

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE FIELD OF MOBILITY

Gent

Brno

Ljubljana

Zagreb

Porto

CIVITAS ELAN
Work and Lessons Learned
Related to Citizen Engagement



The cities of Ljubljana (Slovenia), Gent (Belgium), Zagreb (Croatia), Brno (Czech Republic) and Porto (Portugal) joined together in the CIVITAS ELAN project "Mobilising citizens for vital cities". They have agreed on the mission, "to 'mobilise' our citizens by developing with their support clean mobility solutions for vital cities, ensuring health and access for all".

As part of the EU CIVITAS programme, the ELAN project takes an approach where "putting the citizen first" is at the core of the work in the five cities. They are all vibrant medium-sized European centres of social, cultural and economic life with strong identities, rich cultural heritage and high-quality public spaces. They all have major universities with large student populations. These dynamic cities share a strong commitment to implement mobility policy that gives priority to citizens and their quality of life. More about CIVITAS Initiative and CIVITAS ELAN you can find on www.civitas-initiative.org/



Ljubljana



Gent



Zagreb



Brno



Porto

Work and Lessons Learned Related to Citizen Engagement

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List of abbreviations

AGSOB	Autonoom Gemeentelijk Stadsontwikkelingsbedrijf (Autonomous municipal city development company)
CC	Congestion charge
CEOA	CIVITAS ELAN Open Academy
CSO	Civil society organisation
DPMB	Brno City Public Transport Company
DRT	Demand-responsive transport
GCC	Gent City Council
IMC	Integrated Mobility Centre
KORDIS JMK	Integrated Transport System of South Moravia
LCD	Liquid crystal display
LPP	Ljubljana Public Transport Company
OPT	Optimização e Planeamento de Transportes
PT	Public transport
STCP	Porto's public bus operator
SUTP	Sustainable Urban Transport Plan
ZET	Zagreb Electric Tram

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims of the document and the target groups

The CIVITAS ELAN project *“Mobilising citizens for vital cities”*, funded by the European Commission within the CIVITAS Initiative from 2008-2012, introduced ambitious transport measures and policies towards sustainable urban mobility. The ELAN project took an approach where “Putting the citizen first” was at the core of the work. The five participating cities, Ljubljana, Gent, Zagreb, Brno and Porto, agreed to a common mission statement before the start of the project: *“To ‘mobilise’ our citizens by developing with their support clean mobility solutions for vital cities, ensuring health and access for all.”*

The ELAN project addressed and motivated stakeholders and the interested public in each of the participating cities to become involved and to engage themselves in planning, implementing and monitoring measures in the field of sustainable mobility. In some cities this continued already successful public participation (e.g. community planning in Gent). In other cities a new approach was outlined under the ELAN project and a multitude of successful citizen engagement activities were implemented. In Ljubljana, Zagreb, Brno and Porto, thanks to ELAN, the number of successful consultation activities with stakeholders and citizens increased significantly, which contributed to the growth of a participatory culture in these societies.

In the four years of implementing the ELAN measures, project partners have identified and described a number of experiences, which have also been supported by the findings of the evaluations of the citizen engagement process. Successful practices

and drivers that contributed to them as well as negative experiences caused by various obstacles have been gathered and described. All these findings are presented in this publication as **lessons learned**.

These lessons will be applied in the further activities related to citizen engagement in the ELAN cities. They can also be regarded as recommendations for other players in the fields of sustainable mobility and public participation.

The **main aim** of this document is to enable the lessons learned within the ELAN project, whether successes or failures, to be used to apply more efficient participatory processes in future.

This document is intended to be an interesting source of information for different **target groups**: the ELAN cities, the CIVITAS follower cities, the European Commission, and other actors dealing with participation that:

- plan new citizen engagement actions in the area of sustainable mobility;
- endeavour to improve existing practices;
- have an interest in new perspectives and approaches related to citizen engagement.

1.2. Guidelines on how to use this document

Following this first introductory chapter, Chapter 2, entitled **'Citizens at the heart of the CIVITAS ELAN project'**, describes the relevance of stakeholder and citizen engagement in sustainable mobility planning and implementation, and presents the ELAN mission regarding citizen engagement, the strategy (Citizen Engagement Strategy and Action Plans) and the approach for its implementation in the ELAN cities.

Chapter 3 summarises different starting points regarding citizen engagement in the ELAN cities and the common targets that the ELAN cities had within the project. This can be regarded as the first key lesson learned, namely that **participatory culture and political will are the basic preconditions for effective citizen engagement**. Each of the five ELAN cities had different cultures and traditions of public participation, and consequently the approaches and practices differed. The chapter also describes the ELAN contribution to enhancing participatory culture, which has been achieved through the implementation of a set of participatory activities. The examples illustrate how participatory culture and political support can inhibit or promote participatory processes.

Chapter 4 presents the first phase of the participatory process, **planning and preparation of citizen engagement**. It reflects on the objectives of public involvement, and describes key stakeholders and interested citizens and the means of involving them. These are all key elements of an engagement plan. Citizen engagement can be undertaken ad hoc, but good planning significantly facilitates the subsequent implementation of a participatory process. In this chapter, representatives of the ELAN cities present their experience and knowledge about how to motivate participants in the process and how to establish mutual trust.

