

Road to Nowhere: An Assessment of Social Costs from the Use of Cars in Cypriot Cities

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Abstract

The paper offers an assessment of marginal external costs from car use in urban areas of Cyprus; these are the social costs generated by the use of cars other than those paid by car travellers themselves. On the basis of a European methodology and local traffic data, costs are computed for externalities such as congestion, accidents, noise, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and other social impacts. Results are in line with those for other similar European cities. Congestion represents the highest part of costs during most hours of the day, exceeding one Euro per kilometre during morning peak traffic. Accident costs prevail at night time. Impacts from noise, air pollution and climate change generate relatively low costs. External costs may be several times higher than private costs. Policy implications of these findings are discussed, with special emphasis on the importance of establishing an extensive public transportation infrastructure in Cypriot cities in order to tackle these externalities.

Keywords: accidents, congestion, emissions, externalities, noise, transportation.