

Invitation

FINAL CYCLE CONFERENCE

OF THE PROJECT CENTRAL MEETBIKE

Thursday, 6th May 2014

Žilina (Slovakia), Hotel Polom

What are the actual facts about promotion of cycling behind the former Iron Curtain?

Sustainable, more efficient and less costly mobility with the associated promotion of walking, cycling and multimodal behaviour, these are current - we might say - mantras in Eastern and Central Europe. There is a wide range of European projects that try to transfer and share experience at the international level and the Central MeetBike project is one of them (background information see [here](#)).

What, however, are the differences between the Central MeetBike and other projects addressing the issue of sustainable mobility, such as CHAMP, PRESTO, BICY, LIFE CYCLE, SAFECYCLE, TRANSPORT LEARNING, ABC MULTIMODAL, CYCLECITIES, OBIS, NAVIKI, ACTIVE ACCESS, VOCA, CARMA or CYCLELOGISTICS?

This project Central MeetBike (www.centralmeetbike.eu) is implemented through the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme co-financed by the ERDF.

PROGRAM

09:00-09:15	Opening by Žilina representative	Mayor of the city
09:15-09:30	Project Central MeetBike - Central MeetBike led the 12-member consortium on a three-year project to boost everyday cycling in small and medium sized communities in 4 countries in Central Europe.	Jaroslav Martinek
09:30-10:15	Central MeetBike's lessons learned Central MeetBike's approach, its achievements, challenges, and lessons learned	Prof. Gerd-Axel Ahrens (TUD)
10:15-10:30	The main recommendations of the project	Jaroslav Martinek

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

SERIES A: NATIONAL BICYCLE STRATEGIES

11:00-11:20	Generally	Jan Schubert (TUD)
11:20-11:40	Slovak national cycle strategy	Kristína Molnárová. (Ministry of Transport, Slovakia)
11:40-12:00	Czech national cycle strategy	Jaroslav Martinek (CDV)

SERIES B: ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL LOCAL CYCLING STRATEGIES

12:00-12:20	Tools	Soňa Šestáková (VUD)
12:20-12:40	Hard measures – cycle infrastructure	Zbyněk Sperat (CDV)
12:40-13:00	Soft measures – cycling campaigns	(PUMA)

13:00-14:00 Lunch break (13:30 Press Conference)

SERIES C: EXPERIENCES OF CMB CITIES

14:00-15:30	Selected examples of the project implementation in Central MeetBike cities 10-minute presentations delivered by the project's partners summarizing the project implementation and the current state of urban cycling in the city – success stories, challenges, barriers	The city of Žilina The city of Prešov The city of Pardubice The city of Uherské Hradiště The city of Tczew The city of Gdańsk The city of Dresden The city of Leipzig
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15:30-16:00 Coffee break

16:00-17:30	Summary and questions Moderators wrap up Central MeetBike presentations, and mediate a short plenary discussion Project market Trading ideas, networking, linking organizations from the countries with the same barriers to be overcome Discussion & conclusions Discussion on the next steps in urban cycling development in CEE in the light of the implemented projects, countries' specific situation and the new funding scheme opportunities.	- Prof. Gerd-Axel Ahrens (chair) - Soňa Šestáková (VUD) - Jaroslav Martinek (CDV) - Representative of PUMA
17:30-17:45	Meeting closure, farewell and refreshments	Jaroslav Martinek (CDV)

VENUE INFORMATION

The conference takes place in **Best Western Palace Hotel Polom** :

Address:

BEST WESTERN PLUS

Palace Hotel Polom

Hviezdoslavova 22, 010 01 Zilina, Slovakia

T: +421415048888

F: +421415048333

M: polom@bestwestern-ce.com

An exclusive hotel with a century of tradition, the BEST WESTERN PLUS Palace Hotel Polom opened its doors at the beginning of the 20th Century, and it has been operating as a hotel since then almost without interruption. With its appealing location nestled directly in the pedestrian district at the very centre of Žilina, it is designed principally for business clientele who also appreciate the hotel's secured parking (80 places).

