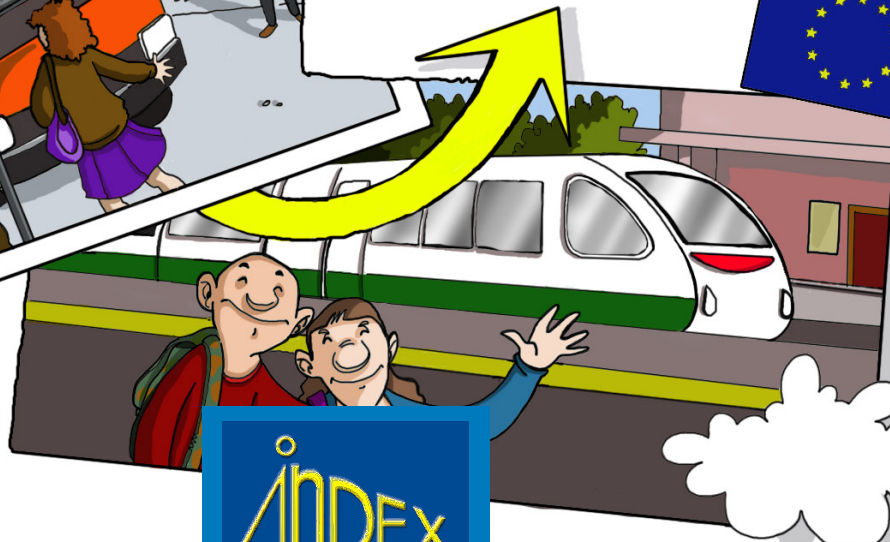
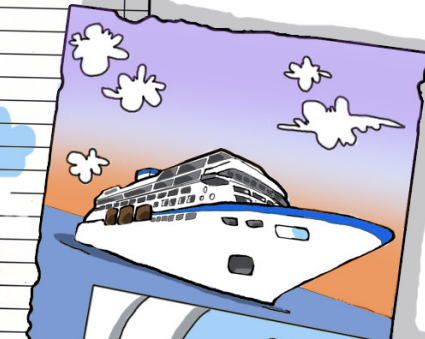


Moving in Bulgaria

DATA AND CIVIC RECOMMENDATIONS



This document is one of the activities promoted by the European project “Mobility, a paradigm of European citizenship”, which involved citizens from 8 countries (Bulgaria, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain) on the challenges that the mobility of people sets for the future of Europe: transport accessibility, environmental sustainability and rights of citizens/passengers.

The issue of mobility is a daily interest for many European citizens and is a paradigm of European citizenship since it relates to many of its aspects (the common identity thanks to transnational mobility, the rights of European citizens/passengers, etc). For further information: <http://www.activecitizenship.net/consumers-rights/projects/85-mobility-a-paradigm-of-european-citizenship.html>

With the support of the Europe for Citizens Programme of the European Union



This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Mobility and transport in Bulgaria: the point of view of citizens

Civic consultation of passengers, travellers and commuters on the different challenges represented by the Mobility of people for the future of the EU: transport accessibility, environmental sustainability and passengers' rights

Acknowledgements

This report was written by independent experts of INDEX Foundation, Bulgaria, based on research and study of documents, interviews of major stakeholders, focus groups and application of a questionnaire in the country. The experts would like to thank all those who gave their time and contributed with information during the project.

This report has been prepared with the financial assistance of the European Commission. The views expressed herein are those of the consultants and therefore in no way reflect the official opinion of the Commission.

Introduction

This National Report is part of the activities promoted by the European project called “Mobility, a paradigm of European citizenship”. The project started in January 2013 with the financial assistance of the Europe for Citizens Programme / Action 1 – Active Citizens for Europe – Measure 2.1 – Citizens’ projects/. It is implemented by a wide international partnership led by a renowned Italian network of NGOs - Cittadinanzattiva /Active Citizenship Network/ which has repeatedly taken the lead in mobilizing the European citizens in various parts of united Europe to stand up and protect their rights for sustainable development in various areas of social and economic life. Next to Cittadinanzattiva the partnership includes another seven non governmental organizations from different countries, as follows:

- the National Association for Consumers’ Protection and Promotion of programs and strategies (Romania)
- the Consumer Rights Protection Center (Lithuania)
- In Loco Association (Portugal)
- The Society of Consumer Protection (Slovakia)
- Citizenship Foundation (Spain)
- The Consumer Consumer’s Center of Serbia, and
- Index Foundation (Bulgaria)

Index Foundation was established in 1997 as a not-for-profit organization with the mission to promote the development of stable civil society and help strengthen the social safety nets in Bulgaria. The Foundation works in collaboration with the international community on a wide range of projects and initiatives. The organization works in several major areas: promotion of civil society and active citizenship; health care and social services, education and training.

Index Foundation has been a partner to the leader of this project ACN for more than 10 years now. Some of the joint projects included: *Active Citizenship Mentoring in Europe* co-financed by DG Education and Culture *Citizen Program* aimed at promoting partnerships with European organizations that point to the strengthening of the Program “Europe for Citizens”, supporting and encouraging citizens to be more “actively involved” in the European integration process, *Evaluating partnerships between companies and citizens’ organizations* - a follow on activity from the European project, “*Lisbon minus 3: Evaluating CSR partnerships*”, co-financed by DG Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission, and UniCredit Group, *Monitoring and evaluating the state of the rights to European active citizenship* - set up, application and diffusion of a Matrix of indicators concerning the implementation of the rights to European Active Citizenship, with regard to citizens’ organizations, *Citizens for the New Europe*- research of the legislative framework with respect to public policies in civic activism in the 28 countries of new Europe, etc.

■ Project Goal

Transnational Mobility is the concrete application of one of the main rights (Free movement of people) guaranteed by the Treaties to EU citizens’ since the beginning of the European construction. It is one of the factors which have contributed to the building of a common European identity.

Over the years, the EU has developed a strong policy in this area, which aims at “*fostering clean, safe and efficient travel throughout Europe, underpinning the internal market of goods and the right of citizens to travel freely throughout the EU*” (website of DG for Mobility and Transport).

Mobility is a major challenge for the development of sustainable economy, which is one of the 3 primary objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Public transport is a key question for many European citizens, who use transport daily to reach their workplace and/or to carry out their other activities. They are thus interested in the development of accessible and efficient public transports, respectful of passengers’ and users’ rights. This is the reason why civic activism is especially developed in this field through informal groups (such as commuters groups) or more structured and permanent organisations (e.g. Public transport users associations, Consumer associations, etc.). Mobility is a key theme for the future of the European citizens and the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. It is a paradigm of European citizenship, in as much as it embraces many of its aspects (common identity, European citizens’ rights, etc.).

It is therefore essential to reflect the opinion of the citizens and their concerns and to involve them in the process of strategy development and decision-making in this area, by giving them a forum to formulate recommendations and present them to the EU institutions.

■ **Project Objectives**

The main objectives of the project include:

- informing the citizens and raising their awareness of the EU policies and initiatives on mobility;
- contributing to bridge the gap between the EU citizens and Institutions, providing the European Parliament and the Commission with information on the actual expectations of citizens in this area;
- giving the opportunity to 2.560 citizens from 8 countries to concretely participate in the EU policy making, promoting direct dialogue between them and European Institutions;
- enhancing citizens' interest in civic participation and their capacity to analyze critical situations, identify solutions and formulate policy recommendations.

Chapter One - Project Methodology

▪ Civic Information Approach

This report has no statistical value but provides a picture in the field of mobility and transport through data collected by citizens and civic organizations at National level. The methodology is inspired by the method of civic information, defined as the capacity for organized citizens to produce and use information to promote their own policies and participate in public policymaking, in the phase of definition and implementation as well as that of evaluation. According to this method, when citizens, despite their presumed lack of competence in the public sphere, organize themselves and take action together regarding public policies, they are able to produce and use information deriving from experts and other sources, as well as from their own direct experience with the issue being addressed. In this project, such a method is implemented by involving civic organizations in the collection of information through interviews with citizens, passengers and commuters, which gives the possibility to put into practice the right to participate in the evaluation of services and policies.

This could be an innovative aspect of this work, despite difficulties and obstacles that may be encountered such as possible criticism towards the output since it will not be a statistically representative research.

▪ Consultations with Citizens

The consultations are structured in two phases: first level consultation of 640 people (citizens, members and volunteers of local organizations, and key stakeholders) in 8 countries and second level consultation of about 2.000 common citizens travelling on public transports, selected in a random way:

- during the first stage a uniform questionnaire was applied to interview citizens – about 380 in the case of Bulgaria from two towns and the capital city
- during the second stage meetings and discussions were conducted with key stakeholders (ministries, NGOs) to solicit their feedback - about 20 people from various institutions and organizations.

▪ Technical Instruments

The same questionnaire for citizens, passengers and commuters was developed and applied in all countries. The questionnaire is divided into 7 sections, each dedicated to a specific field: registry and preliminary information, travel and daily routine, long-distance travel in the country and abroad, problems and inefficiency in travels, some specific inquiries, miscellaneous.

In particular, the last section (G-miscellaneous) is bound to free compilation. Its function is to collect any further information or consideration that the respondents wish to share (eg, suggestions or problems not mentioned in the questionnaire).

In order to be brief, in fact, some themes, although significant when speaking of mobility, have not been treated. One of them is related to the logistics of goods, both by road and rail, of which it is possible to guess the impact on the daily mobility of each of us.

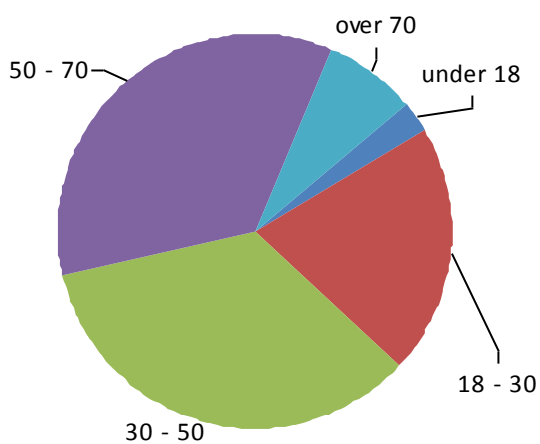
▪ **Sources of Information**

Number of Respondents and Response Rate

400 respondents were contacted in Bulgaria through interviewers, mailing lists, and partner organizations. 378 questionnaires were finally gathered and processed, while 22 were found to be incomplete, or not filled in properly. Several blank questionnaires were submitted as well. In the long run 378 questionnaires were processed and the profile of the respondents is presented below.

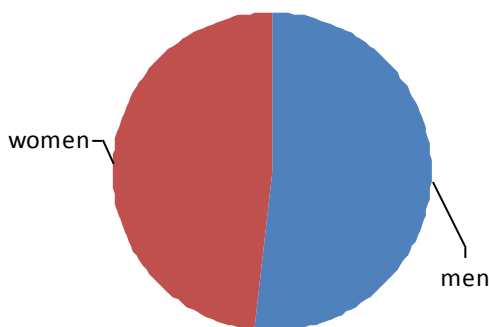
Age and Gender of the Respondents

Graph 1
Age Structure of Respondents in Bulgaria



- 2.4 % of the respondents are below 18 years of age
- 20.7 % of the respondents are aged 18-30
- 34.5 % are aged 30-50
- 34.8 % of the respondents are aged 50-70 years
- 7.6 % of the respondents are aged above 70 years

