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Baltic Sea Region Mobility Summit 2020

September 8 – 10, 2020

Throughout three days of the “BSR Mobility Summit 2020” over 250 attendees of the online event got a wide perspective of how different cities develop sustainable mobility solutions to change transport user habits and make urban areas sustainable and liveable. The unique feature of the summit was the combined effort of the “cities.m multimodal”, “SUMBA” and “BSR electric” projects funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020.

Projects shared their experience on implementing multimodal mobility, using, managing and augmenting existing transport infrastructure and electrifying transport to avoid disastrous climate change and make cities more liveable. In addition, the summit featured examples from various municipalities outside the three project consortia about successful projects and citizen involvement. Overall, presentations stressed the importance of the multiple benefits of sustainable mobility, being resource and space efficiency, decrease of the transport related emissions and impact on climate change, as well as social inclusion and accessibility and the quality of life. Correspondingly, sustainable mobility initiatives should stress and communicate these benefits and let users experience them early in the process.

Partners of the “BSR Electric” project presented seven use cases in different fields of e-mobility, including city logistics (e-vans, e-trucks, e-bikes), shared bikes, electric buses, e-ferries, as well as the study on the state of e-mobility and roadmap for e-mobility development in the Baltic Sea Region, as well as developed e-learning modules.

Partners from the “cities.m multimodal” project presented such project’s activities and results in fostering multimodal commuting in urban environment as mobility points, development of sustainable urban mobility plans, collaboration with schools and kindergartens, creating multimodal pilot areas and applying innovative community involvement practices.

Partners from the “SUMBA” project shared their insights on successful implementation of transport modelling in cities and innovative ways to collect mobility data, the Intermodalizer tool to assess the state of urban mobility across a range of dimensions as well as commuting master plans to promote sustainable mobility in and between urban and peri-urban areas.

The summit featured three practical workshops on the Intermodalizer tool, transport modelling and data in cities, as well as taking strong measures from planning to practice. The



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main conclusions from the workshops concerning positive sustainable mobility actions include:

- the potential for communication between local authorities and residents: it is important to engage with the public and convince them that there are a lot of positive options in transport use,
- the most effective communication and promotion tools are satisfied customers, loyal customer base, social networks that are combined with real events, as well as the influencers – mobility ambassadors and active mobility users that show an example,
- closing streets and putting up some additional trees and green spaces for people can improve the quality of the neighbourhood, but at the same time the drawback of it can be reduced accessibility,
- political will, citizens that oppose change and lacking budget and knowledge are the biggest challenges seen amongst the cities in implementing strong measures, so strong and visible examples are needed to show positive effects.

All three projects talked about their contribution to Riga. When asked, if there is one thing Riga could improve in terms of urban mobility, participants mentioned biking network and cycling paths, public transport, and more opportunities to move by foot and bicycle. Riga has great development plans and ambitions but needs to work on actual implementation.

The last part of the summit “Urban mobility heading towards the future” included high-profile presentations on the European Green Deal from European Commission and on EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR). The central ideas that were displayed in this session, were that transport and mobility are crucial to strengthen the resilience of the Baltic Sea Region and EU. Furthermore, one of the main mobility goals after the COVID-19 outbreak is to stay safe and sustainable. Also, an insight of the development of EUSBSR Policy Area “Transport Action Plan” was given, emphasizing connectivity, climate-neutral transport and innovative technologies and solutions in the Baltic Sea Region.

Perspective from Bremen was given, that the COVID-19 crisis has changed mobility habits of citizens and has provided both opportunities and challenges for sustainable mobility. Further, inspiring examples from Vilnius of how to become sustainable city step by step were given – in recent years, Vilnius has significantly improved its transport infrastructure and accessibility, making it more attractive to cyclists and improving the quality of public transport.

Also, an insightful presentation about citizen involvement, particularly in Antwerp and Ghent was presented. In most cases, negative comments about new ideas will be made louder at the beginning and only later positive findings will follow. It was concluded that public involvement



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gives multidisciplinary perspective and provides a chance to use financial resources more efficiently.

A very interesting discussion ensued about different city experiences of approaching sustainable mobility and public involvement. Gaining insights that the challenges of the COVID-19 must be solved immediately, and the opportunities must be taken, paying close attention to increasing the demand for public transport.

To implement bigger sustainable visions, we need to:

- use data and diagnostic tools as communication,
- change our mentality from "wrong car drivers, right us" to "how can we satisfy their needs in a more sustainable manner",
- involve citizens and use their knowledge,
- make frameworks and handbooks easy to implement.

For easier pilot project implementation, it is important to involve decision makers and potential users at an early stage, there is a need for flexible "templates" and business cases. To easier turn pilot projects into everyday products and services and to raise loyal end users, it is important to design what people use, involve businesses into the pilot projects, as well as municipalities need to build projects around their daily operations. There is a need to educate the public about the importance and value of these pilot projects in the particular place and context, thus encouraging them to take advantage of the opportunities offered.

Humans are unable to adequately react to a crisis that approaches very slowly, but they can react to an acute crisis such as Covid-19 (public health, prevent total collapse of the economy). Governments and parliaments can deliver in few days what sometimes takes years. "Crisis is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before" (*R. Emanuel*).

The summit also featured attractive video-tours on e-scooters in Riga cemeteries and hospitals, bicycle library in Vaxjö, as well as mobility points in the Baltic Sea Region cities.

Here are some take-aways from the summit:

- In car dependent cities, citizens will rarely demand sustainable mobility options: cities need decisive action from politicians and city officials to develop sustainable infrastructure and sustainable mobility options. Citizens then will appreciate the convenience and variety of multiple mobility options and decrease their car use,
- E-mobility has many applications apart from private e-vehicles and e-scooters: from public transport buses to city ferries to urban logistics. In order to create economies of



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- scale, cities need to use public procurement, legal and financial incentives to help the spread of e-mobility,
- make radical decisions, give people the chance to adjust and realize the positive benefits,
 - future looks promising, just need to act to succeed,
 - communication is the key,
 - start doing, even small steps matter,
 - car drivers are friends not enemies,
 - *"never waste a good crisis" (W. Churchill),*
 - public involvement does not change your plan, but makes it better,
 - use streets as public spaces,
 - mobility and public space go hand in hand,
 - social media does not always reflect the view of the majority of the population, so it needs to be carefully considered.

All presentations and videos are available here:

<http://www.mobilitysummit2020.eu/presentations/>



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Teaser for social networks

The Baltic Sea Region Mobility Summit 2020 co-organized by 3 projects funded by the EU Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 – “cities.m multimodal”, “SUMBA” and “BSR electric” – took place from 8 to 10 September 2020. The event was attended by over 250 participants and featured more than 15 industry experts with dynamic presentations on sustainable mobility, public involvement, and other current topics not only in the Baltic Sea region, but also in other European Union cities and worldwide. During the three days, a broad insight was provided into the improvements already made, as well as future plans for the development of mobility in the Baltic Sea Region.

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