Best Western Palace Hotel Polom**** in Zilina is located in distance 12 m from Railway station, 150 m from the Bus terminal (for long distance coaches) and 10 m from the stop of Urban Mass Transportation. For more info please visit <https://www.bestwestern-ce.com/bwc/hotel.ct?hotellid=89708&sm=HOME>

ON-LINE REGISTRATION

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1SK1OzOBugfg7V9WE9wwVOqsftKtDN2DJG6Nlz1TWj0Q/viewform>

CONTACTS

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Tel: +421-41-5686 316; e-mail: sestakova@vud.sk; web: www.vud.sk

CONFERENCE IS FREE

ACCOMMODATION

Name of hotel	level of rooms	Prices according type of room			free services
		One-bedroom	double-bedroom (2 persons)	double-bedroom (1 person)	
Hotel Polom**** Venue of CMB conference http://www.bestwestern-ce.com/bwc/hotel.ct?lang=en&hotelId=89708#.UybDAfI5MwA	Standard	49 €	69 €		wifi, breakfest, sauna, wellcome drink
Hotel Boss*** http://www.hotel-boss.eu/sk/index.php	Standard LUX	64 € 71 €	88 € 98 €	- -	breakfest, wifi breakfest, wifi
Hotel Dubná Skala****+ Special price for CMB conference participants. Keyword: Central MeetBike, City of Žilina https://www.hoteldubnaskala.sk/lg/sk/uvod/index	Standard	60 €	90 €	60 €	wellness, wifi
Hotel Grand***+ http://sk.hotelgrand.sk/index.php	Standard LUX	39 € 55 €	65 € 79 €	59 € 73 €	breakfest, wifi, wellness breakfest, wifi, wellness
Penzion Central Park http://www.penzioncentralpark.sk/penzion/	Standard	55 €	75 €	65 €	welcome drink, breakfest, wifi, wellness
Hotel Slovakia*** http://www.hotelslovakazilina.com/		20 €	30 €	-	wifi
Holiday Inn**** http://www.holidayinn-zilina.sk/	Standard Executive	79 € 130 €	- -	- -	wifi, wellness, minigym wifi, minibar, wellness, minigym
Penzion Kamelia*** http://www.penzionkamelia.sk/en/	Standard	39 €	59 €	-	breakfest, wifi, parking

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT RESULTS OF THE PROJECT CENTRAL MEETBIKE

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The Central MeetBike project builds on the fact that although we have one European Union, the communist Iron Curtain still remains in minds of many people in countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which also affects their perception of traffic. All indicates that people living in the former Eastern Europe still do not have enough of the feeling that they are car owners. For many of them the fact of owning a car proves their social status. Therefore, it is not surprising that transport planning often takes just into account motorised traffic. However, traditionally also the use of public transportation remains strong. In 1989, the situation in the area of cycling promotion was similar in the former Czechoslovakia, Poland and East Germany - there were hardly any activities concerning this transport mode. The same applied in the Central MeetBike project partner towns and cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Pardubice, Uherske Hradiste, Zilina, Presov, Tczew and Gdansk. More than twenty years have passed, the German cities of Dresden and Leipzig rank among the more advanced cycling cities while the others are rather pretending. Unfortunately, the same applies in the national context.

Even though we can observe increasing use of bicycles in Central European countries, in urban planning, a bicycle still remains a kind of alternative which can be promoted only with exceptional efforts of several individuals working at municipal authorities. Moreover, even if a town adopts a new approach to cycling, it is confronted with an obsolete legislation, unequal funding conditions and especially with the notion that a bicycle goes to forests or at best on cycle paths. This surprises, because increased use of the alternatives of cars means less car use and less congestion. It also means less noise and less air pollution.

How to change the status quo - this was the key issue addressed by the Central MeetBike project, which was mainly aimed at defining conditions that would initiate a change to integrated transport planning and policy and automatically to a stronger promotion of cycling. Those new conditions should have been realized during the project, based on the Chinese proverb "*I am learning by doing*". The outputs of the Central MeetBike project must be compelling enough to help reach the changed approach and introduction of new procedures in practice of the Czech, Slovakian and Polish municipal authorities. Although the printed outputs of the Central MeetBike monitor the best deliveries of the project and provide quality information, the most essential things cannot be handed over and be measured. A better knowledge and understanding but must be gained through observation, comparison and new convincing experiences. Is it possible that many partner change their perception of cycling during those three years of the project?