Graph 2
Gender Composition of Respondents

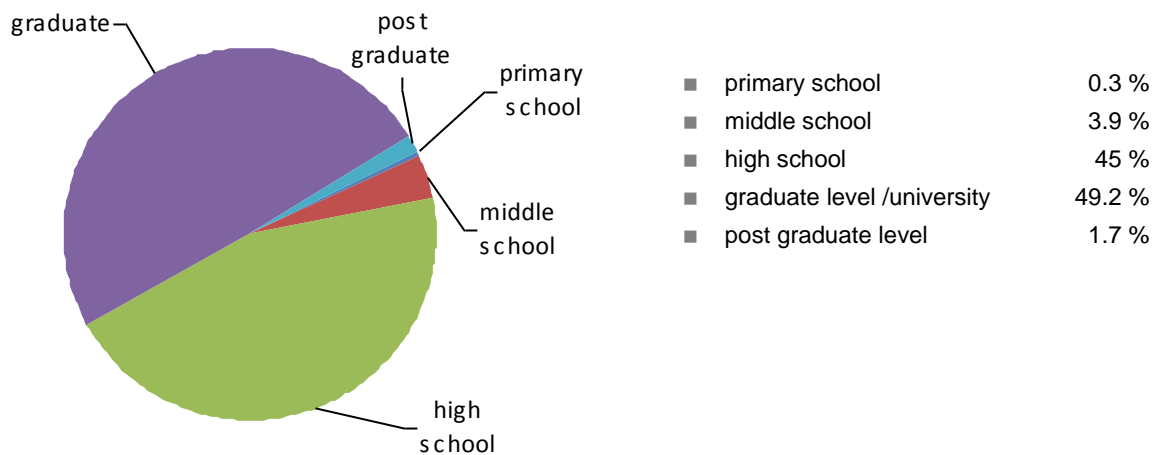


- Men – 51.6%
- Women – 48.4%

Residence, Education and Occupation of the Respondents

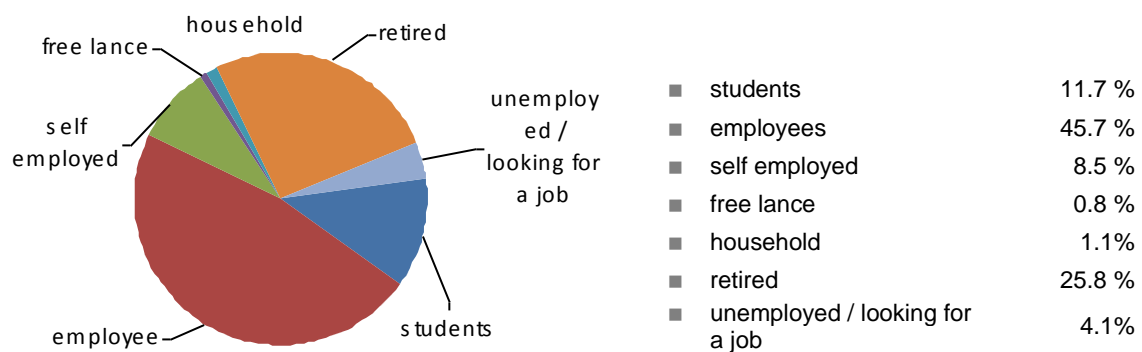
All respondents came from Bulgaria, Eastern Europe. Within the country three residence areas were outreached – the capital city, eastern part of the country and western part of the country. As regards education and occupation the respondents were not chosen according to such criterion, but randomly interviewed. In the long run, the following profile was obtained.

*Graph 3
Education of Respondents*



*Graph 4
Occupation of Respondents*

The biggest number in the occupational profile of the respondents form the employees, followed by retired persons, self employed and students. The free lance are just a fraction, and so is the part of the non working house wives.



Chapter 2 - Dissemination Strategy and Geographical Impact

■ Approach

The approach undertaken by Index Foundation included:

- Translation of the questionnaire in Bulgarian language and its fine tuning so as to reflect the local specificities in terms of general understanding, current practice and terminology.
- Wide spreading the information about the project and the model questionnaire in Bulgarian language, soliciting feedback from partner organizations and contact points in the capital city and the country on the contents, and substance;
- Pilot testing of the questionnaire by members of the organization and some partners, so as to identify potential flaws, clarity level, possible misunderstandings of gaps;
- Identification of the sites where the questionnaire would be applied;
- Circulating 400 questionnaires in 3 locations – the capital city, 2 middle size cities (Yambol and Blagoevgrad), as well as one adjacent village in the municipality of Blagoevgrad.
- Sofia was chosen as it was considered of crucial importance to reflect the view of the citizens users of transport in a metropolitan city, with all its challenges. The city of Yambol /70 000 people population / located in Eastern Bulgaria was chosen to track the issues in a regional center of a rural area/, and the city of Blagoevgrad /70 000 people/ was chosen to track the issues in a busy cultural, commercial and university center. The choice was also determined by the fact that local partner organizations indicated interest in participating in this endeavor and allocated staff as interviewers;
- Applying the questionnaires and collecting the filled in questionnaires in Sofia for submission to a sociological company;
- Contacting sociologists and sociological companies to receive proposals for methodology and practical implementation of the questionnaire;
- Reviewing and analyzing the received quoted from the point of view of scope, method, price and proposed team for the assignment;
- Selection of a company to analyze the filled in questionnaires and aggregate the findings

■ Constraints encountered and steps to mitigate risks

The biggest constraint in applying the questionnaires was related to the costs for this efforts. It was not possible to do a nation-wide representative sociological study for the available budget, and as indicated earlier this has been taken into account. The mitigating measures included involvement of close partners, some volunteers in particular occasions and getting highly professional support where this could not be avoided i.e. to use SPSS for the processing of the results and professional sociological capacity for the analysis and aggregation of the findings.

Having collected all questionnaires to be analyzed by the sociological company, were alerted that there were about 20 questionnaires that could not be processed – fully unfilled questionnaires, partly missing info, ruined hard copies. To compensate for this Index Foundation decided to apply additional number of questionnaires during the subsequent meetings with representatives of the stakeholders, and focus groups. Although it was no longer possible to reflect the answers in the sociological report, this turned out to be important source of information on policy level – while responding to the questionnaires the respondees also presented insights about the existing loopholes, strategies and loner term issues, as well as best practices and partnerships.

Chapter 3 - The Mobility in the Country

Transport plays a major role in the development of every modern society as a means for economic development and a prerequisite for achieving social and regional cohesion. The transport sector in Bulgaria is of an exceptional importance for raising the competitiveness of national economy and for providing services to its citizens. The fact that by 2008 the Bulgarian transport system supported, on a daily basis, an average of 2.54 million passenger trips and the transport of 274,000 tonnes of freight, is an indicative example of the importance of transport. Transport and communications generate 11.7% of the gross value added in the country and directly employ more than 138,000 persons (*Source: National Statistical Institute – NSI, Employees under labour contract*).

The development of the transport sector is of a paramount importance for enhancing Bulgaria's foreign trade relations and of tourism. The demand for transport services – both passenger and freight – have been on the rise over the last several years, with a parallel demand for a higher quality services. In this aspect, the objective of the state administration, represented by the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, is to establish legal and economic conditions for the provision of transport services and of the relevant infrastructure matching the expectations of the users.

The long term goals for the development of the transport system in Bulgaria are stated in the **Strategy for Development of the Transport System of the Republic of Bulgaria till March 2020**, adopted in 2010.

This paper represents a long-term strategic document, which aims to outline the most important aspects for the development of the transport system during the next ten-year period. Medium and short-term programmes and schedules will be drafted on the basis of the priorities and measures set out in the Strategy. Medium-term programmes (4 years) will schedule the activities, projects and tasks of the incumbent governments. Short-term programmes represent action plans for the current year with specified deadlines and persons in charge. The relevant allocations from the state budget are defined in three-year forecasts, compliant with the trends for development as specified in the respective documents as stated herein. In this aspect, the implementation of the measures as recommended in the Strategy will not have a direct and/or indirect impact on the state budget.

All strategic documents for the next ten years should take into account this Strategy. The strategic document is fully compliant with the latest trends regarding the development of the European transport policy. Its main objective is to outline the major tasks facing the Bulgarian transport system on its way to a successful integration within the European transport system. The following major strategic documents were used for the purposes of drafting this Strategy: The EC White Paper "European transport policy for 2010: time to decide", the Mid-term review of the White paper in 2006, the Community Guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network, the Green Paper: Towards a new culture for urban mobility, as well as the Communication of the Commission on "A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user-friendly system", which outline the European transport policy.

The Strategy adopts the basic European principles of:

- Harmonised development of all components of the transport system
- Elimination of infrastructure bottlenecks
- Putting consumers in the policy focus
- Management of the consequences from globalisation processes.

This document complies also with the Lisbon Strategy, whose main objective is to achieve a more dynamic and more competitive economy. From the point of view of transport, the Strategy aims at the further development and modernisation of the transport infrastructure, the liberalisation of the market for transport services and the large-scale application of information and telecommunication technologies.

The priority fields in the process of development of the Strategy were outlined on the basis of three “pillars” as proposed by the Commission:

- Connectivity – planning of initiatives for improving access, transport links and communications along and to the Danube River, and the efficient utilisation of energy resources
- Environment – execution of policies, which include measures to improve water quality, biological diversity, risk management and prevention
- “Unlocking the potential” – a complex of interventions in a broad spectrum of social and economic spheres, with the emphasis placed on economic development and on raising the competitiveness of the regions, on education, culture, and tourism, which are expected to assure a cohesion, multi-cultural and ethnic dialogue while preserving the specific character of the regional identity and cultural heritage.

It outlined the priorities for the development in transport over 2020.

Priority 1 Efficient maintenance, modernisation and development of the transport Infrastructure

Priority 2 Integration of the Bulgarian transport system into the European transport system

Priority 3 Provision of transparent and harmonised competitive business environment of the transport market

Priority 4 Sufficient financing for transport sector development and performance. Efficient absorption of EU funds

Priority 5 Reduction of the transport sector negative impact on the environment and human health

Priority 6 Safety and security of the transport system

Priority 7 Provision of high-quality and accessible transport in all regions of the country

Priority 8 Sustainable development of urban passenger transport

This priority is particularly important for the above project. It complies with the main guidelines of the EU transport policy for developing the concept for a sustainable urban mobility of the public, which consists of incentives for the use of all types of transport vehicles and a combination of various types of public transport with various types of individual transport. Urban regions face an enormous challenge within the context of sustainable development: combining economic development and accessibility, on the one side, and improving the quality of life and the protection of the environment, on the other.

Urban mobility must boost the economic development of cities, improve the quality of life and protect the environment. Implementing the urban mobility concept will result in:

- Reducing congestion in cities
- Optimised use of private cars
- Reduced noise and pollution in cities
- Improved urban transport organisation
- Creating a more easily accessible urban transport, especially for people with reduced mobility, disabled persons, elderly people, families with small children, and for children
- Higher reliability and safety of the urban transport
- The initiation of a package of physical, regulatory, financial and information measures for traffic management.

The use of intelligent transport systems will improve operations management and will allow offering new services (car pool management, passenger information systems, charge collection systems, etc.).

Another major doc is ***National Action Plan for the promotion of the production and accelerated incursion of green vehicles, including electric mobility in Bulgaria for the period 2012-2014***, adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2012.

The objectives and the actions in the plan are grouped into several main areas: stimulating the production of electric and other clean vehicles in Bulgaria, including equipment items and parts for them; stimulate Research and Development activities for the development of environmentally friendly vehicles and charging systems, by providing financial support to encourage research in new technologies and materials related to the development of sustainable mobility, stimulating consumption and demand of new green vehicles, accelerated building of charging infrastructure for EVs and HEVs; increasing the awareness and the capacity of stakeholders and the public about the nature, purpose and benefits of the development of sustainable mobility; promote the development of sustainable urban mobility through public facilities and urban planning to promote the development of electric mobility in urban areas.

On the basis of the Law on Investment Promotion is provided encouraging investment in the production of electric and other clean vehicles by introducing lower thresholds investment class and additional incentives for priority projects. In terms of innovation will be introduced a new regulatory framework for investment. National Innovation Fund will become an institution for long-term innovation policy. The OP "Competitiveness" has provided financial support for the development of innovative start-up enterprises, introduction of innovative products, processes and services, and the Norwegian Cooperation Programme is being prepared to provide financial support for the promotion of eco-innovation and innovative industries in the sector. It is planned to be implemented all the requirements for standardization of electrical connectors for charging and technical compatibility on electric safety and electromagnetic compatibility and more.

In the plan is provided the introduction of the instrument "green" public procurements in which the public procurements are with environmental regulations and taking actions to identify and analyze the opportunities and impacts of the introduction of annual tax incentives for the vehicles,

depending on the environmental performance of the vehicles, the introduction of preferential fees for initial registration and regulation of EVs and HVs categories, accelerated development of charging infrastructure for EVs and HVs.

The development of electric mobility is fully in the model for economic development of the country, according to which sustainable growth will be based on sectors with high innovation intensity. The incursion of electric cars will ensure the implementation of the agreed objectives in the area of climate and energy. Environmentally friendly vehicles will ensure a sustainable future for transport and reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. This will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, a significant portion of which is attributable to this sector.