Chapter 5 deals with the **implementation of citizen engagement in practice**, and describes experiences and insights in implementing information and consultation activities, including the use of new technologies and social networks. In the five ELAN cities, project partners implemented numerous information activities and consultation events, using a variety of different techniques, (some of them rather innovative), which produced a wide range of effects. The chapter summarises the ELAN experiences, also with regard to how the project partners in the ELAN cities were able to use drivers and remove or avoid obstacles.

Chapter 6 describes the **impact of the citizen engagement activities**. The summary also explains how the views and proposals from the public were considered and the influence of these proposals on the decisions made in the planning and implementation of the ELAN Measures.

Chapter 7 presents the experiences and lessons learned in **evaluation of citizen engagement**.

Chapter 8 **summarises lessons learned and key benefits of citizen engagement** within ELAN.

2. Citizens at the heart of the CIVITAS ELAN project

2.1. The relevance of stakeholder and citizen engagement in sustainable mobility planning and implementation

Mobility is one of the most important aspects of people's lives in urban areas, as it greatly affects the accessibility of the work place, services, social and recreational activities, etc. That is why citizens' interest is understandably increasing in being informed and participating in mobility planning processes and the development of concrete mobility measures. At the same time, people are becoming more and more aware that sustainable mobility will not be possible without changing their own mobility patterns, primarily reducing the use of cars.

On the other hand, decision makers are becoming more aware that the problems and challenges of modern society are so complex that they can no longer be solved within narrow professional and political circles. **In democratic societies, people's views and responses whether they find new solutions acceptable are considered side by side with professional decisions.**

This applies to the field of mobility in which solutions for many urgent problems depend more on public acceptance than on what is technically possible. The necessity to open the decision-making process and the development of the solutions to public participation instead of simply "educating" citizens is increasingly evident. This development reflects a wider trend in governance of European cities in which the use of participation and consultation has become a necessary and credible way to legitimise decisions¹.

The relevance of citizen participation in mobility planning and implementation, as well as the related legitimisation difficulties were already addressed by previous CIVITAS projects. In fact also the difficulties encountered in previous CIVITAS projects were an additional reason for the CIVITAS ELAN project to deeply integrate a focus on

citizen engagement in its work plan. In addition to these facts, the main reason for the stronger orientation of the CIVITAS ELAN project towards citizen engagement is also project partners' belief in the benefits such a participatory approach entails. Among the positive effects there are increased publicity and raised awareness about different dimensions of mobility issues and "local knowledge" contributed to the decision-making or planning process by citizens involved, particularly concerning people's needs, their values, their perception of problems and also their proposals for solutions to existing problems.

However, the most important benefits/consequences of an effective citizen engagement are the acceptability of the solutions by citizens and their readiness to change their mobility habits, which is often needed in order to implement the mobility measures in practice. Today, virtually every measure related to mobility has a more or less direct impact on people in urban areas. This especially applies to people's attachment to cars and the fact that sustainable mobility measures restrict the use of cars. Although urban mobility problems are widely acknowledged, they challenge the motivational ability of the entire urban population, meaning that they challenge cognitive as well as value dimensions.

In the implementation of changes in mobility it is therefore vital to structure and select the most acute problems on the one hand, and reach a consensus about the measures that are as desirable as they are unpopular, and the dynamic of their implementation on the other hand. It is clear then that we are dealing with highly complex conditions which require to constantly confronting expert reflection on individual issues with general social value contexts, which largely determine our capacity to act¹.

”²

Citizens' complaints are a good indicator for detecting major mobility issues.

¹ - Kos, Drago – 'Rethinking everyday mobility', in 'Results and lessons learned from the CIVITAS ELAN project', Trček, Franc – Faculty of Social Sciences, 2012, Ljubljana.

² - Quotations are findings and views expressed by CIVITAS ELAN Measure Leaders and Site Dissemination Managers.

2.2. The CIVITAS ELAN mission – Objectives and approach related to citizen engagement

In the CIVITAS ELAN project, the effectiveness of a large number of measures depended on effects of public involvement, therefore CIVITAS ELAN from the very beginning has been oriented towards citizens. It is obvious from the project's mission statement which was agreed at the initial phase between the representatives of the consortium cities: "To mobilise our citizens by developing with their support clean mobility solutions for vital cities, ensuring health and access for all."

The focus on citizen participation was a very important feature of the work plan. Putting citizens first means the essential shift from perceiving them as a "problem", towards their inclusion as the most important and constructive part of the solution. In that sense, **CIVITAS ELAN has accepted the great responsibility of finding solutions which are, at the same time, sustainable for the public transport systems and acceptable from the point of view of the citizens and their habits and personal preferences.**

Since in most ELAN measures citizen engagement was one of the important preconditions for achieving effective results, many activities to inform and consult with the public were carried out in these measures. Special attention was paid to residents and city visitors, giving them an opportunity to have an equal voice as other stakeholder groups (such as local government, business sector, operators and experts in the field of mobility).

The basis for achieving the project's mission was **ELAN's Citizen Engagement Strategy**, which at project level defined the principles for effective citizen engagement, the objectives, and the tools for engaging citizens, the indicators of success and guidance for practical implementation of citizen engagement in ELAN cities. This Strategy was the basis for planning citizen engagement activities at city level – for **Citizen Engagement Plans** and for measure related engagement plans. Harmonized and coordinated planning of citizen engagement at city level was necessary mainly to avoid duplication of engagement activities and to better connect related activities and achieve synergistic effects between them.