What conditions for Central and Eastern European countries did the Central MeetBike project define to launch changes in the approach to cycling promotion?

The basic assumptions are as follows:

1. Defining responsibilities - there must be just one leader, a town or a city in this case that cannot renounce this responsibility (there must be one integrated and sustainable strategy

for sustainable mobility that is accepted and implemented by the political and administrative leaders in a city).

2. Having the know-how - a specific training programme called Bicycle Academy was developed within the Central MeetBike project with the aim to encourage towns and cities so that they would work out their own strategic documents and action plans. The basic teaching materials include "fact sheets on bicycle transport for experts". Please find attached an example how to use the training programme in practice.
3. Having support from the state and regions - these should take responsibility for the promotion of cycling. There is much speculation whether the state or the regions should have their cycling strategies, and it was the Central MeetBike project that has proved they definitely should. The national cycling strategy defines a number of general recommendations which can help develop cycling, in particular by removing legislative and financial barriers.
4. Encouraging the process of networking. Every partner country tried to look for its own way but it seems that the Czech Republic has developed the most successful one regarding the future of cycling - the Association of Cities for Cyclists was established here within the Central MeetBike project, with currently 40 member towns and cities, including the two largest ones of Prague and Brno. This network will guarantee that the ideas of the Central MeetBike project will not stay on paper but will be realized in practice.

As mentioned above, municipal authorities have the largest share of responsibility to promote cycling. Within the Central MeetBike project seven key requirements for towns and cities were defined in order to launch the process successfully. Although a number of specific recommendations were elaborated within the Central MeetBike project, these seven are the key ones:

- 1) **Having a political vision.** Every strategy is based on a political vision which tries to answer a fundamental question: "How do I want my town to look like?" And of course, this question applies also to the transport issue. Town representatives can opt for one of three scenarios; then, all further political decisions proceed on the chosen one: A) good accessibility focused on motor transport, B) good accessibility for everyone through improved mobility of "short distances", C) sustainable accessibility connected with significant changes in travel behaviour. This decision entails the development of a strategic document that includes an action plan with clearly defined budget (Note: You should make clear that we need an integrated strategy for all transport modes that contains all three elements. Main message: do not forget the alternative to cars and put more emphasis to increase their use)
- .2) **Updating a ZONING PLAN as an important tool to fulfill the vision.** But what are the instructions that the zoning plan should meet? Should it be focused on the mobility of cars or of the people? Should it be focused on a liveliness returned to the inner town or on further expansion out of the town and thus increased traffic? Dispersed uses create more traffic, emissions and mobility costs.
- 3) **Implementing surveys on travel behavior.** The vision must be associated with latest and statistically reliable numbers, the town representatives must know the current status concerning urban transport in their town so that they are able to set out the goal and the way how to change people's mobility. Such statistics are missing in most of the Central European towns; therefore no concrete measurable goals can be defined. How many towns and cities can boast quality comparable surveys that were carried in the Central MeetBike partner towns?
- 4) **Having the General Bicycle Transport Plan of "a new generation".** Next to the „Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan“ (SUMP) that is necessary to collect national or European money, many towns have their compatible general cycling plans well prepared but they are used haphazardly. The general plans that were elaborated during the project can show an innovative approach in the planning of integrated cycling. It is based primarily on the principles of building the

cycling infrastructure rather than defining specific measures. The main principles include the following:

- Prefering integration to segregation (i.e. to integrate cyclists into the main traffic flow, especially on the majority of side streets with max speed of 30 km/h)
- Measures are intended to serve to the desired increase in bicycle use
- Increasing the attractiveness of a bicycle as an everyday means of transport
- Using low-cost measures
- Selected cycle paths sections to be realized

Measures for cyclists will be implemented according to the following rules:

- Especially for traffic safety reasons cycling infrastructure has to be realized on major urban streets,
- other streets without planned pro-cycling measures will be calmed in the near future and modified to the scheme of zones 30 or residential and pedestrian zones,
- cyclists will be separated from pedestrians (with exceptions, of course),
- if a cyclist goes along the main street on a cycle path, he/she should have the same right of way as if going on the main road
- the infrastructure for cyclists will usually be one-way infrastructure that will be constructed at the right side of the street.
- Since non motorized traffic is sensitive to detours where possible one-way roads should be usable also for bicycles in both direction.