Sustainable Urban Mobility is another priority. A project is currently under way - **Sustainable Urban Mobility – SUM** where the municipality of Sofia is a partner. It is aimed at encouraging good practices for urban mobility and stimulate the modernization of urban transport. The project is co financed by Interreg IVC, Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention, energy and sustainable transport. Sofia is partner to 15 organization – 10 municipalities, 4 energy agencies and one association of municipalities. Its duration is 30 months – from January 2012 to June 2014. The project is aimed at developing a joint European strategy and it will stimulate the modernization of public transport and the gradual substitution of the traditional vehicles with electric ones through a coordinated strategy for sustainable mobility.

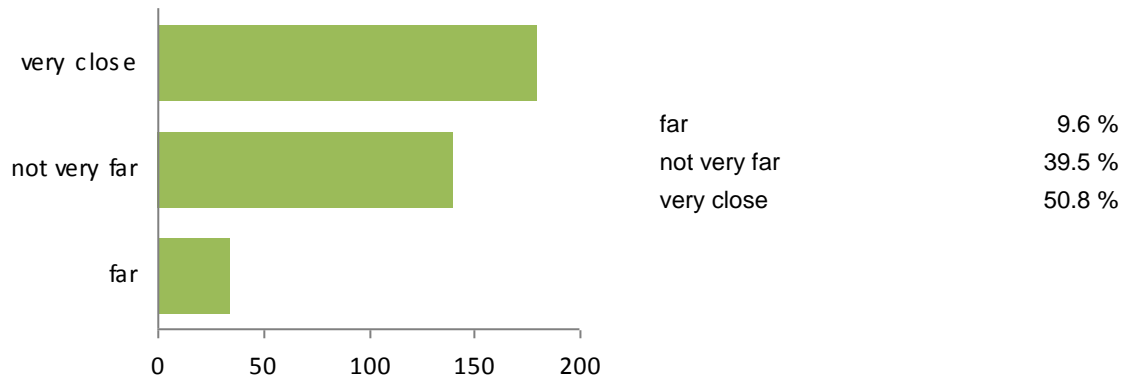
The project includes 3 major work packages – Management, Communications, Exchange of Experience for identification of best practices. It makes it possible to introduce best European practices and innovative models. In the frameworks of the joint European strategy Sofia will reduce the harmful emissions and pollution and improve the health status of the population in a more friendly urban environment. Thus it will get closer to the criteria of the programme Europe 2020.

Chapter 4 - Data collected

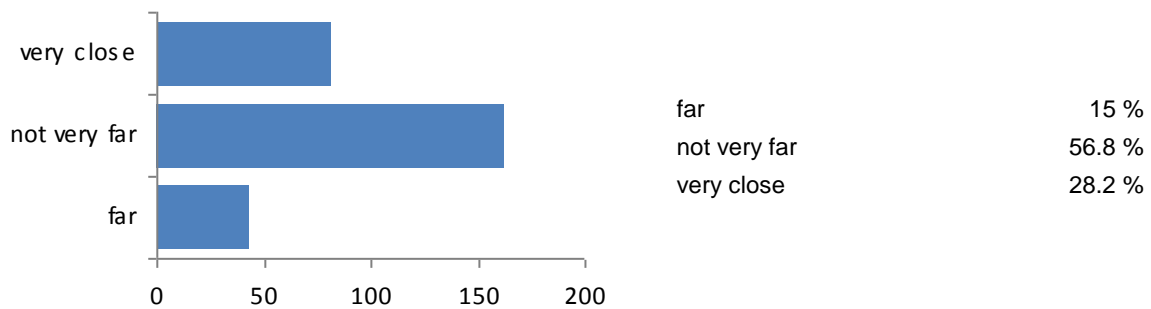
This Chapter presents the results from the applied questionnaires in the areas listed below.

Connection to public transport

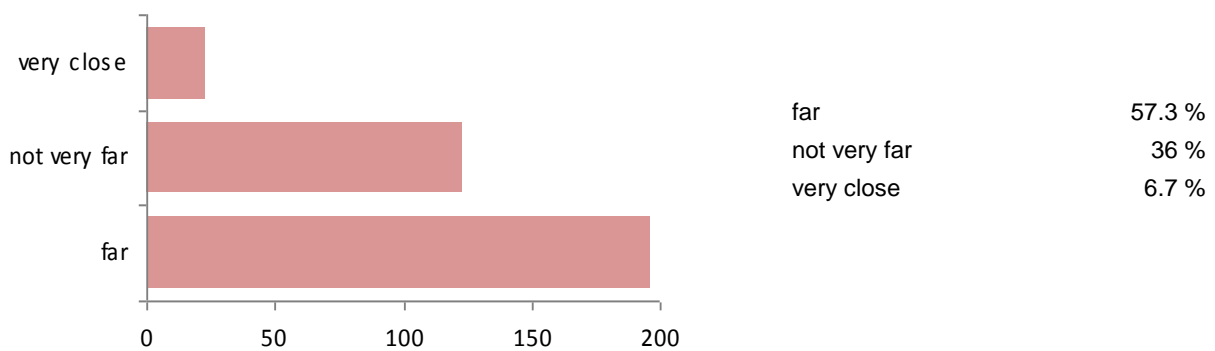
Graph 5. Connection to the first bus / tram / metro stop:



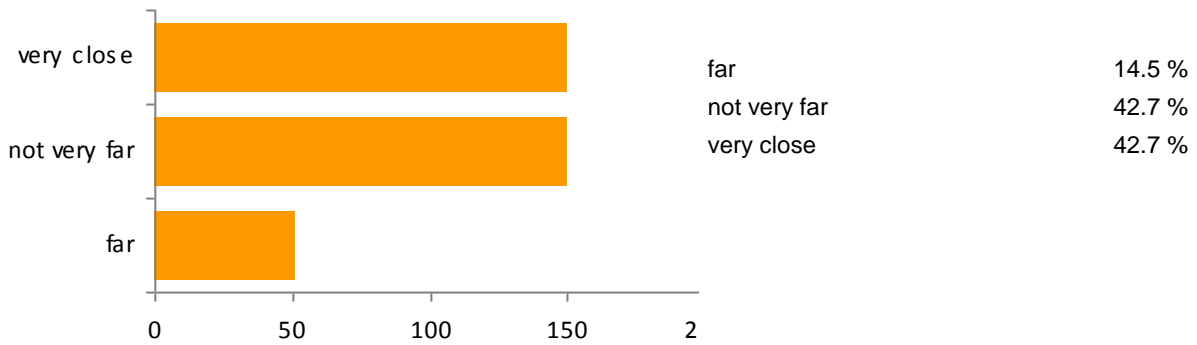
Graph 6. Connection to suburban bus station:



Graph 7. Connection to railway station

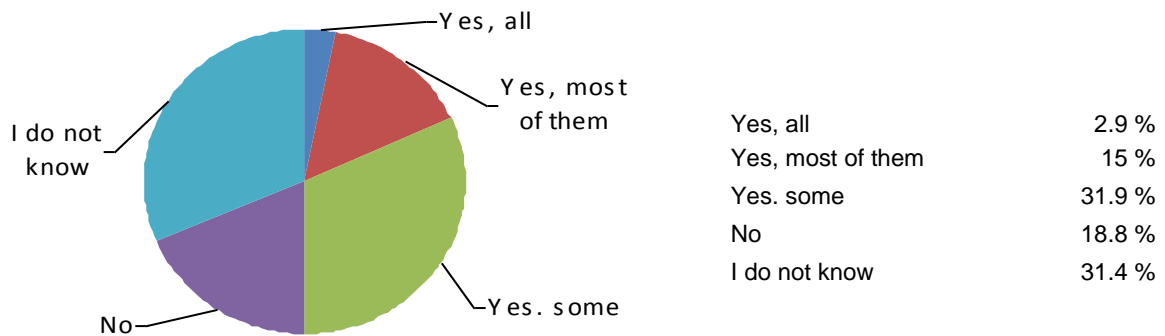


Graph 8. Connection to Taxi



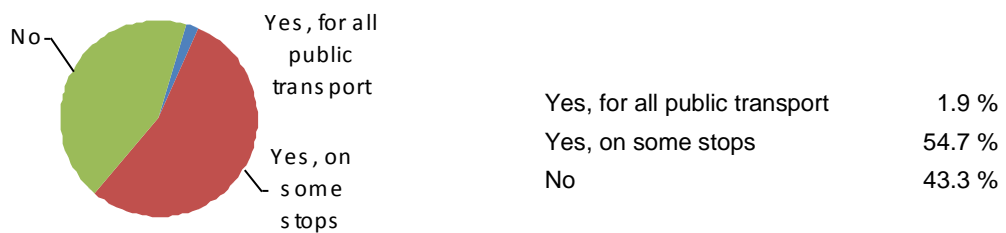
Vehicles on alternative power in public transport

Graph 9. Availability of vehicles on alternative fuel in the city of the respondents



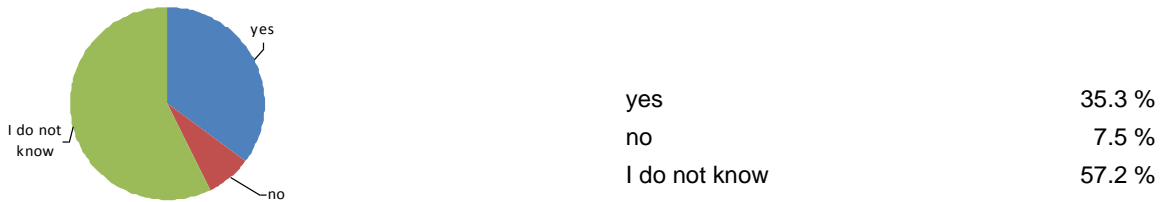
Mobile information system available to the citizens (eg poles, electronic information boards, app for tablets and smartphones)

Graph 10. Availability of mobile information system in the city of the respondents



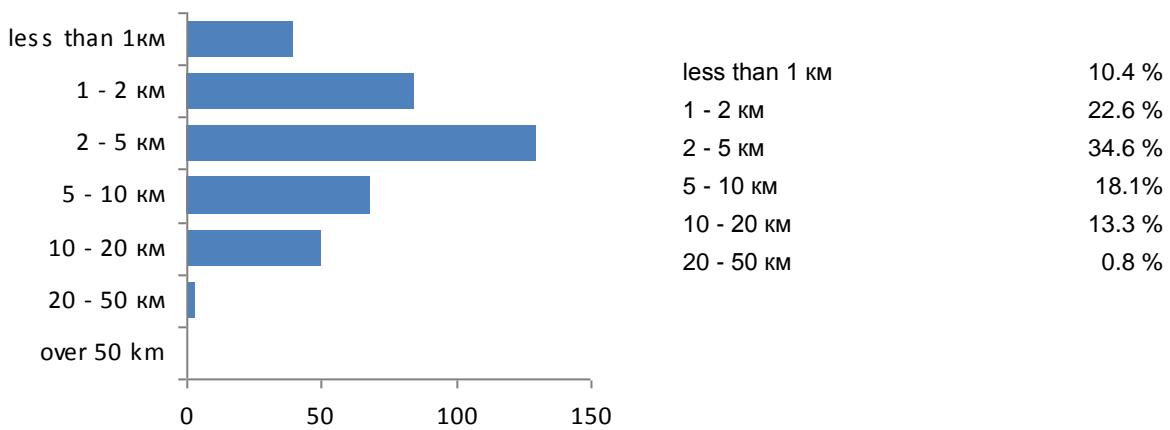
🚦 Urban mobility plans

Graph 11. Awareness of the citizens if the local government has developed and applies a plan for urban mobility in the respective location / percentage of those who know and those who do not know about this /



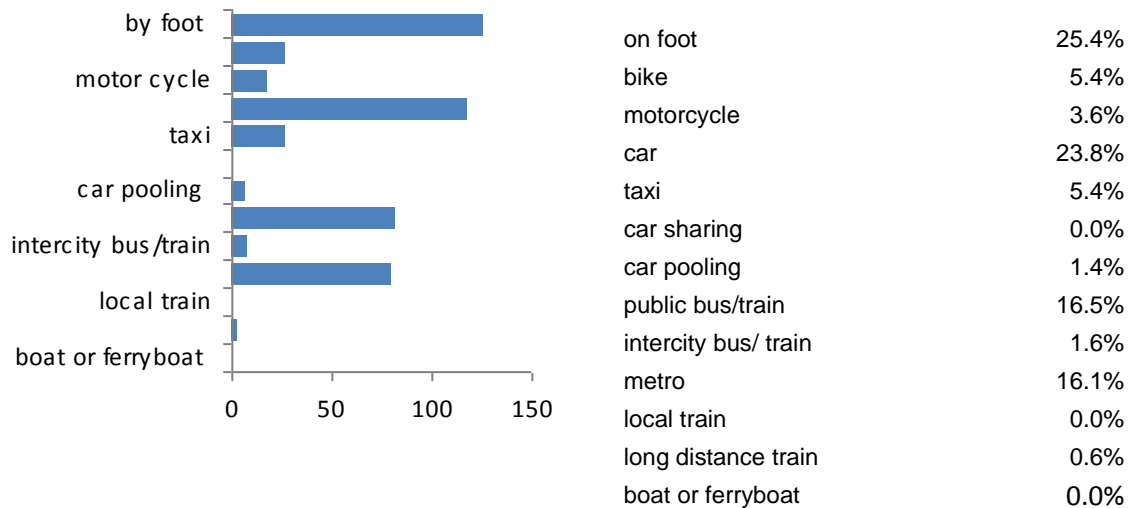
🚦 Regular and Daily Movements

Graph 12. Miles walked during the day



🚦 Vehicle Used for Regular and Daily Movement

Graph 13. Vehicle or manner chosen for regular and daily movements



Reason for Above Choice

The choice of the respondents to use one vehicle or another is influenced primarily by their age, and residence, as well as the location where they live in the city i.e. far from the center, not far or near the center of the city.

