty about how different types of EVs will recharge in different locations, which makes it difficult to assess the necessary investments. How can we address these issues?

Domecq: These uncertainties can be managed through cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and effective planning. Early coordination in the deployment of charging infrastructure between stakeholders is key to success and ensures convenience and cost-effectiveness for users.

We recommend close cooperation between regulatory authorities, energy companies, flexibility service providers, fleet managers, charge point operators (CPOs), Distribution System Operators (DSOs), and, importantly, local authorities. Such collaboration benefits all parties involved.

Fievet: Easier said than done, is it not?

Domecq: Certainly, decarbonising transport is no easy task. To facilitate this process, we recommend that local authorities adopt a 'Blueprint for Recharging Infrastructure' approach. This ensures an organised, planned, and coordinated deployment of charging stations.

The blueprint, defined by local authorities and developed in consultation with relevant stakeholders, would include local planning rules for implementing recharging infrastructure in main highways, national roads, and urban areas, including suburbs.

It would also assess the required charging infrastructure—such as the number of points to be installed, their locations, their power, and the types of sockets—taking into account both existing publicly accessible infrastructure and private charging infrastructure.

POLIS: How can the development of electromobility be an asset, rather than a burden, for the local distribution grid in cities?

Domecq: Cities should help leverage the full benefits of V2X technologies—'Vehicle-to-everything' technologies allow electric vehicles to exchange electricity with various elements of their surroundings (buildings and homes, power grid, renewable energy sources etc.).

Cities are, in general, the key enablers and accelerators of V2X due to their alignment with clean air and decarbonisation strategies, like the growing adoption of zero-emission zones and the electrification of heating as an alternative to petrol, gas, or wood. V2X can lighten the stress on the electricity grid while reducing costly reinforcement needs. It also enables the further use of renewable energy, minimising the need to deploy additional renewable energy plants. Additionally, V2X can lower energy and driving costs for citizens. Therefore, V2X should be part of an integrated mobility and energy strategy at all territorial levels.

Fievet: This sounds promising but we are not there yet. Electric transport solutions remain marginal. What strategies can we implement to accelerate the transition to electric mobility within our cities, particularly for high-mileage vehicles like taxis and ride-hailing services?

Domecq: The next step in accelerating the transition to electric mobility should be mandating corporate fleets to decarbonise faster than the market.

Corporate fleets represent a significant portion of vehicle sales, yet companies and other large fleet owners are currently lagging in the energy transition. For cities, this is especially relevant because taxis and ride-hailing vehicles have a much higher mileage than individual drivers.



Céline Domecq

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*Céline Domecq at a ChargeUp Europe /
AVERE event in October 2024
ChargeUp Europe*

An electric Volvo car

Volvo Cars



For cities, this is especially relevant because taxis and ride-hailing vehicles have a much higher mileage than individual drivers. A well-regulated corporate fleet mandate would not only speed up the decarbonisation of the transport sector but also make EVs more affordable for the broader public. After being used for three to four years on average, corporate-owned cars often enter the second-hand market quickly.

The previous European Commission laid the groundwork with a public consultation on this issue, and the new Commissioner-designate for Transport, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, is charged with putting forward proposals for clean corporate fleets. Such measures would particularly benefit lower-income households who might otherwise struggle to afford new electric models and risk being excluded from the energy transition.

This policy will support a smoother and more inclusive transition to e-mobility, helping to lower transport costs for consumers while contributing to the reduction of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Fievet: When discussing electric mobility, we often think of electric cars, but public transport and e-bikes are also crucial in this transition.

Domecq: Indeed, urban rail infrastructure—such as metros, trams, and light rail vehicles—has a pivotal role in achieving Europe’s climate objectives.

These systems combine high capacity, energy efficiency, and safety with minimal land use, making them indispensable components of sustainable mobility.

The revised TEN-T Regulation mandates that 430 major cities along the network develop Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) to promote zero- and low-emission mobility.

Accordingly, the Platform for Electromobility calls for adequate funding to support alternative fuel infrastructure solutions for urban rail, ensuring that charging infrastructure is available at key locations such as terminuses, bus stops, and depots.

The new TEN-T regulation even mandates that airports with annual passenger traffic exceeding 12 million be connected to the TEN-T railway network, including the high-speed network, enabling long-distance rail services.