



SPECIAL BULLETIN

„The European Mobility Week and Car Free Day campaign 2005“

SPECIAL - SEPTEMBER 2005

HEALTHY CITIES OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

THE EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK AND THE EUROPEAN CAR FREE WEEK

Between the 16.-22. September 2005, a number of Czech, Moravian and Silesian towns for the fourth time participated in the all-European campaign – The European Mobility Week that is annually culminated and round off by the European Car Free Day. The motto and main topic of the European Car Free Day held on 22. September this year sounded: “Clever Commuting”.

In this special issue of the HCCZ Bulletin you will find information concerning the events that recently took place in connection with these important campaigns in the Healthy Cities. These are e.g. utilization of more economic modes of transport, transport intensity reduction in the city centres, a number of cultural and educational events. A record-breaking number of Healthy Cities – 27 overall, have taken part in or have supported this year of the campaign, these are as follows:

Boskovice, Brno, České Budějovice, Hodonín, Hradec Králové, Humpolec, Chrudim, Jilemnice, Karviná, Kopřivnice, Kostelec nad Orlicí, Kroměříž, Letovice, Moravská Třebová, Mladá Boleslav, Pelhřimov, Prostějov, Říčany, Telč, Třebíč, Třeboň, Ústí nad Labem, Valašské Meziříčí, Velké Meziříčí, Veselí nad Moravou, Vsetín, Zlín. However, another cities, such as Olomouc or Praha have also taken part in the campaign.

Both events are primarily of educational character, aiming at the support of a more economical – environment friendly transport and reduction of individual passenger car transport in the cities. Both events may also bring real measures leading to improvement in traffic situation.

In the Czech Republic the events related to the aforesaid campaigns are coordinated and realised under the auspices of the Department of the Environment and one of the main partners are also the Healthy Cities of the Czech Republic (HCCZ).

The European Car Free Day (ECFD) was held for the first time in 1998 in France, and since the year 2002 it has become a part of the European Mobility Week (EMW). The popularity of these events is growing each year, both on the all-European scale and in our cities in the Czech Republic, among others, owing to the active work of the national EMW coordinator, Eva Veverkova. Since the year 2000 the number of participants has more than doubled – last year, more than 1537 cities from across Europe took part in the EMW programmes, the Healthy Cities also take part regularly. A precondition to the participation of cities in the

European Mobility Week or the European Car Free Day events is the ratification of the Chart – a document that contains the event rules. Another precondition is the implementation of at least one permanent measure leading either to the traffic reduction or to increase in the pedestrian safety in the course of a year. In the event that the cities do not meet these requirements, they may express their support to the aforesaid programmes. Even though the events within the scope of the European Mobility Week serve mainly for educational purposes, their aim is also to implement completely practical measures.



The major part of interested persons in the campaigns traditionally comes from the ranks of children and youth.

Also this year, various activities, such as traffic educational events held in collaboration with the Police of the CR took place in the



In Moravská Třebová, seniors have also participated actively in EMW.i

Healthy Cities during the European Mobility Week. Students were also actively involved in these events – homeland study

tramps, cycling and running contests, whose aim was apart from the joy of exercising to enable the citizens to get to know their surroundings better. The programmes usually consist of various events for children, (traffic field games, contests, theatrical performance, multimedia educational programmes etc.), seniors and disabled citizens. Thanks to field trip to the Public City Transport operating control, people were able to find out more about the history and current functioning of this institution. In a number of cities they could have a ride in historic cars, as the case was e.g. in **Hradec Králové**, **České Budějovice** or **Kroměříž**. Children's fine art and literary contests were also a part of the programme, these took place e.g. in **Hodonín**, **Prostějov**, **Kroměříž**, **Moravská Třebová** or **Letovice**. Forums with citizens, statistic researches or conferences also took place – e.g. **Třebíč** became a host and co-organiser of the II. National Meeting dedicated to the project Safe Way to School that was organised by the Centre of Transport Research in Brno, under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport of the CR – BESIP. Among others, the Student's Parliament of the town of Třebíč actively participated in this event.