Indicatively, those who chose to walk are of younger age, or live in the center of the city. Young people and especially students are also more inclined to use a bike, but in their comments some point out that a problem is the absence of parking areas and bike paths.

For those who live far from the center as well as those in active working age, the preferred manner of transportation is the personal car, and the reasons quoted are that this is much more comfortable and fast, you can carry things or people at discretion and also accompany family members.

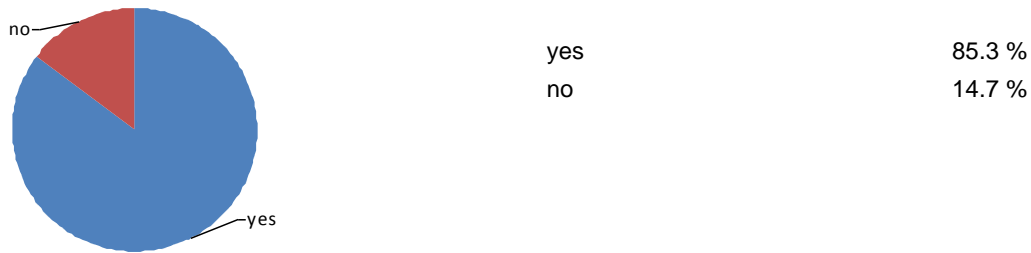
People in active age, and also those living out of the center tend to use public transport for daily travel because it is cheaper, but on the other hand they appreciate it is not comfortable neither safe enough. Traffic congestion is often quoted as a major problem.

The metro is a choice of the people in the capital city, as there is no such infrastructure in the other locations where the questionnaire was applied.

Long Distance Travel

The overwhelming majority of respondents reported they have been traveling long distances / over 250 km / during the past 2 years.

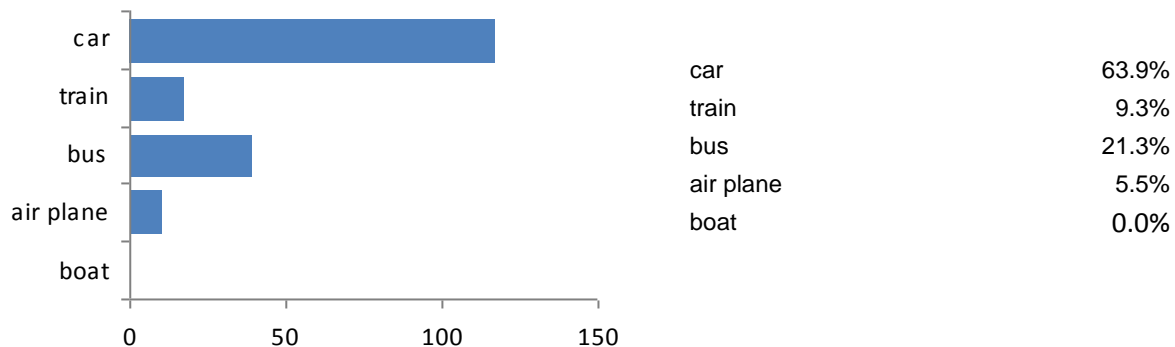
Graph 14. Percentage of respondents traveling long distances



🚦 Long Distance Travel

The most preferred vehicle for long distance travel was pointed to be the personal car, for reasons of convenience, and mostly for holiday and spare time. Train and bus are used mostly because they are cheaper, or because of absence of choice. Not surprisingly also they are chosen by younger people and by people above 70 years of age.

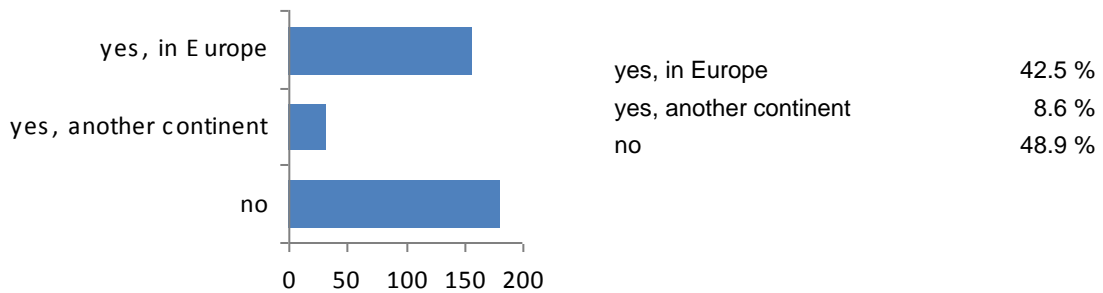
Graph 15. Vehicles used for long distance travel



🚦 Travel abroad

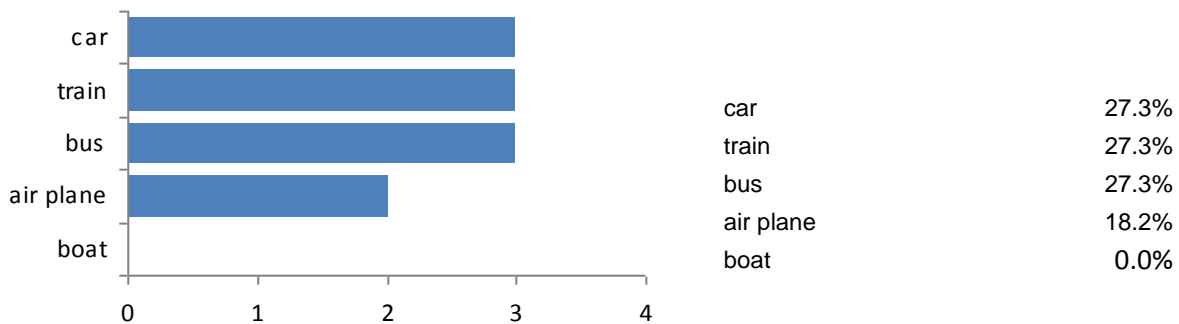
The number of the people who traveled abroad during the past year was almost equal to those who did not. These trips were mostly for business or holiday and mostly in Europe. Just a few people traveled to another continent and the indicated reason was health or holiday. In this connection it should also be noted that during the interviews it became clear that in some occasions there were parents visiting their children who had settled abroad / US for example / and baby sitting for their grand children was given as a reason.

Graph 16. Travel abroad



Vehicle of Choice when traveling abroad

.Graph 17. Preferred vehicle for foreign travel



Reason for Above Choice

The choice of the vehicle is related to the purpose of the travel, and the age of the respondents. In the case of business trips it is airplane, and in the case of holidays mostly car or bus. The bus is preferred mostly by younger people, whether for holiday or for study. Family travel is by rule done by car.

The reason for using an air plane or a car is mostly convenience and independence, also because it is faster. Younger people as well as some other respondents quote the price as a major determining factor for using bus i.e because it is cheaper. Other reasons are that you are independent and can do whatever you want during the trip - read for example. In the case of cars a frequent reason indicated is that you can carry other people and things i.e. luggage for example.

Chapter 5 - Passenger Rights in EU and main violations in Bulgaria

▪ EU Regulation

According to EU Communication “*A European Vision for Passengers: Communication on Passenger Rights in all Transport Modes*” (COM(2011) 898 final), passenger rights are based on three cornerstones: non-discrimination; accurate, timely and accessible information; immediate and proportionate assistance.

The following ten rights that stem from these principles form the core of EU passenger rights:

- (1) Right to non-discrimination in access to transport
- (2) Right to mobility: accessibility and assistance at no additional cost for disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility (PRM)
- (3) Right to information before purchase and at the various stages of travel, notably in case of disruption
- (4) Right to renounce travelling (reimbursement of the full cost of the ticket) when the trip is not carried out as planned
- (5) Right to the fulfilment of the transport contract in case of disruption (rerouting and rebooking)
- (6) Right to get assistance in case of long delay at departure or at connecting points
- (7) Right to compensation under certain circumstances
- (8) Right to carrier liability towards passengers and their baggage
- (9) Right to a quick and accessible system of complaint handling
- (10) Right to full application and effective enforcement of EU law

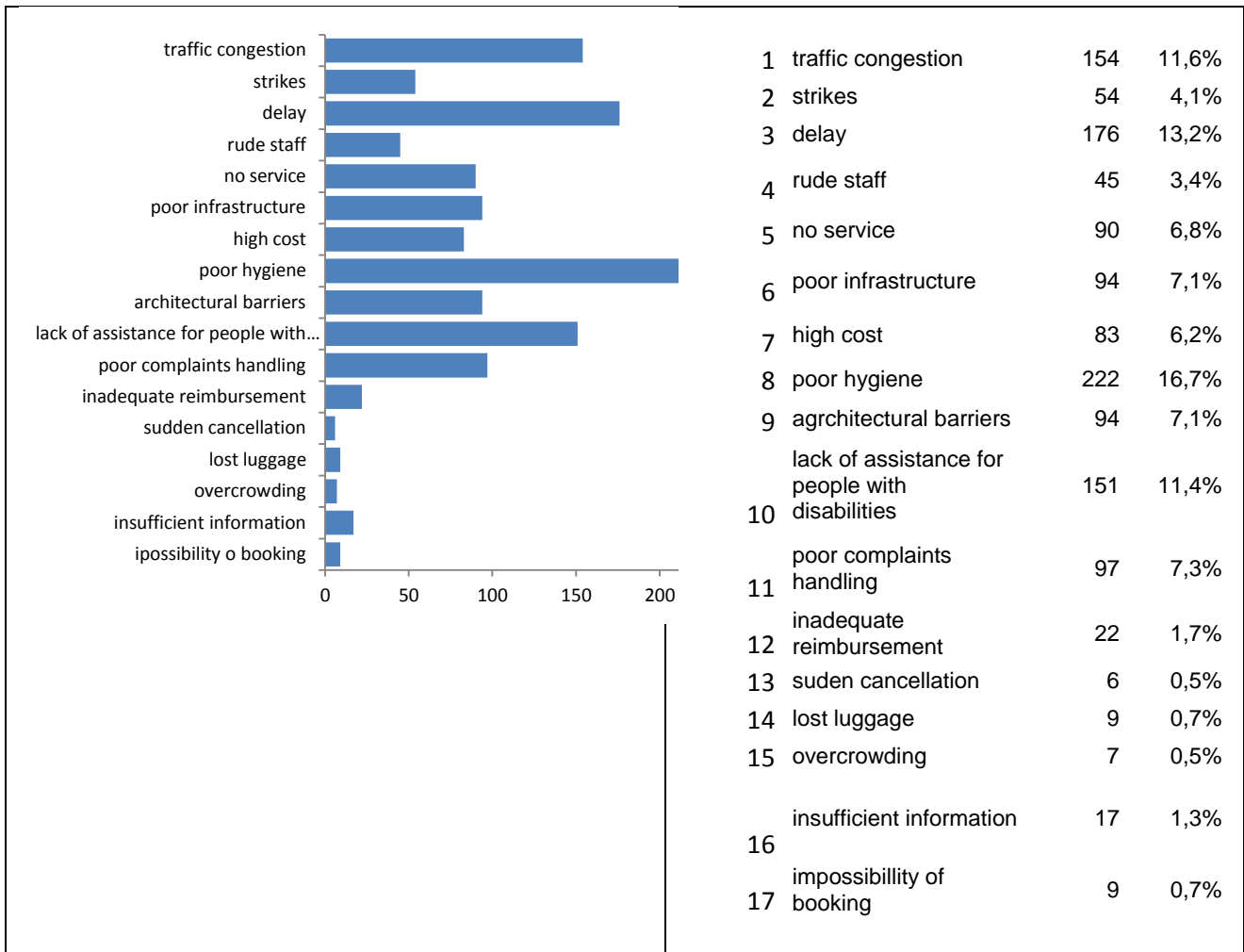
▪ Deficits in Bulgaria

In the context of the above rights the project sought to explore the problems and inefficiencies encountered by the passengers in the course of travel during daily trips and when travelling abroad.

