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Connective Cities Local Project Workshop

Skopje Velo-City: Increasing the number of cyclists
in the Macedonian capital

13 – 15 December 2017 in Skopje, Macedonia

Partners of Connective Cities



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Connective Cities

International Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development

Cities are gaining increasing importance globally, and urban actors all over the world are facing similar development issues. Although local solutions are required, these issues are becoming increasingly relevant at the global level. While many innovative solutions for sustainable urban development exist at a local level, for example in energy efficiency, mobility or municipal services, frequently these are not widely known. Often there is a lack of systematic access to these practical solutions. The pressing challenges posed by worldwide urbanisation call for efficient and innovative approaches, especially in the areas of Good Urban Governance, Integrated Urban Development, Local Economic Development and Municipal Services – Connective Cities' four focal themes.

Connective Cities, the International Community of Practice for Sustainable Urban Development is a joint venture between the Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Service Agency Communities in One World of Engagement Global. Connective Cities is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Connective Cities provides demand-oriented services designed to improve cooperation among urban practitioners at the global level. The platform enhances sharing of good practice examples, expert knowledge and solution-oriented peer-to-peer consulting, and creates opportunities for partnerships among different stakeholders.

The City of Skopje took part in a Connective Cities dialogue event on sustainable mobility in June 2017 in Bremen, Germany and presented its cycling concept. To further work on the concept and to get new ideas and recommendations the City of Skopje asked Connective Cities to organize a local project workshop in Skopje to get German expertise on how to increase the number of cyclists and to support the networking of all relevant stakeholders in the City of Skopje. For the first time, this local project workshop brought together the relevant representatives from different city departments, civil society, public enterprises and ministries in December 2017.

Back to back to the Connective Cities local project workshop the GIZ Open Regional Fund for South-East Europe – Energy Efficiency (ORF-EE) launched its new regional project Sustainable Urban Mobility in South-East European Countries – SEE Cities Together towards Sustainable and Energy Efficient Transport (SUMSEEC) on 12 December. The kick-off meeting brought together representatives of South-East European cities and municipalities, including various other stakeholders. Participants of the Connective Cities workshop partly also participated in the kick-off meeting.





Starting Situation

About a quarter of the Macedonian population lives in the capital Skopje. The City of Skopje is not only an important transport hub within Macedonia, but it is also the hub of the transport corridor from Central Europe to Greece.

The cityscape is characterized by a high volume of motorised traffic and frequent traffic jams. Many citizens do not regard bicycles as a safe and reliable mean of transport, and many motorists do not pay enough attention to cyclists.

Even though a bicycle traffic concept for the city of Skopje (duration 2010-2017) was developed and a cycle traffic network is being partly implemented, the share of bicycle traffic is on a low level (approx. 2%). The City of Skopje aims to increase the share of bicycle traffic to 5% by 2020. The infrastructure for bicycles is mostly already in place. In the last 5 years, the cycle path network has been extended by 60 km. In addition, the city offers subsidies for residents to buy bicycles.

The aim of the local project workshop in Skopje was to develop a roadmap on how to increase the share of cyclists in the city and to support the networking of all relevant stakeholders. The workshop brought together stakeholders from Skopje, from various city departments, civil society, public enterprises, the Ministry of Transport and Communication and the Ministry of Interior as well as bicycle and urban transport experts from Germany. The City of Skopje requested Connective Cities to support the stakeholders with knowledge, experiences and good examples from Germany to get new ideas and solution suggestions. The German experts from the City of Mainz, the GIZ sector project sustainable mobility, team red Deutschland GmbH and the City of Witten therefore shared their experiences and presented solutions on how to increase the number of cyclists in cities.

Good Practices Presented

- **Leipzig, Germany: Municipal framework for cycling development**

The City of Leipzig created working groups for the promotion of cycling, involves the public and political stakeholders and established a “cycling coordinator” within the city administration to address all cycling related issues.

- **Mainz, Germany: Public Relations for a Functioning Cycling city**

The City of Mainz established various campaigns to promote cycling, e.g. a cycling film festival, brochures, or cycling events

- **Witten, Germany: Strategic Development of Cycling and Cycling Infrastructure**

The importance of a strategic approach was stressed for both the promotion of cycling itself and for the development of a modern cycling infrastructure.