With the dissemination actions it was possible to inform for example about challenges and solutions from a number of measures, with an exhibition it was possible to raise awareness among target groups in several measures, and public opinion surveys brought responses and suggestions, which were later used in several related measures. With such systematic and coordinated actions at city level, it was possible to maintain public interest and prevent the so-called stakeholders' fatigue, which occurs if the public is too saturated with invitations to participate and as a result loses interest.

The Citizen Engagement Action Plans at city level were basic documents for further preparation and planning of engagement at measure level. As presented in Chapter 4: *Planning and preparing citizen engagement activities*, Measure Leaders took different approaches to **measure related engagement planning**, from preparing detailed engagement plans to more ad-hoc approaches.

ELAN Measure Leaders were provided with **support at project level** in order to better shape the citizen engagement activities. The most important were several **trainings** at city and at project level (training on the engagement planning, training on participation techniques, training on the use of social media for citizen engagement). Several Measure Leaders benefited from **individual consultations** provided by the Citizen Engagement Coordinator and other public participation experts involved, and from the assistance of Site Dissemination Managers that coordinated the citizen engagement activities at city level.

A special kind of support was the so-called **CIVITAS ELAN Citizen Engagement Shelf** (<http://www.civitas.eu/index.php?id=154>), a database that provided ELAN Measure Leaders with relevant information on international good practices in citizen engagement, theoretical and methodological documents and websites, like guidelines and thematic publications, all with relevant links, and ELAN citizen engagement planning and training documents.

@
**CIVITAS
ELAN Citizen
Engagement
Shelf** (<http://www.civitas.eu/index.php?id=154>)

3. Different starting points, common targets

3.1. CIVITAS ELAN partners' understanding of citizen participation

The CIVITAS ELAN partners' understanding of citizen participation was based on the commonly used definition presented in the ELAN Citizen Engagement Strategy:

"Citizen Engagement is a process that enables local people to be part of addressing problems, and involves them in the planning and delivery of innovative solutions to those problems."

Citizen engagement involves a two-way exchange of opinions, ideas, information and expertise as an input into a decision-making process before a decision is made.

It should not be merely informing citizens about a decision taken or a new service available, but it should be about engaging them in order to understand their priorities and needs in order to help planning and delivering targeted services. Therefore, the overall goal of the ELAN citizen engagement was to provide opportunities for interested citizens to be adequately informed about, and to participate in, the process of planning and implementation of policies, plans, and concrete solutions together with other relevant stakeholder groups.

3.2. Five cities, five different participatory cultures

The five ELAN cities, Ljubljana, Gent, Zagreb, Brno and Porto, represent **five different societies with different traditions and different degrees of participatory culture**. ELAN cities have not only different cultures, but also different legislation, different institutional setups and especially different practices for engaging citizens. Different practices are applied even in different sectors of the same city. This resulted in different achievements in citizen engagement in the ELAN cities, even though they shared a common approach and a common goal of moving towards a more "participatory society". Success depended to a great extent on the various complex historical, cultural, political and legal backgrounds: from Gent, where community planning was well embedded in the city planning and management, to Porto, where public participation had not yet taken root. The cities of Brno, Zagreb and Ljubljana were said to have practised some participation before ELAN, but this involved rare attempts in some sectors rather than well supported participatory

practices. It can hardly be called public participation, as the cities aimed mainly to inform citizens and not to listen to their opinions and suggestions, or to involve them in the decision-making process. In those cities, before ELAN, citizens had never been engaged in consultations on issues related to transport planning.

In all the ELAN cities, **the project definitely contributed to an improved participatory culture**, which to a large extent meant changing social patterns. It can be stated that the ELAN goal *"to make in each ELAN city a significant step forward in citizen participation from the situation we had at the beginning of the project"* was largely achieved.

In the next section the situation before and after ELAN will be described for each city.



Before ELAN there was no communication between the local transport provider and disabled. We created trust and confidence, which is a good base for further cooperation.

Ljubljana

Before ELAN In Ljubljana, good practice in citizen engagement could mostly be found in the fields of development and spatial planning and environmental protection. There was no tradition of citizen participation in issues related to transport. Ljubljana joined the ELAN project in order to improve the practice of informing and consulting with citizens and visitors on the key aspects of urban mobility. Ljubljana's aim in the ELAN project was to introduce numerous awareness-raising and consultation events that would motivate citizens to become involved and would improve the mutual trust needed for effective participation.

The CIVITAS ELAN team in Ljubljana knew that the situation would not change overnight. On the other hand, the local ELAN partners did not imagine that it would be so challenging to build up trust of citizens in the city government or to realise the CIVITAS ELAN measures. It took almost four years to mobilize citizens' minds and eradicate the general belief that their opinions had no impact on decision-making. Despite the various challenges, citizen engagement experienced more than one "break-through", with the establishment of the Cycling Platform of the City of Ljubljana, and plans by the public transport provider to undertake carriage of various disabled groups.