In the case of **travel by taxi** the main problems identified were traffic congestion / 23.3%/ and the high cost /13.3. %/.

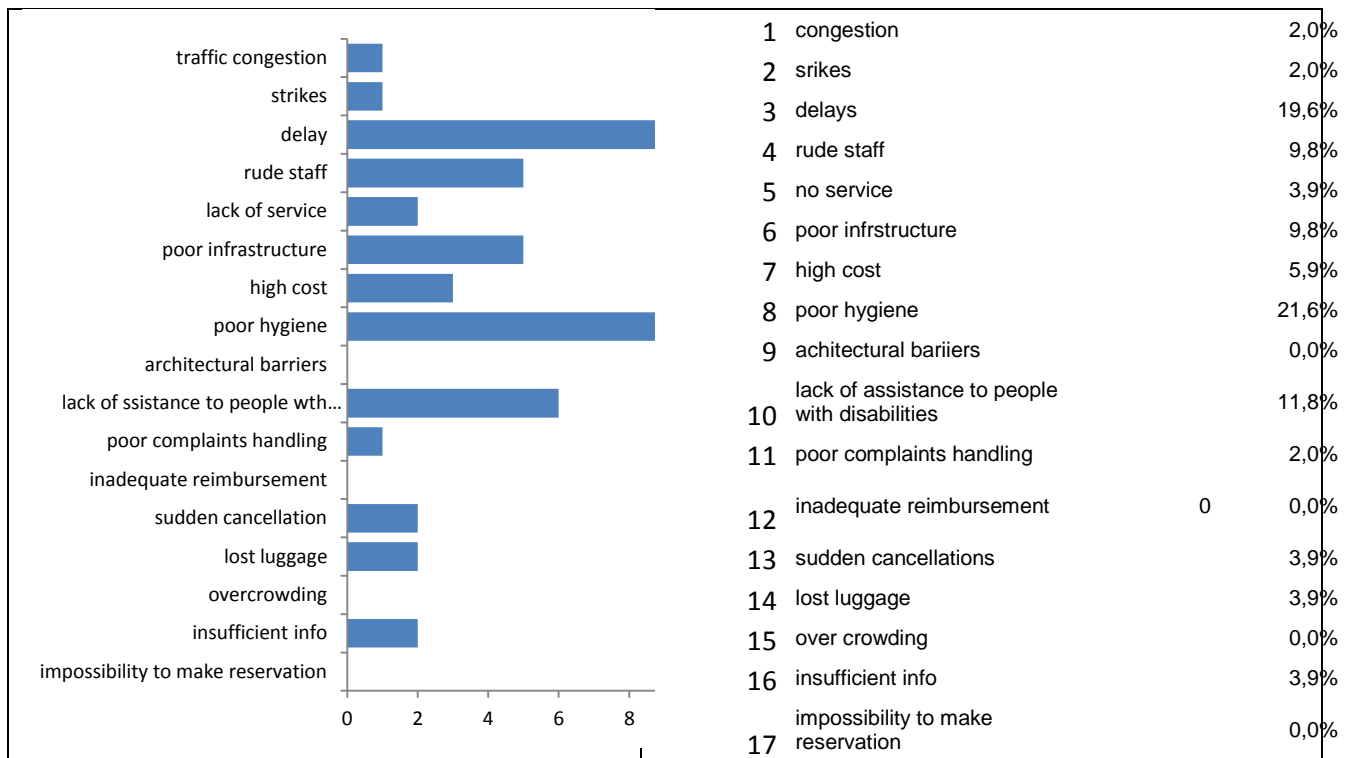
In the case of **urban tram or bus**, the core problems turned out to be the poor hygiene and delays, followed by the absence of support to people with disabilities and traffic congestion.

Graph 17. Problems experience when travelling by urban tram or bus



The problems encountered during travel with suburban bus are reported to be very much the same as with urban one.

Graph 19 Problems experienced when travelling by train



In the case of **metro transportation** it should be noted that only in Sofia there is such transport and it was started comparatively recently. Now there are just two lines, and one more under construction. The respondents in Sofia are highly appreciative of this mode of transportation and the criticisms are reduced primarily to the insufficient infrastructure and the absence of facilities for people with disabilities /i.e there are elevators only at some metro stations/.

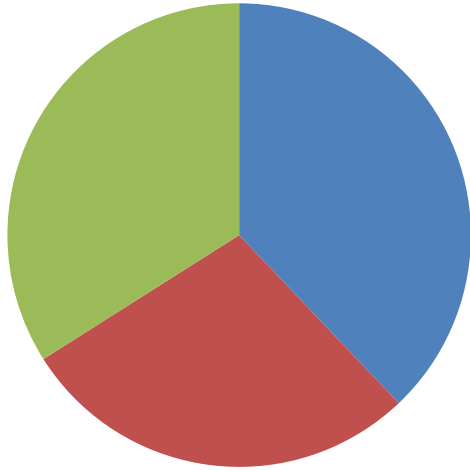
As regards **air travel** the major inconvenience quoted is related to the high cost of the tickets.

Car sharing and **car pooling** are still unpopular in Bulgaria and there is general absence of understanding or misunderstanding about the meaning. Lack of such service is accordingly the most frequent answer.

- **Awareness of the rights of passengers**

The questionnaire included questions referring to air transport, train, long distance bus and ship transportation. It is reported by the interviewers that the respondents did not have actually certain awareness of their rights, and the answers were just a guess. The findings on that basis are presented below.

- Passenger rights & airplane – Graph 20

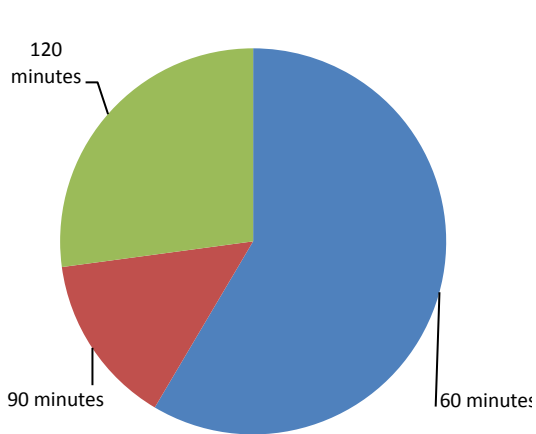


In case of denied boarding:

the airline can arbitrarily decide who to let on land	38%
the airline must first appeal to pole who voluntarily renounce their reservation the company decides who t leave on ground based on the order of booking	28%
	34%

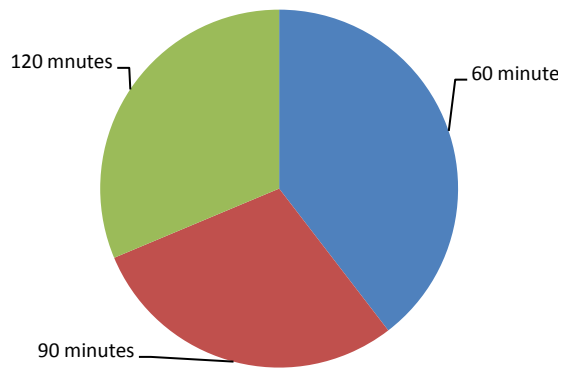
○ Passenger rights & train – Graph 21

The passenger can choose to get a full refund of the ticket if his train has a delay of more than:



60 minutes	58,5%
90 minutes	14,4%
120 minutes	27,1%

○ Passenger rights & long distance bus – Graph 22



I have the right to a refund of the ticket in the event that the race has changed with respect to the scheduled starting of more than:

60 minutes	39,6%
90 minutes	29,1%
120 minutes	31,3%

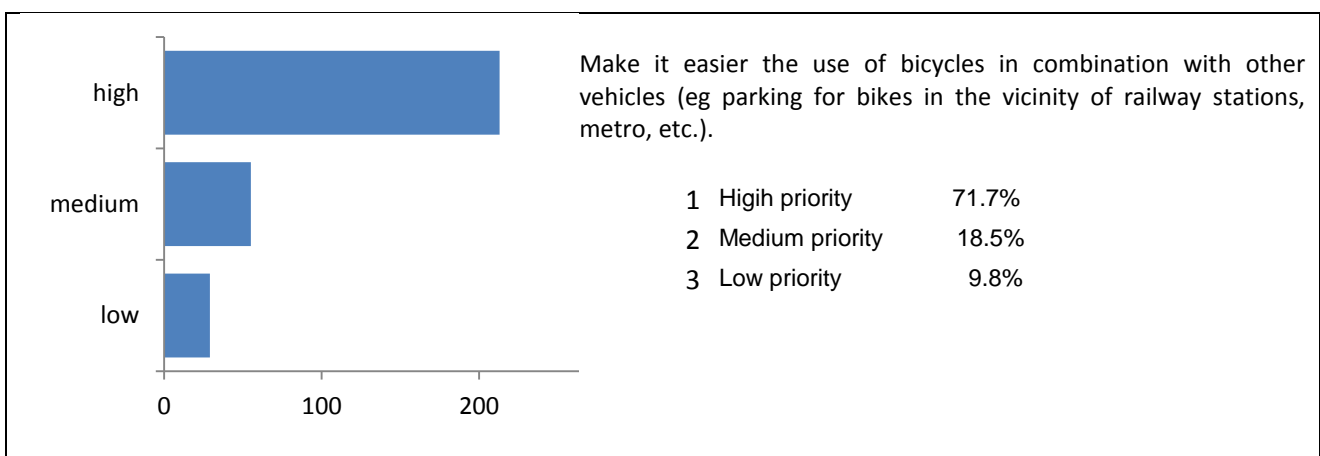
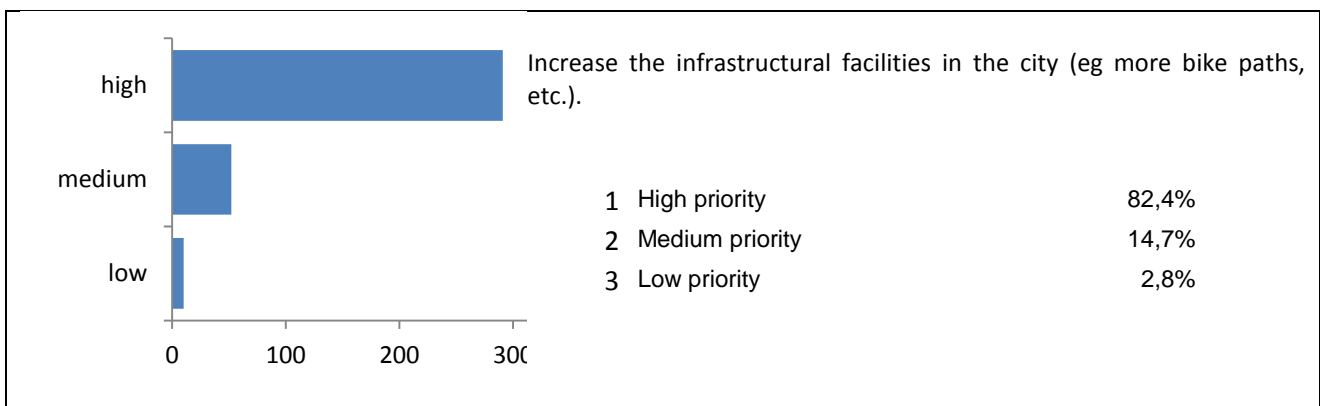
Chapter 6 - The voice of citizens and proposals

The questionnaire sought to understand also what action would the citizens propose to the institutions to improve mobility. The proposed interventions are grouped according to the type of vehicle.

