Cycle to work - effective cycling campaigns in Sofia

Session 3A: Transferability of the FLOW tools

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Overall modal split in the city of Sofia

2017 modal split (different types of car traffic summarised)

- Pedestrians: 31.4%
- Bicycles: 1.8%
- Public Transport: 29.7%
- Vehicular Traffic (summarised): 37.1%

Area – 1 311 sq.km.
Population – 1 300 000 inhabitants

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Decongesting Europe: New approaches to freeing our cities, 13-14 March 2018, Brussels
FLOW campaigns in Sofia 2016-2017

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Phases of the campaigns

Goals:

- Raising the profile of transportation cycling in Sofia through involvement of high profile organisations
- **Short to mid-term**: making cycling more attractive in Sofia
- **Long term**: reduce congestion by increasing cycling

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Lessons learned

• Campaigning is about changing what is possible.

• Offering testing bikes (incl. e-bikes) helped to convince companies to participate. (This was a “game changer”).

• The campaigns included education by doing (through experience), not through being given information.

• Answers to surveys were low in quantity. The ex-post and ex-ante survey were altered (shortened, different questions) in order to increase the number of respondents.

• Underestimated: communication to employees was not done properly by the companies. There was no ‘pushing’ from top down.

• Companies should be chosen not based on number of employees, but on the interest of the company (potential, enthusiasm, location, existing cycling policy/culture).

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Successes

• Campaigns with employers is now a measure in Sofia’s cycling strategy.

• After the campaigns, the participants reported that they are more inclined to cycle.

• The employers committed to continue with encouraging and supporting cycling among their employees. One of the companies even started its own bike sharing scheme for employees (incl. developing of an app).

• The e-bikes (pedelecs) used in the campaigns proved that they can be very useful for more distant locations. Especially for those with more than 10 kilometres to work.

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Ideas for action

• The companies were interested in the campaign with test bicycles and still are. There currently is a high demand to continue the campaigns.

• Some follow-up initiatives could be carried out, such as Bike-to-work day or Bike-to-school day.

• Between campaigns the test bicycles could be used for encouraging cycling in other city events, such as European Mobility Week.

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Transferability

- Keep it simple

- The campaigns demanded a relatively small investment, but could have a large impact in the long term

- The main challenges which campaigns are facing are the lack of cycling infrastructure close to working/residential place and the distant locations which are more difficult to be reached by bicycle

- Local factors should be taken into account, which can influence the success of the campaigns, such as: implementation methodology, relief, weather, spatial planning & road infrastructure, regulations at national/local level concerning zones with 30 km/h speed limit and contra-flow for cyclists
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Thank you for your attention!

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