- **Team red GmbH: Systematic bicycle promotion and evaluation**

BYPAD (Bicycle Policy Audit): EU wide standardized self-assessment procedure and the Bicycle climate test of ADFC (German Cycling Association): German-wide survey on the assessment of cycling conditions by cyclists as measures for bicycle promotion and evaluation



Witten



Leipzig



Mainz



Team red

Municipal input

Project Skopje Cycling City

Mr. Vladimir Strezovski, City of Skopje

The main objectives of the Project Skopje cycling city are to:

- reduce congestion by encouraging a switch from cars to more sustainable transport modes
- promote bicycles as an alternative mean of transport
- increase the percentage of trips made by bicycle to 5 % by 2020
- improve the air quality in the city, so Skopje will become a more liveable and sustainable city

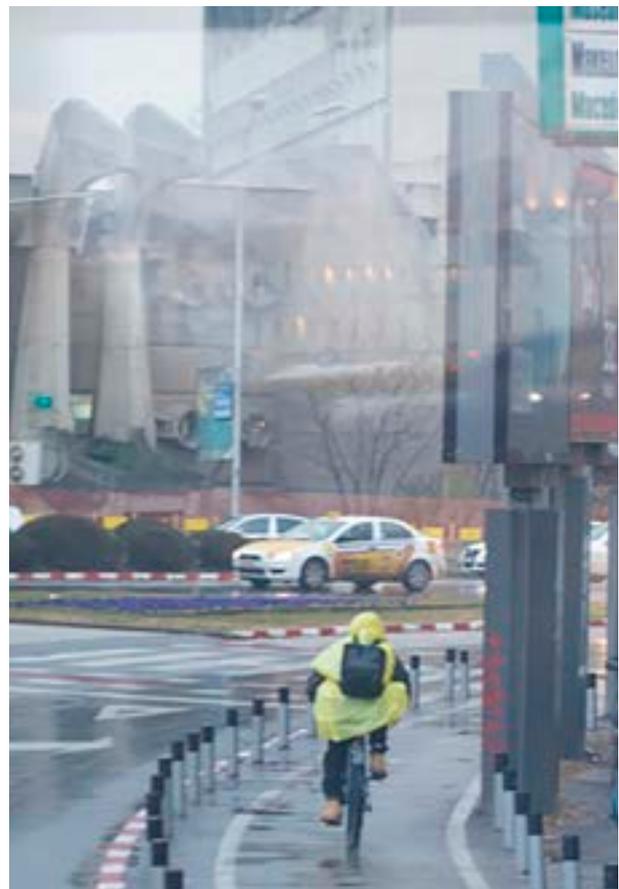
Cyclists face various challenges every day in Skopje, for example damaged bicycle paths, illegally parked cars on the bicycle paths, high curbs at intersections, or various obstacles on the bicycle paths like trash bins, containers, billboards etc. The scope of the project is the reconstruction of additional 50 km bicycle paths, the introduction of bicycle lanes, the introduction of a bike sharing system and a bicycle station, increasing the number of parking spaces for bicycles and protecting of bicycle paths from illegal parking.



Policies for Sustainable Urban Mobility in the City of Skopje

Mile Biljanovski, City of Skopje

To reach the objectives the City of Skopje established various its, e.g. the promotion of electro mobility, renewal of the public transport fleet, introduction of smart ticketing in all busses for public transport, installation of displays for real-time passenger information at the bus stops. The busses are monitored in the operational control centre for public transport by using an automatic vehicle location system and also two mobile applications for planning the quickest, cheapest and most environment-friendly routes to destinations in the capital (Skopje green route) and real-time information when busses arrives at the requested stop (Trans-Info) were introduced. Furthermore the City of Skopje defined four main bicycle routes and seven connectors. A master plan including an action plan for the reconstruction of cycling paths was developed for the period 2014-2017 but is not fully implemented yet. In 2016 the City of Skopje was selected finalist for the European Mobility Week award.





Results: Transformation Areas

The participants formed three working groups in order to develop recommendations on how to increase the number of cyclists in the City of Skopje.