- Interventions to encourage the use of bicycles

Bicycles have never been a widely practiced means of transportation in Bulgaria, except for some rural areas and villages where they are perceived as the most convenient means of transportation or even the only one. In the big cities predominantly young people will drive bicycles to go to school or the university, but this is quite a challenge as there are very few paths for bicycles. There are no designated parking areas either and the riders are compelled to take their bicycles indoors / for fear of stealing. It is not a surprise therefore that 82.4 % of all respondents stressed as a top priority for bicycling the need to improve the infrastructural facilities / paths and parking areas/. The use of bicycles in combination with other vehicles (e.g parking for bikes in the vicinity of railway stations, metro, etc.) ranked second with a score of 71.7% of the respondents. Tthe awareness raising among the citizens for specific environmental initiatives and events ranks last, as such awareness exists even now among the various environmental group members and students, thanks to the social networks or specially designated initiatives of the authorities.

Graph 23 Interventions to encourage the use of bicycles



- Interventions to promote the use of local public transport / long distance

The questionnaire listed 21 choices that had to be assessed by the respondents, as pointed out below. The score for each intervention based on the respondents who considered this high priority is given against it. As seen from the results presented top priority for the citizens / 76.4% / is the investment in the newest and most comfortable vehicles. It is also seen that the citizens are dramatically unhappy with the level of hygiene in public transport and 72.8% of the respondents believe this is the highest priority that has to be addressed for the use of public transport to be improved. Next to this 70.4 % consider the public transport vehicles still inaccessible to people with disabilities and point out the transport barriers should be broken. Much the same 67.7% expect more facilities for vulnerable segments of the population, and the same percentage of respondents are keen on increasing the safety of travel by public transport.

Table 1. Interventions to Promote the use of public transport

• Introduce / increase discounts and tax breaks for tickets for public transport (eg deductibility of the cost of)	• 69.1 %
• Toughen penalties for those who are not provided with a valid travel document	• 56.3 %
• More facilities for vulnerable segments of the population (eg, students, seniors, unemployed, etc.).	• 67.7 %
• Introducing / increasing the integration tariff for the use of more vehicles (eg. same ticket for the use of multiple means, including different; increase the time of validity of the traveling, etc.).	• 61.7 %
• Increase the lanes and preferential pathways for the benefit of public transport and car pooling	• 58.4 %
• Introduce / increase the on-call service	• 31.1 %
• Increase the frequency of strokes / territorial coverage of the service	• 39.2 %
• Cleaning ability in vehicles	• 72.8 %
• Ensure greater safety in vehicles (eg use of video surveillance systems)	• 67.7 %
• Invest in the newest and most comfortable vehicles	• 76.4 %
• Possibility to buy a ticket on board at no extra cost	• 68.2 %
• Increase the number of parking spaces for the exchange where you can leave the car	• 65.2 %
• Improve the connection of the stations of arrival / departure with other transportation options for onward travel	• 58.4 %
• Break down the barriers that prevent accessibility to passengers with reduced mobility / disabled	• 70.4%
• Offer extra comfort (eg, wi-fi, tv, newspapers, etc.).	• 49.2 %
• Provide seats for subscribers (eg for commuters)	• 42%
• Introduce / enhance tools to solve quickly and free small disputes	• 27.9%
• Introduce / increase automatic compensation for those affected by inefficiency	• 42.9%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of technologies for intelligent traffic control and the improvement of road safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61.8 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of technology to introduce smart ticketing you can book / buy tickets h24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of technologies to provide more information to users on the service, on travel options and connections and real-time traffic (eg app for mobile, wi-fi, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 46.3 %

- Interventions to reduce the environmental impact of private vehicles

The questionnaire provided 6 choices.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce / increase the penalties for non-periodic monitoring of the exhaust gas of his own car 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce / increase the traffic ban for a few days (eg ecological days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict the movement for the most polluting vehicles (eg toll schedules, for zones, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce / increase circulation number plate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24.1%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce / increase a tariff policy on differentiated parking (eg distinction between residents and non-residents, including most polluting cars and less polluting, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote educational programs to driving style safe and environmentally friendly in order to reduce road accidents as well as reducing noise and environmental pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40.2

- Interventions to promote the use / purchase of environmentally friendly cars

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce tax relief for producers in order to reduce the selling price to the price list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 67.3%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce tax reliefs for those who purchase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61.5%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expect more numerous dedicated infrastructure (charging stations for electric cars, dedicated parking spaces for cars LPG, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59.2%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide reserved parking / free for eco-friendly cars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply discounts in highway tolls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply discounts on additional costs (eg Rc car, car tax, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 58.9%

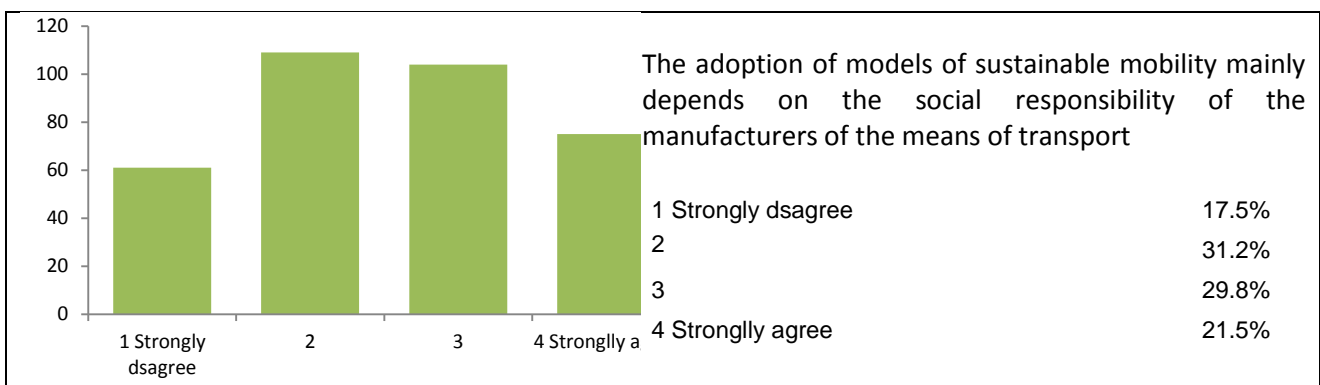
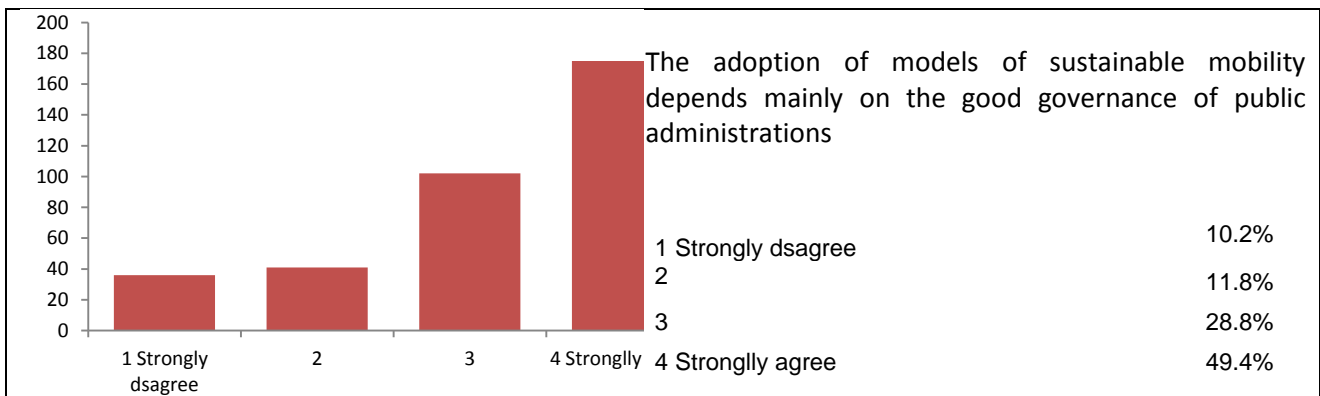
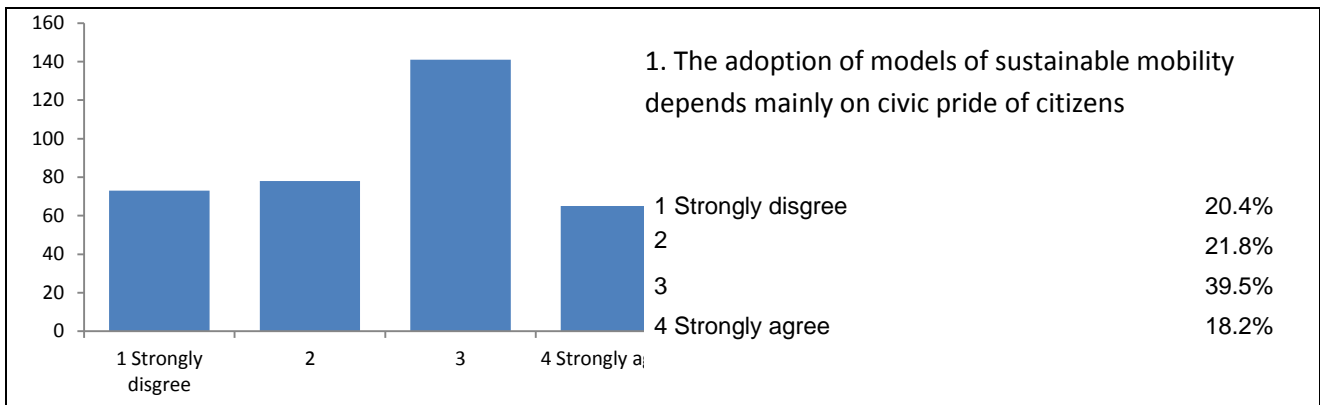
- General interventions