Achievements within ELAN

Everyone in the open group Cycling Platform of the City of Ljubljana was offered the chance to express at any time opinions, suggestions and ideas about how to improve cycling conditions in Ljubljana. Some of the ideas were later taken into account in the new Spatial Master Plan of the City of Ljubljana and in the proposal of the new "Traffic Policy of the City of Ljubljana until 2020". Thanks to the CIVITAS ELAN partners, the latter document also includes a concrete communication and citizen engagement plan, with activities that will certainly enhance the participatory culture in areas related to transport.

Thanks to the public involvement of disability organisations, the public transport provider in Ljubljana replaced a rather timid plan to purchase only one vehicle for transporting people in wheelchairs, with a much more ambitious agenda for social inclusion of different groups with special needs. On the basis of people's input, they took the strategic decision to incorporate as part of their long term business the equal use of all their vehicles by different groups of disabled people, which was a very beneficial decision socially.

At the beginning it was almost too ambitious to expect that Ljubljana would develop optimal participatory practices during the project period, but by the end significant progress in existing engagement practices has been made. Within the four years of ELAN, the city administration has achieved active participation of citizens in many mobility projects, and citizens' opinions are now considered as a driver, not an obstacle.



CIVITAS ELAN created a more "open" city administration in Ljubljana.

Gent

Before ELAN Gent was a city with a high level of participation of citizens that had influenced decisions on several public matters. The citizens of Gent were active and responded well to invitations from the city authorities for public participation in planning matters, including those related to mobility. Public involvement in Gent has a long tradition and is now well rooted in the systems and functioning of urban institutions. In this respect, Gent stands out significantly from the other ELAN partner cities. However, even in Gent the ELAN project was an opportunity to apply further improved approaches for the involvement of citizens in the planning and implementation of mobility measures, especially through the introduction of new consultation techniques and innovative approaches in the organisation of consultation processes.



Continue with citizen engagement and make it even better, this is our strategy.

Although Gent had sound experience with citizen and stakeholder consultation, there was still room for improvement of the citizen engagement process. Some Measure Leaders fine-tuned their techniques and searched for new opportunities, like dialogue cafés around the construction works at the main Gent Sint-Pieters station or the tailor-made information gatherings and specific workshops. Some Measure Leaders explored new media and experimented with different tools. They found that Facebook was an excellent tool to reach certain target groups, such as the age group 20 to 35 years, whose lives are often too busy to spend their evenings in debates or workshops. For large project developments, like the Gent Sint-Pieters station, it was crucial that there was an open communication between all involved partners and stakeholders. It was also important to use a variety of communication tools, especially interactive ones, to enable people to express their opinion.

Achievements within ELAN

Porto

Before ELAN In Porto, citizen engagement was little considered within the public administration, and public participation was far from rooted. Historically, ELAN citizens had not been consulted for two reasons. Firstly, this was an unusual procedure in the city and the country, and secondly citizens were not only not used to expressing their opinions, they even rejected the idea, because they felt that their opinions or suggestions would not be taken into account anyway. The CIVITAS ELAN project was an important opportunity to involve citizens and to overcome the rather traditional indifference towards these processes. Since the start of the ELAN project the attitudes are gradually changing.



In Porto there was a lack of communication and debate, but some cooperation between the city and its citizens was established during CIVITAS ELAN.

Many activities concerning citizen engagement were undertaken in Porto, using different techniques (e.g. online questionnaires, face-to-face surveys, user interviews, and distribution of flyers and brochures) to call attention to the project and engage citizens in shaping sustainable mobility solutions. After some drawbacks, local ELAN partners succeeded in crystallising communication and engagement techniques that proved to be suitable for the citizens of Porto. This resulted in effective gathering of citizens' opinions on important mobility issues.

Looking back on the four years of ELAN in Porto, the picture is mixed. In some measures citizens were engaged successfully, while in other measures citizen engagement made no impact at all. In several cases, citizens were not prepared and not open to participate in discussions and decisions related to sustainable mobility. The city administration learnt that in order to involve citizens it is necessary to meet them personally, otherwise it is difficult to get their feedback. Although many efforts were undertaken within the ELAN project to involve citizens, it seems that many citizens are not yet convinced that they can be part of the decision-making process. Further political support and more successful citizen engagement practices are needed to convince citizens of the benefits of participatory processes.

Achievements within ELAN

Brno

Before ELAN In Brno good practice regarding citizen engagement included consultation processes dealing with planning and construction of infrastructure, as well as spatial and traffic planning. Public involvement in this process was facilitated through public debates, public opinion research, working groups, etc. Citizens were generally not used to making their voices heard or to communicate with transport operators and local authorities. For historical reasons, the participatory culture was at its beginning when ELAN started. The first attempts to involve citizens into the implementation of a large project were made. These participatory events were mainly mandatory under national legislation.

Achievements within ELAN

At the beginning of the ELAN project, public opinion about the transport situation in Brno was rather critical, especially with regard to public transport. Several awareness raising and consultation activities that were implemented within the ELAN project tried to change this negative attitude. CIVITAS ELAN helped to establish dialogue between all concerned parties, which resulted in better solutions (for example, the introduction of new low-floor vehicles on special lines, vehicles that take into account the needs of disabled people). The ELAN approach in citizen engagement was further transferred and used by other departments of the municipality. For Brno, the ELAN project was not only an opportunity to improve the traffic situation, but also to improve the practice of citizen engagement in planning and implementing measures to improve mobility and to make it more sustainable.