In working groups three areas have been identified as the ones where changes are necessary to achieve results, namely: Infrastructure Transformation, Social Transformation and Transformation of framework conditions.

Infrastructure Transformation

Regarding the infrastructure transformation it was suggested to expand the bicycle network to the districts of Skopje, to design a new intersection as a pilot project, to systematically monitor bicycle accidents to derive guidelines for traffic facilities from these and to prioritize actions, to organize a conference for cycling infrastructure design and to change legislation for the cycling infrastructure (planning guidelines).

Social Transformation

To change the mind-set of people and to encourage more people to use bicycles (social transformation) the following concepts for campaigns were developed:

- a Video Bike Festival
- bicycle trainings for adults, to learn about traffic rules and laws,
- promotion of Velo Tourism, introduction of a Velo Radio to promote cycling,
- social media campaigns
- establish incentives for public administration
- make education on sustainable traffic mandatory in schools.

Transformation of framework conditions

To establish a sustainable transport planning adjustments to the framework conditions are necessary. The following key-aspects where changes are needed have been identified by the participants:

- In the area of **planning guidelines** not only for the bicycle infrastructure but the entire infrastructure of the city, three areas of responsibility were identified: Revision of the planning guidelines, further education on current regulations including international developments and to start a competition on good planning examples for integrated traffic planning.
- To implement measures **sufficient funds** are required. Due to different financing conditions, the areas of responsibility for the financing of new investments and the maintenance of transport infrastructure have to be looked upon separately.
- In the area of **coordination of district administrations and inter-agency cooperation**, the tasks of integrated planning and missing trained specialists were designated by the participants. In the area of enforcement of law, the participants analysed the following areas of work: higher and consistent punishment for illegal parking; improved staff capacity in the police, increasing the registration fee for vehicles, penalties for errors in traffic planning and participation processes.

It became clear that the three areas are closely intertwined and a holistic approach is necessary to achieve results. Within the working groups concrete next steps to reach the targeted objectives were elaborated and specific persons were identified to follow-up their implementation. The participants agreed upon a new format to implement the next steps: **A round-table that involves all relevant stakeholders will be set up** to work on details of each area mentioned above and to have a regular exchange to implement, promote and cooperate in order to increase the number of cyclists in Skopje. Furthermore the mayor of Skopje will be informed about the **developed road map** and invited to participate in the round-table meetings, thus the topic of cycling is more widely perceived at the political level.



Conclusion

For the first time in Skopje, the local project workshop brought together representatives from different city departments, civil society, public enterprises and the relevant ministries. The workshop provided a better understanding of the Velo City concept, the challenges the city is facing with regard to cycling and what has been reached so far. Furthermore the workshop allowed the participants to see cycling and the challenges the city is facing from new perspectives. By learning from another and the exchanges enhanced the working relationships between and among different stakeholders. This new connections and understanding for the other actors in the city will lead to better and improved working conditions that will contribute to a more sustainable urban development. Concrete recommendations and proposals for measures to increase the number of cyclists in the City of Skopje were formulated with the support of the German experts. It was also decided to involve the city districts of Skopje more closely in the future. The City of Skopje will now implement the developed concepts. Connective Cities is available to further support the City of Skopje.





List of Participating Institutions

- City of Leipzig, Germany
- City of Mainz, Germany
- City of Witten, Germany
- Communal department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
- Eko svest, Skopje, Macedonia
- Environment and nature protection department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
- Go green, Skopje, Macedonia
- Inspectorate department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
- International department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
- JSP, Skopje, Macedonia
- Mayor's office, City of Skopje, Macedonia
- Ministry of Interior, Macedonia



- Ministry of Transport and Communications, Macedonia
- Na Tocak, Skopje, Macedonia
- Parking, Skopje, Macedonia
- Prv do vrv, Skopje, Macedonia
- Public activities department, City of Skopje, Macedonia

- Streets and Roads, Skopje Macedonia
 - Team red GmbH, Germany,
 - Traffic department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
 - Ulici I Patista, Skopje, Macedonia
 - Urban planning department, City of Skopje, Macedonia
 - Velo Evropa, Skopje, Macedonia
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