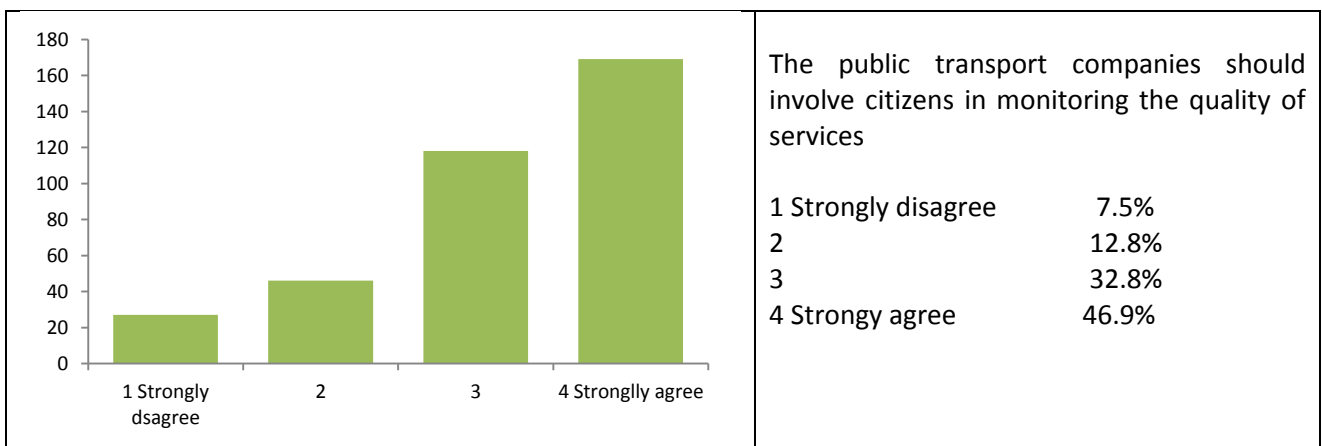
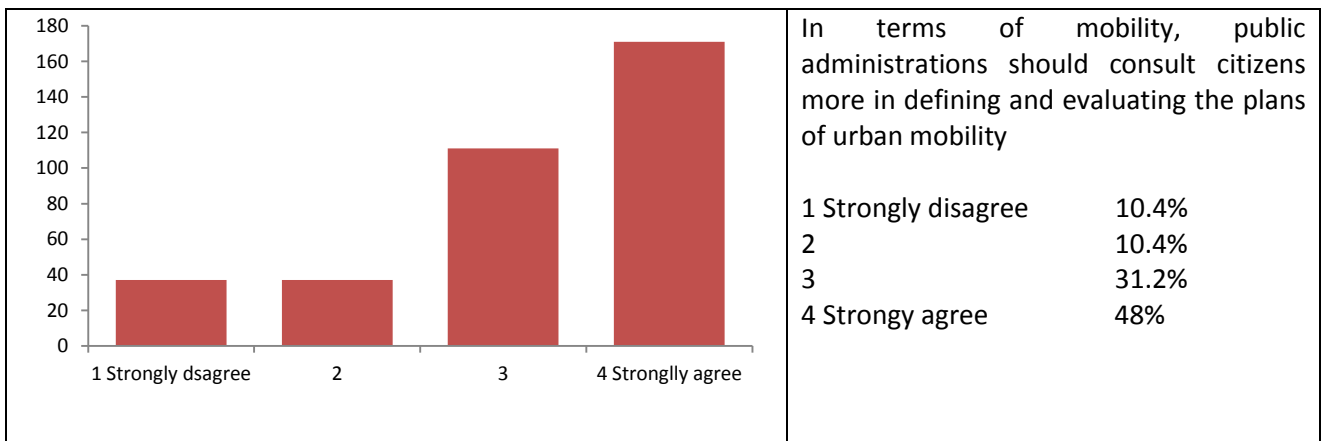
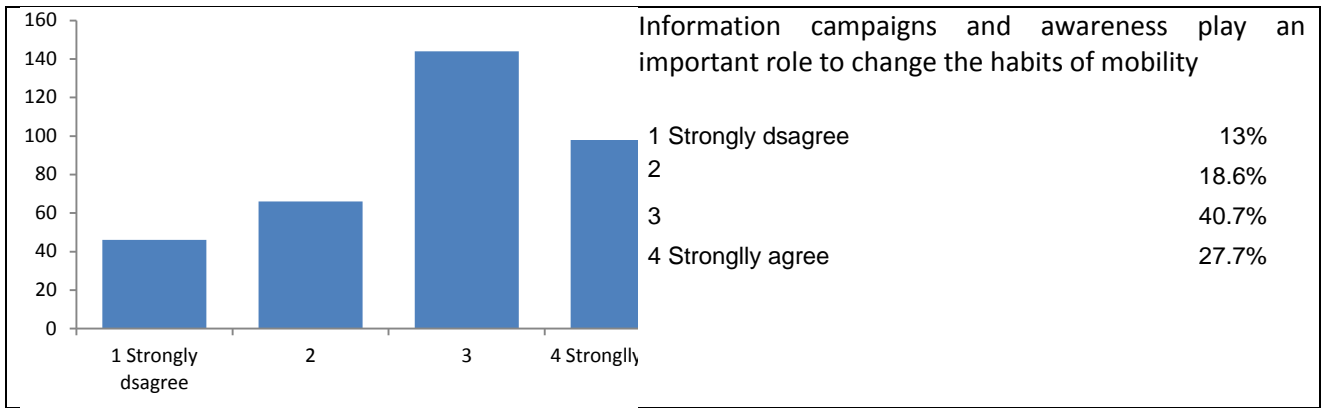
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the opening / closing of public offices, schools, etc.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35.1%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a change schedules of opening / closing of the private offices, shops, etc.. sites in some particular areas of the city (eg the old town, crowded areas, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24.7%

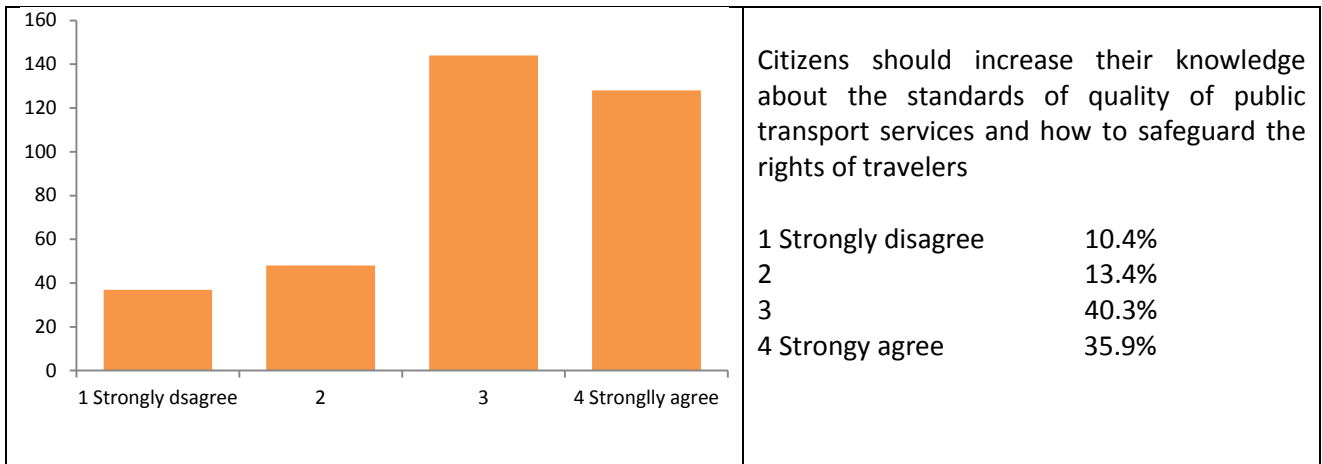
- Encourage competition between transport operators (rail, air, road, marine)

- 36.7%

The questionnaire also checked the concurrence of the citizens with the statements below related to the models of sustainable urban mobility







Chapter 7 - Synthesis of data and conclusions

The concept of sustainable mobility in this project was considered in three dimensions: social, economic and environmental.

The social dimension refers predominantly to issues related to access, affordability, choice and living conditions associated with transport. The economic dimension deals with the costs and the ecological – with the protection of the natural environment.

The findings of the surveyed revealed that in all the cities where the questionnaire was applied access to public transport and connection were very good. Physical access i.e. the distance to the stop of the bus or tram is reported to be very small. This was the case with citizens both in the capital city and the country, and with those living in the center and those in the outskirts. This is indeed reflection of the real situation, as the public transport network is quite well developed and the stops are equally distributed throughout the entire route. In the case of taxi, the situation is much the same. Access to information is however not so good. Only in the capital and some other cities, and not at all stops one can see information about the schedule of the bus, and quite rarely it is electronic.

Access to transport for people with disabilities, however, turn out to be very problematic. The public vehicles are not equipped with facilities for people with reduced mobility or disability – there are no platforms or any other conveniences. Rarely can one file a request for individual transportation and the options are reduced to particular programmes only.

Regarding affordability, while the cost of transport is still considered to be reasonable, most of the people would travel by bus or by train at long distances rather than by car, merely for economic reasons. The choice of the respondents to use one vehicle or another is influenced primarily by their age, and residence, as well as the location where they live in the city i.e. far from the center, not far or near the center of the city.

Indicatively, those who chose to walk are of younger age, or live in the center of the city. Young people and especially students are also more inclined to use a bike, but in their comments some point out that a problem is the absence of parking areas and bike paths.

For those who live far from the center as well as those in active working age, the preferred manner of transportation is the personal car, and the reasons quoted are that this is much more comfortable and fast, you can carry things or people at discretion and also accompany family members.

People in active age, and also those living out of the center tend to use public transport for daily travel because it is cheaper, but on the other hand they appreciate it is not comfortable neither safe enough. Traffic congestion is often quoted as a major problem.

The metro is a choice of the people in the capital city, as there is no such infrastructure in the other locations where the questionnaire was applied.

In the case of long distance travel the most preferred vehicle for long distance travel was pointed to be the personal car, for reasons of convenience, and mostly for holiday and spare time. Train and bus are used mostly because they are cheaper, or because of absence of choice. Not surprisingly also they are chosen by younger people and by people above 70 years of age.

Regarding travel abroad the number of the people who traveled abroad during the past year was almost equal to these who did not. These trips were mostly for business or holiday and mostly in Europe. Just a few people traveled to another continent and the indicated reason was health or holiday. In this connection it should also be noted that during the interviews it became clear that in some occasions there were parents visiting their children who had settled abroad / US for example / and baby sitting for their grand children was given as a reason.

With respect to the problems experienced poor hygiene and the absence of facilities for people with disabilities are the top two problems. Added to these are the absence of parking places and paths for bicycles. Bicycles have never been a widely practiced means of transportation in Bulgaria, except for some rural areas and villages where they are perceived as the most convenient means of transportation or even the only one. In the big cities predominantly young people will drive bicycles to go to school or the university, but this is quite a challenge as there are very few paths for bicycles. There are no designated parking areas either and the riders are compelled to take their bicycles indoors / for fear of stealing. It is not a surprise therefore that 82.4 % of all respondents stressed as a top priority for bicycling the need to improve the infrastructural facilities / paths and parking areas/. The use of bicycles in combination with other vehicles (e.g parking for bikes in the vicinity of railway stations, metro, etc.) ranked second with a score of 71.7% of the respondents. The awareness raising among the citizens for specific environmental initiatives and events ranks last, as such awareness exists even now among the various environmental group members and students, thanks to the social networks or specially designated initiatives of the authorities

As regards long distance public transport the investment in the newest and most comfortable vehicles is pointed as a big priority. It is also seen that the citizens are dramatically unhappy with the level of hygiene in public transport and 72.8% of the respondents believe this is the highest priority that has to be addressed for the use of public transport to be improved. Next to this 70.4 % consider the public transport vehicles still inaccessible to people with disabilities and point out the transport barriers should be broken. Much the same 67.7% expect more facilities for vulnerable segments of the population, and the same percentage of respondents are keen on increasing the safety of travel by public transport.

For protection of the environment it was considered that reducing the movement of the most polluting vehicles and the tax reliefs would be the most effective measures.

The project also checked the awareness of the citizens of the existence of urban mobility plans and the models of sustainable urban mobility. Still there is no awareness of the true contents of the urban mobility plans and they are often mistaken with the schedules developed by the transport companies and the general plan of the municipality. With respect to the models, some 50 % of the respondents were convinced that they depend primarily on the good governance of the public administrations, but also the citizens should increase their knowledge about the standards of quality of public transport services and how to safeguard their rights of travelers.

BEST PRACTICES

Best Practice 1

Title: SEAMORE PROJECT IN BULGARIA

Description and Objectives:

The IEE project SEAMORE funded by EACI was launched in March 2012. The project duration is 3 years. *Club Sustainable Development of Civil Society* is the Bulgarian partner. The aim of the project is to change the travel behaviour of visitors in 8 European regions towards more sustainable transport modes. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. Increase the awareness among visitors of sustainable mobility options in tourist regions
2. Increase co-operation between the sectors of tourism and mobility and creation of new and improved energy efficient mobility options for leisure travel in 8 coastal regions throughout Europe.
3. Shift of travel behaviour of visitors towards more sustainable modes (monitored in 8 coastal regions in Europe);
4. Widely share and communicate the SEAMORE experiences and outcomes with other actors in Europe, so that they start implementing similar actions targeting leisure travel.

Club “Sustainable Development of Civil Society” is the Bulgarian partner in the project.

The target region selected in Bulgaria was the north coastal area of the Black sea, Dobrich region, visited by 500,000 tourists a year, but with no traditions in mobility management, no public transport and no cycling routes along the seaside. SEAMORE seeks to facilitate the development of appropriate public transport and soft mobility usage among visitors and local population, promoting a shift from private cars to public transport, cycling and walking.

The road infrastructure connecting Dobrich and the seaside is good enough but public transport connections between maritime areas and towns are not well developed. Public transport does not exist in the maritime towns of *Kavarna, Shabla and Balchik*. Thus tourists and the local population rely mainly on their private cars. The intense traffic causes a lot of air pollution, noise, road congestions and many accidents.

In Dobrich district mobility surveys have never been conducted and mobility management measures never been introduced. The big hotels and other resort facilities offer only taxi services to their clients. The perfect conditions for developing cycling routes and pedestrian alleys are totally neglected. Small seaside settlements have a lot of parking problems during the high season.

The local government has no financial capacity for measures for environmental improvement and energy saving; therefore it relies on European actions and SEAMORE to facilitate the development of public transport and soft mobility usage among visitors and to promote a shift from private cars to public transport, cycling and walking. ,

In 2012 a thorough analysis of the current mobility situation was made, using primary and secondary sources of information. A local strategy was developed, approved by the local government and all stakeholders in tourism and transport sectors. In line with that strategy Dobrich district has the vision: “MORE ATTRACTIVE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY SEASIDE DOBRUDZHA THROUGH SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT.”