Fewer cars in the city centres bring their inhabitants cleaner air and safer streets

Various forms of transport reduction in cities present one of those measures that are increasingly implemented as means leading to the reduction of negative impacts of transport. Intensive transport is no longer a problem of the European cities of the Paris or London type, difficulties are nowadays experienced by towns, municipalities and small villages.

Transport reduction in the cities is an important issue within the scope of the European Mobility Week. Transport reduction should bring a greater safety of the urban traffic and it should also enable the inhabitants to move better and easier in the overcrowded city centres. In practice this should mean e.g.



The education in traffic safety begins as soon as at the children's age

reduction of number of traffic lanes or reduction of parking areas in the centres or their charge. In **Telč** they e.g. utilize speed bumps for reduction of traffic speed and in **Boskovice** they have introduced a partial reduction of entry to the city centre. Another type of these measures is a reduction of transport by means of the speed limits in the city built-up areas.

These are applied e.g. in **Hodonín** or **Chrudim**. A number of cities, among whose belongs also e.g. Humpolec, try to make the roads safer by constructing new pedestrian crossings, others solve this issue by means of roundabouts – for instance **Kostelec nad Orlicí**, **Letovice** or **Telč**. A specific method of how to force drivers to follow the traffic rules is the installation of laser velocity meters, which is utilized e.g. in Kostelec nad Orlicí or in Moravská Třebová. One of the main problems of a number of the European and increasingly also of the Czech cities is a limited availability – time, local, financial – of transport to the citizens. That is why many new measures concentrate on the ways of how to ensure the accessibility of all city or municipality parts to all fellow citizens – low-floor buses are being bought, such as the case is in **Hradec Králové**, or the complex issue of mobility in itself is being solved, which is currently the case of **Kroměříž**.

Within the EMW and ECFD framework, some cities tried what it is like not to meet a car in the city centre

One of the main campaigns during the European Car Free Day is **closing of one of the city parts** – mostly centres – to the passenger car transport. Among the towns that have chosen this alternative belongs e.g. **Hodonín**, **České Budějovice** or **Kroměříž**, where an entertaining and educational programme was under way for the whole day at the Velké Square. **Letovice** closed a part of Masarykovo Square, the Tyršova Street was closed for parking. The city of **Telč** came up with an interesting innovation – it ordered a closure of the Municipal Office communications and parking place in the Na Sádkách street, the parking place was transformed into a playground for children. The children could therefore try out the environment of a real traffic under the safe circumstances provided by the typical traffic field. **Chrudim** had closed for the whole day the areas in front of Dr. Jan Malík kindergarten and Vít Nejedlý street by the Vít Nejedlý kindergarten, where the programme "Children Live Here" was in progress. Another way of demonstration of the European Car Free Day was chosen by **Moravská Třebová** – students in collaboration with the municipal police distributed illustrated appeals to drivers, provoking thought concerning the topic of the event. The city of **Prostějov** proceeded in a similar way. The drivers who wanted to drive through the closed Studentská street received an information leaflet concerning the Car Free Day.

The idea of a sustainable transport is not over with 22. September, it is to stay

Apart from one-day events, some cities also proceeded to the so called permanent measures. For instance the city of **Letovice** pushed through the realisation of crossings with islands at the frequented street running through the city and together with the Road and Motorway Directorate it prepares realisation of a roundabout at the road in the city centre. **Telč**

helped to the reduction of transport speed by the speed bumpers at Radkova housing estate and the city also realised the roundabout at the Masarykova, Slavičkova and Staňkova intersection. Utilization of elements for transport reduction is also being prepared in the Široká street, **Chrudim**. **Kroměříž** gradually reconstructs the localities serving for rest and games. It supports revitalisation and formation of new children's playgrounds in accordance with the European standards. The fact that the EMW has been successful not only in the terms of the number of its quality events realised, but also in the terms of reduction of car transport, is proved by the **Prostějov** town roads monitoring report: "According to the data from radars placed in the town and comparison to the same day outputs (Wednesday) and the Car Free Day, a slight decrease in the number of cars driving through in the period between the midnight and noon has been noticed. It is however impossible to prove positively that drivers were influenced by this campaign."