Each master plan must necessarily be connected with a financial budget and a work schedule.

5) The transport planning in any town cannot be effective without a cycling coordinator.

As long as cycling is not considered automatically in planning processes a cycling coordinator is a key position, as he/she is the person monitoring so that everything defined in the master plan (see section 4) is fulfilled. But his/her tasks are much more extensive. He/she is one of the persons systematically working on the "political vision" (see section 1) to achieve a modal shift (see section 3). But in fact, every Czech and Central European town and city faces the same problem - it is not clear what department such a person should work at? Under the current practice, this question has various ad-hoc solutions, e.g. the Department of Transport, the Investment Division, or the Department of Chief Architect as in case of the town of Pardubice. Ideally, a Mobility Department should be established to deal with the implementation of strategic documents in practice and to get the issue of urban mobility into the administrative agenda. However, the issue of mobility has not yet been well incorporated into the Czech legislation and development plans and programs. This systemic change that has already passed in many countries is still waiting in the Czech and many Central European conditions.

6) Cyclists need incentives in the form of safe cycling infrastructure that will make cycling comfortable. Although it is often difficult to carry through the infrastructure for cyclists, it is the major tool to make cycling attractive. In this case, it is not our aim to present good examples but on the contrary, we want to show troubles within the entire implementation process. These problems shall be addressed in the framework of national and regional strategies which should define the possibilities of how the state and the regions can help cities. The Central MeetBike project brought complete information on how to solve problems with building cycling infrastructure. The partners (state-region-town) have responsibility to make mutual agreement.

7) Building a brand of Cycling Cities ("cyklomesta" in Czech). Although it may not be obvious, bicycle transport also needs own marketing. We have to create a bicycle friendly atmosphere. It is desirable to explain all activities implemented by municipal authorities and to provoke a public discussion. The Central MeetBike project has brought complete information on how to work in the area of promotion, but the representatives of a town are the decision-makers who must choose what will be implemented.

Of course, there has to be will among the municipal officials and policy makers, which is the basic premise to make any of those steps. Unfortunately, we have just a few of such examples. Therefore the national cycling strategy was developed to encourage towns, using its training programmes, so that they choose the right way. For such purpose a training programme called Bicycle Academy was prepared within the Central MeetBike project. Additionally, the programme can be carried out even after the project closure.

What is the aim of all those initiatives? A more sustainable and efficient urban transport system has to increase the use of the more sustainable modes. 60 % or more of the trips in our cities are shorter than 5 km, an ideal distance for the use of zero-emission bicycles. In order to increase this desired use, every project can be expressed with the following words: "Without implementation of concrete measures for cyclists in practice the promotion of cycling would remain just a beautiful theory." The lack of safe cycling facilities bothers the inhabitants of our cities the most. Thereby, the visions and lectures for city representatives as well as public discussions can remain a theory. As the examples in various towns and cities show, with a sufficient political will an appropriate space for cyclists can always be found. But it is usually effective enough to keep cyclists in mind before every reconstruction work at intersections, when building new projects, etc., and to incorporate cycling into an everyday transport agenda at municipal authorities.

The Central MeetBike project did not forget this issue either, within the project lots of pro-cycling measures were implemented through which the residents of partner cities can believe that their cities are approaching the idea of cycling promotion seriously.

In closing, the greatest advantage of the project should be highlighted, which is the fact that all project partners had been engaged in promotion of cycling before the project started, then in the course of it, but what is most important, they will work with the information and project results and outputs after the project is finished. And the question is: What about various agencies and consulting companies that had implemented other cycling projects in the past and after finishing them they have another project to be implemented, e.g. production consulting for toymakers...? Companies that participate in this kind of projects primarily to earn money instead of to help the essence of the issue are detrimental to the further development of cycling.