The main goals were defined as follows:

1. to develop a strong information and promotion campaign introducing the term “Mobility management” in the region and explaining the benefits of sustainable tourism and transport development.
2. to introduce new mobility measures in resort areas, thus linking tourism and transport sectors;
3. to increase energy efficiency of transport.

The document was approved by the local government authorities and all stakeholders in November 2012. The project team focused immediately on the first tasks at hand: actions for information and marketing. By the end of February the necessary information, pictures and maps were collected and the design of the advertising material shaping the integrated sustainable mobility information package for visitors was prepared. It contained a detailed description of local leisure sites with pictures and information how to reach them sustainably. The brochure represent a mobility guide for regional visitors including complete and integrated information and timetables of public transport and coaches in four languages.

During the 2nd meeting of the Local Working group the package was discussed and some new proposals by the experts were integrated in the final version. As the budget for printing of paper materials is limited, the District Governor and the Mayor agreed to publish on their official sites a printable version of the mobility package and to allow tourists and citizens to download it and print it for their own use.

The Bulgarian team also started to work on the task “ Training on integrated mobility options” for 80 professionals being in direct contact with visitors (hotels, bus drivers and leisure activities staff). The main training topic was “Sustainable mobility:introduction and European best practices”.

The next public SEAMORE event was the seminar in Dobrich entitled: “Energy saving through sustainable transport”. It is officially enlisted among EUSEW events.

The interchange of experiences and the technical assistance of the SCDCC team provide local decision makers with innovative and tailor-made mobility options to be gradually implemented.

The impact on tourism sector will be very positive because the improved ecological situation in the seaside region will attract more tourists, create more jobs and influence public health in a positive way.

BEST PRACTICE 2

Title: EASY TRIP

Partners: Centre For Research and Technology Hellas/Hellenic Institute of Transport Greece, MUNICIPALITY OF BANSKO, Bulgaria, Municipality of Krumovgrad, Bulgaria, Centre For Research and Technology Hellas/Chemical Process & Energy Resources Institute, Greece, : Municipality of Thessaloniki, Greece; MUNICIPALITY OF KAVALA, Greece, MUNICIPALITY OF SERRES, Greece, MUNICIPALITY OF THERMI, Greece, TRAINOSE, Greece,

EasyTrip is a crossborder project financed by the *European Territorial Cooperation Programme “Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013”*. It aims to improve crossborder accessibility between the regions of action through the development of a web-based tool which will offer e-mobility services by using advanced ICT technologies that will spread the information to all travelers using channels easily reachable from everyone (mobile phone applications, internet, VMS).

EasyTrip services will address the needs of road users, tourists and relevant authorities. The main target is to enhance sustainable and green mobility at trip ends, to improve road safety, to promote all areas of intervention supporting their economies and development giving also equal opportunities and fair competition and to minimize environmental impacts of traffic in the crossborder area.

BACKGROUND

Cross-border traffic between Greece and Bulgaria rises up to 50.000 vehicles/day during holidays and weekends, mainly due to leisure trips to/from major tourist destinations in both countries but also due to daily commuters. The large numbers of visitors and resulting traffic, in parallel with the fact that almost all of these trips are executed by private vehicles, in absence of alternative modes, results to increased traffic, delays and environmental pollution at the level of national road networks, but more importantly at the level of regional and local roads at trip ends.

The above problems are increasing during weekends and national holidays. Queues and increased delays are experienced in the cross-border areas, entire road segments operate over their capacity and there is lack of pre-trip information in order to avoid this situation and find other alternative routes or modes. In addition, the absence of adequate information provision to the travelers, either at pre-trip or at en-route level, regarding mobility related issues at their destinations, such as e.g. information on routing, alternative transport means, parking, exact route guidance etc, results to unnecessary trips, increased travel times, delays and other traffic by-products such as environmental pollution due to traffic.

Another accessibility problem is the variance of road characteristics and the different regulations that the driver must follow in every part of the cross-border network. The network between the two main poles of action (Region of Central and Eastern Macedonia – Thrace and Blagoevgrad) presents a variance of quality and characteristics. Additionally there are different driving regulations among the two countries e.g. in Bulgaria the lights must be always on, the speed limits are very low etc, that causes a lot of safety problems for the passengers who travel for the first time in the cross-border routes and requires specific pre-trip information, which is today not offered.

The increased seasonal traffic between the poles of attraction causes also environmental pollution. The vehicles' emissions are the main reason for this problem, which can be easily avoided if the passengers use alternative modes for their trip, if the number of vehicles is well distributed to the alternative routes and during the hours of the day and if the travelers are well informed about where to go and how to get there. The environmental effects have never been assessed, in order to form specific policy measures for the minimization of the pollution and specific environmentally friendly routes to be calculated in order to be followed by the vehicles.

Finally, the accessibility problem of the cross-border area can be also minimized if the visitors are well informed about alternative locations in regions of action. This can be achieved by offering touristic information together with the accessibility and promoting also less known destinations. The above existing problems related to mobility and accessibility largely affect sustainable development, the environment, equal opportunities and fair competition within the entire area, which are horizontal issues tackled by the EasyTrip proposal. As it is obvious, there is clear demand for the expected outputs and results of the specific project because it aims at tackling all the above mentioned accessibility problems and all of the target groups who are the users of the specific network, the residence of the activity areas, the authorities and all the relevant business sectors.

The locations of activities of Easy Trip are: Region of Central Macedonia (CERTH, Hellenic Institute of Transport, CPERI, Chemical Process and Energy resources Institute and Municipalities of Thessaloniki, Themi, Serres), Region of Eastern Macedonia–Thrace (Municipality of Kavala), Province of Blagoevgrad (Bansko) and Province of Kardzhali (Krumovgrad).

The EasyTrip e-mobility services will be provided in the form of user-friendly, personalized web services and mobile applications for pre-trip and en-route planning and information. The services will be provided in Greek, Bulgarian and English, so as to enable a smooth and convenient flow of information and service provision to all travelers, despite the language used locally. In addition, small scale infrastructures, in the form of Variable Message Signs and Info Touch Screens, will be

installed at all participating sites so as to inform travelers, in addition to the information provided to them by the e-mobility services.

The final outputs will be the following EasyTrip e-services for travelers: advanced traveler information, detailed information provision for trip ends, traffic and parking information, tourist-related information and points of interest (POIs), public transport and taxis information, road safety information, environment and weather information, on-demand transport services.

The scientific and technical outcomes of the EasyTrip project are:

- Improvement of crossborder accessibility between the regions of actions through the development of a web-based tool which will offer e-mobility services by using advanced ICT technologies that will spread the information to all travelers using channels easily reachable from everyone (mobile phone applications, internet, VMS).
- Enhancement of sustainable and green mobility at trip ends.
- Improvement of road safety.
- Promotion of all areas of intervention giving equal opportunities for sustainable development and fair competition.
- Minimization of traffic impacts in the crossborder area.
- Enhancement of the economy of the participating areas through the offered services by promoting their places and protecting them also from the resulting environmental or traffic effects.

BEST PRACTICE 3

Title: **FREEDOM CHALLENGE: International cycling tour against human trafficking**

Description: Bulgaria was elected to the start of FREEDOM CHALLENGE - international cycling tour, which aims to raise the public awareness of human trafficking at European level.

Bulgarian start of the initiative was organized by the general sponsorship of Aurubis Bulgaria with partnership of the National Committee against Trafficking in Human Beings and Bulgarian Cycling Union. The participants in the project crossed 9 countries for 11 days by one of most difficult cycling routes in Europe, organized by the international NGO "Campaign A21".

International cycling team covering the distance from Bulgaria to the UK started in Sofia at October 6, 2013 (Sunday) 10.00 A.M, from Alexander I Battenberg Square.

The team was joined by hundreds of Bulgarian bikers to accompany them in symbolic tour of Sofia city center.

The route

The participants in FREEDOM CHALLENGE competed against time in attempting to reach from Sofia to London for 11 days, crossing the territory of the 9 countries - Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Slovakia, Austria, Germany, Belgium, France and the UK. The cyclists had to pass minimum 100 km a day. The route of the tour passed through one of the highest mountain throat in Europe - Grossglockner, the highest mountain in Austria. There the team had to ride 48 kilometers on extremely steep Alpine Road and climb to 2504 m. above sea level.

The participants

The main team of FREEDOM CHALLENGE consisted of 10 people and most of them did not have professional experience in cycling. The average age of the cyclists was 32 years, and their professions ranging from business administrators to singers. Only two of the team were professional cyclists. Despite of the difficult route, in the team were two ladies - one nurse from Paris and the other - a professional chef in a luxury restaurant from London. In order to cope with the challenges of the route, all participants had passed through very intensive six-month training process.

Partners

Project partners were also Sofia Municipality, Bulgarian Cycling Union, Cycle Evolution and Cycle Walk associations, BG Radio, Actualno.com, Offnews.bg

BEST PRACTICE 4

Title: EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK 2013

Description/Objectives:

More than 35 organisations participated in a total of over 45 separate events taking place in Bulgaria in the European Mobility Week from 16 to 22 September, 2013

The European Mobility Week 2013, the biggest forum of events and discussions on mobility and alternative forms of transport in the modern city, and the *Day in Town without My Car* took place from 16 to 22 September 2013. The campaign was conducted with the financial support of the Capital City municipality and the support of the candidature of Sofia and the Southwest region in the initiative for nomination of a European Capital of Culture in 2019. The motto of the campaign this year was: „Clean Air: It is Your Move”, specially designed as a challenge to the citizens and their thinking regarding the individual imprint on the environment that each one of us leaves behind, depending on the transport used.

The seven days between September 16 and 22 mirrored the best achievements in the field of development of sustainable urban mobility and the best ideas for the future of transport. The events related to the week started a day earlier, on September 15, with a bike parade “Save the Arctic”, organized by *Greenpeace*, Bulgaria under the motto to protect the northern polar region.

Early in the morning the next day, with the first congestions at the crossings between Moskovska and Rakovska streets in Sofia City/, a mobile unit for air quality control was stationed to monitor the levels of pollution of the air we breathe every day. It was followed by several forums later to discuss future projects for sustainable urban transport as well as demonstrations of electric solar energy driven vehicles. The first day ended with training how to cycle safely in the city - “Safe Biking”, a joint initiative of *Veloevolution Association*, the Traffic Police and the Dutch Embassy. His Excellency Tom van Oorshot, Ambassador of the Netherlands signaled the start of the campaign and was among the first cyclists to cover the distance of several kilometers along the routes with heaviest traffic in Sofia. 5 such trainings were organized within the European Mobility Week, in the course of which cyclists received valuable tips and ideas how to move safely in the city. An action for the safety of active cyclists took place on Wednesday with the involvement of five regional cities: Plovdiv, Bourgas, Varna, Blagoevgrad and Rousse, with police offices and volunteers of *Veloevolution Association* handing out the *Manual for Safe Urban Cycling*.

Another interesting initiative was the campaign „Be Cool on Bike”. Its purpose was to find out if cyclists in Sofia pay attention to their urban dress code, with project volunteers affixing fashion color stamps at key locations in the city during all days of the European Mobility Week. The winners were determined by the number of stamps collected from the different events and initiatives during the week. Over 50 cyclists collected stamps and some of them received cycling awards.

We all know that one of the problems facing cyclists is how to prevent theft. The *veloregister.bg* guys took care of that by marking over 70 bicycles against theft, owned by people who had taken part in the events during the week.

Cycling and walking tours, charging electric vehicles with solar energy, free courier deliveries by bikes, information shows etc. took place during the week, culminating in the Day without Cars on 22nd September, when a large part of the city centre was closed to motor vehicles. Thus hundreds of people could join and be entertained in some of the 25 events taking place in the closed area, or just enjoy the clean and quiet without cars. Bike coaching, bike rallies, educational games for children, testing of handmade bikes, games to get to know what bikes, skateboard and longboard shows – everybody was able to discover the most enjoyable way to spend the weekend.

The mobile unit for air quality control was in place all through the day to complete all measurements so that the test results could be compared, thus demonstrating the positive effect of all initiatives implemented during the European Mobility Week 2013 with the active support of the Urban Mobility centre, The Ministry of Environment and Water, The Executive Agency on Environment, the Traffic Police department of the Capital City Directorate of the Ministry of Interior and others.

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Partners:



The project is coordinated by Active Citizenship Network (ACN), the European interface of the Italian civic organization Cittadinanzattiva.

Active Citizenship Network is associated partner of the European Mobility Week (www.mobilityweek.eu)



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