” Citizen engagement helped measures to improve performance and citizens are now more aware that they can influence decision-making.

Zagreb

Before ELAN Participatory policies and regulations had been developed in the City of Zagreb, but implementation of participation lagged behind in practice, especially at the local level. Citizens could communicate their ideas to the City Council through local committees and city districts, and also in some more direct ways. With regard to mobility issues, public participation was mostly limited to experts. It was also noted that neither citizens nor civil society and business organisations had sufficient knowledge or capacity to be involved in decision-making processes. There was no recognisable venue open to citizens – a place where they could get information, attend the presentations of plans, offer their views and comments or take part in discussions on mobility issues. Thus the ELAN project was a challenge to motivate citizens to contribute actively in the search for answers to mobility problems and an opportunity to enhance participatory culture in dealing with development of the city and improving the quality of life.

Achievements within ELAN

Through a variety of engagement activities, Zagreb's ELAN team introduced a viable and effective dialogue among mobility planners and citizens. Continuous provision of information to citizens and selected stakeholder groups has resulted in increased interest, awareness and expectations in relation to mobility issues. Interested citizens were trained in communication with the city authorities and encouraged to use these skills in practice.

The mobility dialogues organised for inhabitants in nine local committees may lead to the introduction of similar encounters as a regular practice. The City Coordination, consisting of the Mayor, Assembly President and representatives of the city districts, has adopted a decision to improve the practice of communication with citizens at local committee level. Opportunities were created by the opening of the Zagreb Forum at the end of 2011 for a joint dialogue, where citizens and other stakeholders, and representatives of public administration, business, academic and civil sector, could discuss problems and needs and consider possible solutions, including mobility-related opportunities.

” CIVITAS ELAN built a bridge between the city and its citizens.

The results of CIVITAS ELAN activities in the field of citizen engagement have exceeded by far the issue of mobility. They have provided a strong impetus for governing Zagreb in a more democratic way, taking into account citizens' views and suggestions for the future of the city.

3.3. Participatory culture and political support as preconditions for effective engagement

A developed participatory culture is certainly a key precondition for effective citizen engagement. It exists when **interested citizens have the opportunity to become involved in planning or decision-making processes**, and when they contribute their views. This means that relevant information is provided for the interested public and various consultation processes are organised in which citizens have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the topic and provide their opinions and proposals, potentially having an indirect or direct influence on final decisions.

Participatory culture largely depends on the general **awareness of its importance and the benefits** it brings. This awareness must be present on the side of those who formulate decisions as well as on the side of those involved in the participatory processes as stakeholders, contributing their opinions and suggestions. In addition to awareness, the participatory culture is also dependent on the **participatory skills** of both sides and the **mutual trust** between them.

There are two critical challenges: how to obtain the consent and support of decision-makers for effective citizen engagement, and on the other hand, how to attract citizens and other stakeholders and encourage them to participate actively in discussions and give their opinions. Decision-makers might want to avoid open consultative processes because they do not believe that the public can significantly contribute to solutions or they are concerned that they will not be able to follow envisaged plans due to negative reactions from large parts of the public. On the other hand, citizens are often reluctant

to participate in deliberations because they do not believe that their views will be taken into consideration at all.

In societies where citizen involvement is not yet embedded in the city planning and management, it is quite demanding to implement efficient participatory processes. **Significant efforts are needed to motivate citizens, to build trust between citizens and decision-makers and to build capacity for participation.**

The level of participatory culture varies in general in different societies and cities: in some of the more open societies, participation is a key part of the operation, while in others its importance is not yet fully recognised. A similar diversity can be seen from the experience with the ELAN project where results and effects of inclusive activities did not always reach the expectations in spite of the efforts invested.

However, a participatory culture is built slowly; regulations, and awareness and skills of all participants in the process are needed. It is also necessary to have examples of good practice, in which public participation contributes to the quality and impact of planned policies or solutions, and to greater mutual trust. Within the ELAN project many such cases can be found. Thus it can be said that the ELAN project has contributed significantly to the development of a participatory culture in all the partner cities.

”

People in Gent are willing to become involved.

”

There was no tradition of citizen engagement in Porto.

4. Planning and preparing citizen engagement activities

4.1. Summary of the CIVITAS ELAN approach towards planning and preparing citizen engagement activities

Measure Leaders had different approaches to planning citizen engagement activities for the implementation of the measures. Some prepared a detailed engagement plan already at the beginning of the project, e.g. for the redevelopment of the main station area in Gent (see Case Study 1) or for the preparation of the cycling strategy in Ljubljana (see Case Study 3). In other measures the planning of citizen engagement was more real-time (*ad hoc*), without a precise initial plan. In a few cases the need for consultation with the target group appeared later. These were cases where citizen engagement has not been envisaged originally, but during the execution of the measure activities such a necessity arose. One such example was the development of a demand-responsive transport service in Ljubljana, where the mobility needs of different user groups had not been fully recognised and these were identified by the project partners through consultation with the target group, i.e. disabled people (see Case Study 15). In spite of the usefulness of a citizen engagement plan, not many Measure Leaders prepared this at an early stage. There were many more cases where engagement planning was done later in the implementation, the reason being the lack of Measure Leaders' knowledge and even reservation towards citizen engagement at the very beginning of the project.