What do Armadillo and helmet have in common? They protect the lives of not only our children

Educational and enlightenment events for children and youth during the European Mobility Week are mostly concentrated on accident and injury prevention in transportation. During the campaign children had the opportunity to try out the multimedia educational programmes on the subject of safe movement in the urban traffic, they could also verify their existing mastery of traffic regulations and basics of the first aid administration. In many cities, such as in Hodonín, Telč or České Budějovice, traffic playgrounds have been built. On these playgrounds children could verify their knowledge in practice



in the course of biking under supervision of the members of Municipal Police. In **České Budějovice** or **Brno**, children in kindergartens were prepared by means of a fairytale to the subject of safe travelling. Armadillo guided the children through the programme as a symbol of safety – it is a mascot of the international campaign focused on support and publicity of using children's car seating systems. During the EMW, lectures in attendance of the Police of the CR, doctors and ecologists were under way at basic schools. Children along with adults had an opportunity to try out simulated overcoming obstacles and barriers on a wheel chair, the way disabled persons have to face them in traffic on the daily basis. In some cities children

participated directly on their own accord, e.g. in **Kroměříž**, children could treat with stickers those teachers and Municipal



A practical example from the „Going biking? Don't forget your helmet“ and „Armadillo“ campaigns

Office workers who came to work on foot, on a bike or by means of a City Public Transport, in cooperation with the Police of the CR and Municipal Police, children could also help monitor the observation of traffic regulations by drivers and cyclists driving in these days through the city – these events took place e.g. in **Letovice** or **Telč**. In many cities, e.g. in **Prostějov**, **Letovice** or **Chrudim** the campaign "On the Bike with a Helmet Only" was revitalised. Within the framework of this campaign the Municipal Police concentrated their checks on using cycling helmets by the cyclists under 15 years of age.

EMW is also filled with various sports events, such as cycling trips and contests dedicated to all age groups, home land study tourist marches, running contests, skating, etc. Among important parts of these days naturally also belong exhibitions by children from basic schools and kindergartens and fine-art or literary contests yet again dedicated to various topics related to transportation in the cities. Another important culturally-educational event are the Open days of the City Transport Company or the Czech Railways. In these events the visitors may find out more about the history and future of transportation in their city and to learn something about its background.

Support of the sustainable forms of transport

Sustainable transport has absolutely specific features, among whose belong e.g. safety and friendliness to the environment. However, sustainable transport also has to be socially acceptable and economically viable so that it may fulfil its basic function – i.e. transport of passengers, goods and services to places. Doing so it should also respect generally accepted health and ecology standards, such as level of noise and emissions or disproportionate land use. Apart from the local aspects it also has its broader dimension – sustainable transport should not noticeably contribute to climate changes or disruption of the ozone layer.

A number of these aspects have been accepted by the Healthy Cities and it is therefore very pleasing that the EMW and ECFD campaigns gain more and more popularity among the HCCZ