In the citizen **engagement plans**, the Measure Leaders defined the objectives of stakeholder and public engagement in the implementation of the measure. They determined the possible role that stakeholders and citizens could play, at which stage of measure implementation the stakeholders and the interested public should be involved, and the ways of informing and consulting them. Key

stakeholders and citizens were identified in detail as well as their interests and potential influences. They also predicted how the results and insights that would derive from the consultation process should be considered in the further Measure activities.

The first step in planning the citizen engagement activities was the **specification of the objectives and issues** for the consultations and communication with citizens. These goals differed from measure to measure and also from stage to stage of the implementation in each measure. Most often, the objectives were:

- to inform people about the project, the challenges of sustainable mobility, and the planned or implemented new measures;
- to gather citizen's views about their needs and problems concerning mobility, and to motivate them to contribute to designing the best solution;
- to raise the acceptability of the Measure to the public and to gain their support for implementation;
- to inform the public about appropriate new solutions and services;
- to raise awareness of how everybody can contribute to improving their own mobility in a sustainable manner, and to encourage the use of more sustainable transport modes (especially public transport), cycling, and walking) and reduce the dependency on cars.

Measure Leaders tackled the **stakeholder identification** on the basis of their knowledge of potential users of the Measure, those for whom the measure could have a positive or negative impact, as well as those who could contribute to better solutions with their knowledge or experience.

” We had problems distinguishing the difference between dissemination and citizen engagement.

The selected **methods and techniques** for citizen engagement depended on the target groups and the purpose of public involvement. Having that in mind, Measures Leaders chose different techniques for informing, consulting and in some cases participating in decision making.

Often CIVITAS ELAN partners had **difficulty in distinguishing between dissemination and citizen engagement**. Dissemination of information is the lowest point of the participation ladder – one-way provision of information to stakeholders is the minimum level of participation. Informing citizens is really only a prerequisite for participation. If, for example, dissemination of information was aimed at promoting the ELAN project, then this would be classical dissemination. However, if stakeholders were informed about substantive aspects of a measure so that they were able to participate in its planning then such dissemination can be regarded as an integral part of the public engagement process. Both activities may be strongly related and should be dealt with in an appropriate context.

In planning and organising citizen engagement activities, **external support** may be useful. However, the majority of ELAN project partners planned and organised citizen engagement activities themselves, without external help, based on the knowledge and skills that they gained from ELAN project training and exchange of experience. Looking back, it can be said that involvement of the public turned out to be much more of a challenge for Measure Leaders than they expected. Several Measure Leaders have stated that it would have been good if, for example, they had had in their team a skilled moderator for citizen engagement at measure level, who would have taken over the whole process. The project partners in Gent did not face such problems because communication and consultation with

the public has long been successfully coordinated by a special section of the city administration, and cooperation with them is very effective.

At the beginning of the project, a number of **Measure Leaders were not in favour of citizen engagement**; they did not see the benefits of such cooperation. In all the ELAN cities except Gent there had been no previous good practice of public participation in mobility; policies and measures were developed and accepted in expert and political circles. It was therefore no surprise that many Measure Leaders were quite reserved towards citizen engagement and found it difficult to plan and implement. However, it was possible to overcome these difficulties through the partners' consultations and training. At the conclusion of the project, the majority of Measure Leaders stated that the engagement of stakeholders and citizens had been beneficial for the success of their measures.

The **support and involvement of politicians** was very helpful or even crucial to make the citizen engagement processes effective and credible. However, it was often difficult to convince them to publically declare their support for citizen involvement and to take a more active role in engagement activities. In some cases, NGOs were engaged for the citizen engagement activities to overcome the lack of political support at the city level. One of the reasons for the successful involvement of citizens and stakeholders in Gent and Brno was that the ELAN partners had the full support from the political level for the implemented citizen engagement activities.



We should have involved a professional or dedicated person just for citizen engagement at measure level.

4.2. Planning and preparing citizen engagement – CASE STUDIES

Case study 1: Participatory re-development of main station area in Gent

Case study 2: Development of a sustainable congestion charging scheme in Ljubljana

Case study 3: Comprehensive cycling strategy for Ljubljana

Case study 4: Freight delivery regulation for Zagreb

Case study 5: Update of the Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP) for Ljubljana

Participatory re-development of main station area in Gent

Of the four main objectives of this Measure, the following two were especially relevant to citizen engagement:

- to raise public awareness and support for the major construction works (redevelopment of the Kortrijksesteenweg, the new Gent St-Pieters train station, new terminals for public transport, new sheds for 10,000 bicycles, underground parking for 2,810 cars, etc.) through public communication channels;
- to develop a physical information centre to promote the main projects (new public transport hub and Kortrijksesteenweg).



The Gent City Council (GCC) decided to engage citizens on two levels, namely:

- at a structural level for which the instrument "soundboard group" was created. In these meetings – held 4 to 6 times a year – the main stakeholders of the train station area (citizens, various pressure groups, schools, church representatives, etc.) would gather. A decision was made to invite every organisation present in the area. This soundboard group is regarded as the most important means of engaging the so-called "organised citizens". Here they receive information first. The soundboard group is – and will be in the future – the information exchange body of the project, chaired by a neutral person to guarantee objectivity (the Mayor also attends the meetings as well as several Aldermen).
- at a more ad hoc level, the GCC chose a wide range of communication techniques: written, televised, and 3D material, formal and informal meetings, information markets etc. For every upcoming change, whether minor or major, the communication team together with the Mayor or Aldermen decides whether it is opportune to engage citizens and how to do this.

In this Measure, the partners implemented nine soundboard group meetings, 35 reduced discomfort meetings, 22 visits to the public, several information markets and guided tours, and one Facebook questionnaire. They answered more than 850 questions from citizens received via post, e-mail, website or personal contact.

The partners gathered feedback from all these events/activities; for the soundboard group this is a report; for dialogue cafés, information markets and hearings, the members of the Information Point recorded the name and address of the person, the questions and suggestions. The questions and suggestions were then discussed with the Gent City Council and the Aldermen. In the past four years the Information Point has received all together more than 3,000 questions, suggestions and complaints related to the re-development. Every question has been answered, and every suggestion considered. Everything from reports to questions and answers has been published on the project website www.projectgentsintpieters.be (in Flemish).

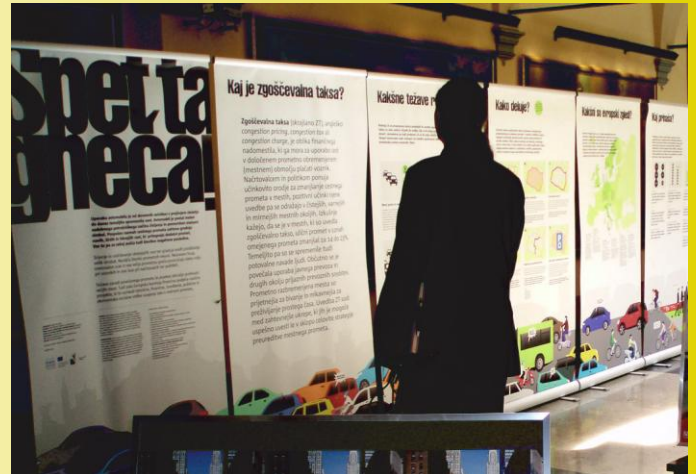
The impact of citizen engagement can be seen in several changes to plans, in the organisation of work, etc. The most visible example of a GCC decision based on a participatory initiative was the closure of a street for all motorised traffic. At a dialogue café in June 2010, the GCC asked the people from the neighbourhood of the station to decide whether a new tunnel under the train tracks should be open to traffic or not. Most participants were afraid that opening a new connection would attract a lot of traffic destined for the city centre (and thus not local traffic), which would mean an extra burden on this residential neighbourhood. The GCC followed the people's arguments and decided to keep excluded motorised traffic.

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Development of a sustainable congestion charging scheme in Ljubljana

In order to implement restrictive measures, such as congestion charges, citizen engagement is vital to gain broader public support and achieve consensus. Also in this Measure, it was important to gather information about specific problems of local communities concerning car parking and their origins.



First, an appropriate communication and engagement strategy was prepared, focused on a new mobility approach with a balanced use of diverse means of travel, in order to reduce the use of cars, and on promotion of a change in public opinion to favour stricter solutions. The purpose of the communication was to explain various aspects of congestion charges (CC), to identify reasons for implementing CC in Ljubljana and any pre-conditions, and to find out what would be the most appropriate CC scheme within the city and at a regional level, in conjunction with other planned and implemented CIVITAS ELAN measures.

Afterward the most important target groups to be involved in the congestion charge discussion were defined: inhabitants of Ljubljana, daily commuters, students, families with pre-school children, families with school children, active male population (with a strong attachment to their cars), and handicapped and disabled persons.

As the first event a meeting in the City Hall was planned, with the aim of presenting the various aspects of congestion charges over the widest possible range: good and bad experience from EU cities, technical solutions available and currently used, legislative aspects, etc. This was to be accompanied by an exhibition "*Spet ta gneča*" (*Oh, no, this congestion again!*). After the City Hall, it was envisaged that the exhibition would be displayed for a week in each of Ljubljana's local communities together with thematic workshops or other events, which would draw more attention than the usual approach. Several preparatory meetings with city administration representatives and Presidents of City Districts were organised in order to prepare the most effective campaign. The final proposal for a CC scheme would be presented

and discussed at two events, along with air quality measurements.

All events were implemented as planned except the mobile exhibition with simultaneous workshops. More than half out of the 17 Presidents of City District Councils did not see a real benefit of the exhibition and did not accept the idea. They stated that local communities were focused primarily on resolving communality problems, and not on promoting programmes of wider importance, especially not restrictive ones. They also warned of a significant risk of poor participation (based on experience with similar activities) and therefore questioned the justification of such events. An alternative was therefore found: the exhibition was held in conjunction with eight already planned events organised by the local communities. However, the events were visited mostly by elderly and children, so in general the participation was very poor. In many cases citizens were not eager to participate in organised events because they did not believe that they would be able to influence the decisions. Citizens were more interested in what was happening in their local neighbourhood, and used every opportunity to raise their voice about various local community problems that had remained unsolved for years, but these issues were usually not related to mobility.

Even though event participants did not make direct proposals, they did provide clear information about their habits, needs and values, so feedback from citizens did significantly influence the preparation of the proposal for a congestion charging scheme.