members every year. The fact is, that ensuring the transportation services significantly influences our health and quality of life, both in the negative and positive way. Now already, and this year's participation in the campaigns also proves the fact, that many cities try to point at methods of how to make the transportation more pleasant for the people and at the same time to make it more environment friendly. Many of these accepted some permanent measures leading not only to the reduction of transport, but also to the support of sustainable forms of transport as a part of the European Mobility Week framework. As an example of this may serve e.g. the illustrations from the following cities – **Boskovice**, in which the traffic on the frequented road II/150 has been regulated by cancelling the parking places, cargo traffic has been excluded from the street in the city centre (now a pedestrian lane) that connects the square with the street in which the public transport stops are situated. In **Hradec Králové** the City Transport Company prepared a project for purchase of new City Transport Line buses meeting the Euro3 emission limits. **Kroměříž** extended its City Public Transport to the place where the construction of the house of special purpose has been completed and whose inhabitants, mostly pensioners and mothers with children use the City Public Transport frequently. In **Velké Meziříčí** they have extended the existing City Public Transport (CPT) lines from Velké Meziříčí to the local part Lhotky and started to improve the infrastructure of pavements in several city streets. In many Healthy Cities, but also in many other municipalities, the CPT was free on 22.9. – e.g. in Hodonín, Chrudim, Mladá Boleslav, Pelhřimov, Prostějov, Kroměříž, Břeclav etc. The 8th International Conference and Exhibition “**Transportation and Technology for Sustainable Development**” held in Karlovy Vary between the 14.-16.9.2005 was also dedicated to the support of sustainable forms of transport.

To date less frequently utilized forms supporting the sustainable transport are e.g. carsharing or carpooling. Both work on the same principle of sharing a car by a number of persons. Whereas in the first case you can for a certain fee become a co-user of a car (cars) that enable you to get about in the city, wherever you may need at the moment, the other system usually functions for free and in basics it is up to the car owner's good will, since instead of e.g. travelling to work alone, he/she occupies the rest of the free seats in his/her car on the way to work with colleagues. These systems fulfil the needs of passengers who usually appreciate the comfort and economy in time provided by the car and at the same time the damage to the environment and our health is reduced. Good experience with these types of transport are reported from Scandinavian countries or for instance from Germany or Switzerland, the success of these systems in our conditions will be shown by the near future. Most of all, let's hope that nobody comes up again with the idea that occurred to H. Ford one hundred years ago: “We will solve the problems of the cities by leaving them”...naturally by car.

The favourite wheels are those on your bike – without any engine and with pedals



An example of cycle track constructing in Hodonín

Among the most frequently used permanent measures of the EMW belongs also constructing new and modification of the old **cycle tracks** and bikeways. These also belong among the most common investments of cities and municipalities for support of the sustainable transport and these are an object of interest from the part of public administration bodies, regions, their specialised partners from the state sphere, non-state non-profit organisations or companies whose products are directed into this field. It is understandable, since the development of cycling is not related only to the quality of the environment, but it is also connected to the healthy lifestyle philosophy. The fact, that bike transport takes approximately **12times** less space than car transport also isn't without interest. A cyclist is understood as a full participant of the traffic within the sustainable traffic concept, that is why there are investments in the cycle tracks both of the transporting and tourist nature. Exactly the everyday commuting to work, so typical e.g. for **Uherské Hradiště** or **Hradec Králové** is a great relief for the roads congested already. Even though we are not yet threatened by extreme lengths of commuting to work such as in e.g. USA, where it no longer is an exception to travel more than 320 km per day, every kilometre ridden on a bicycle is already being felt. Also in the Healthy Cities they have rich experience with cycle tracks and cycle lanes. For instance in **České Budějovice** they are building a network of cycle tracks in the inner ring – from the city towards the shopping centres so that everyone may be able to go shopping on a bike comfortably. **Vsetín** realised in the 2005 a construction of a new track for cyclists along the river Bečva. It is 3m wide and 2.5km long and it leads independently to the main road I/57. In the future it will be a part of the main cycle track 46km long that will lead from Valašské Meziříčí through Bystřička to Velké Karlovice. Cycle tracks are being built, repaired or are about to be built also in **Hodonín** and other cities.

CONTACT

Healthy Cities CZ, Srobarova 48, 100 42 Prague 10, Czech Republic
T: +420 602 500639 | E: paha@nszm.cz | W: www.nszm.cz

Petr Svec, National Coordinator of the Healthy Cities Project
(The photographs were provided by the archives of HCCZ member cities, municipalities and regions.)