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Comprehensive cycling strategy for Ljubljana

One of the main objectives of this Measure was to develop and implement a comprehensive cycling strategy and to establish a local cycling partnership/ platform. The platform was to ensure and support participation of various stakeholders at the earliest possible point in defining the approach, key issues and priorities for the strategy, its promotion and its implementation.

A citizen engagement plan was prepared and relevant stakeholders were identified, including state and city administration, expert institutions, various types of NGO (cycling clubs, environmental NGOs working on sustainable mobility, cycling advocacy organisations, etc.) and individual experts and activists in the field of cycling in the city of Ljubljana. All relevant citizen engagement activities were included to generate the necessary input from the specific stakeholder groups for each defined step in the preparation of the Comprehensive Cycling Strategy. Several thematic workshops were planned, covering:

- the vision, strategic objectives and priority measures of the strategy;
- the integration of cycling infrastructure into the new General Spatial Master Plan and the Detail Spatial Master Plan of Ljubljana;
- a corporate identity and the promotion of cycling;
- the design of the cycling infrastructure;
- cycling and tourism.

Thematic and/or district-specific guided site excursions and/or meetings with representatives of district councils to observe the challenges of improving traffic regimes and the infrastructure for cycling were also envisaged.

In parallel, plans were defined for informing citizens and the media – focusing on internet and new social media. The most appropriate communication tools and techniques for moderating a multi-stakeholder dialogue were proposed.

The newly established cyclist platform was a professionally operated and moderated open forum that brought together representatives of more than 25 bicycle clubs, 17 bicycle shops and services, 20 cyclist and environmental NGOs, 17 city districts, different municipal departments, Deputy Mayors,



mobility, urban planning and public health institutes, transport experts, police and city wardens, etc. The task of the platform was to provide suggestions and solutions for improving and promoting cycling in the city. The platform had clear political support from the city authorities. All the planned events were completed, sometimes in a slightly different way than that originally envisaged, but in all cases the outcomes were very useful.

The Comprehensive Cycling Strategy of the City of Ljubljana was prepared. The results of citizen engagement related to new and better cycling infrastructure were used to amend the Detailed Spatial Master Plan, and improve media coverage on this topic and the public image of cycling in the city. The main messages of this strategy were included in the new *"Traffic Policy of the City of Ljubljana until 2020"*.

Professionally moderated stakeholder engagement events created trust and a positive attitude. This enabled stakeholders to contribute their valuable knowledge to improving the city's traffic and mobility policy. Evidence that public participation is not only politically correct, but that it can provide innovative solutions for promoting lifestyles that are less dependent on motorised private transport is provided by the wide spectrum of stakeholders, active attendance at platform meetings, and many creative ideas for improving cycling infrastructure, safety and promotion.

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Freight delivery regulation for Zagreb

The aim of this Measure was to implement new, modified freight delivery regulations. Citizen engagement was crucial to establish awareness among stakeholders about the negative influence of freight traffic on the environment, traffic congestion, noise level and the quality of life in central parts of the city. Stakeholders' opinions on possible freight delivery regulations and their acceptability would also be collected.



Firstly, a survey on the freight traffic situation among relevant stakeholder groups, i.e. citizens, distributors and owners/occupants of business establishments in the chosen area at the beginning and at the end of project was planned. Also several workshops for owners/occupants of business establishments and city authorities were planned in order to discuss and gather opinions on the proposed new set of measures. A direct approach was chosen for collecting data, namely a questionnaire and direct contact with representatives of specific stakeholder groups. For the questionnaire, citizens were chosen randomly – about 600 citizens were involved. Other activities during the CIVITAS ELAN project (public presentations) helped to point out problems regarding freight delivery regulation and the influence of delivery vehicles on the environment and the quality of life in central city zones.

The results from the citizens' engagement activities were used in the assessment process of possible freight delivery regulation measures. Citizens' opinions were taken into consideration during the decision-making process. The final proposal of freight delivery measures was presented to representatives of city authorities and distributors in order to receive feedback about the possible influence of those measures on every day activities.

Lessons learned during these activities show a lack of coordination between stakeholders and a need for better coordination of implementation activities among distributors and business organisations.

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Update of the Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP) for Ljubljana

The main aim of the citizen engagement process for this Measure was to include citizens in the development of the Sustainable Urban Transport Plan (SUTP), to gather their inputs and views on various SUTP topics, to promote sustainable mobility, raise awareness, and spread knowledge and understanding of the importance of this topic to a wider public.

Citizen engagement was planned at the start in the form of meetings and workshops. As it turned out, this was not the best method as debates always ended on different topics than those planned. Later, so-called CIVITAS ELAN Open Academy (CEOA) events were planned to focus on topics that were more specific on the one hand and either innovative or little known among citizens on the other hand. The target audiences included all people whose work was related to mobility and all citizens interested in transport policy in Ljubljana (more specifically, representatives of the Ljubljana city administration, expert institutions, public service providers, civil society organisations, interest groups, the police, traffic wardens, ministries and other national institutions, the commercial sector, students, and the media). All CEOA events were carried out during the preparation of the plan, this means from beginning of the process until the actual writing of the SUTP. However, a special focus was put on setting goals, visions and measures. The first event was held in November 2009 and the last one in March 2011.

The CEOA events can be described as a series of workshops, lectures, discussions, site visits, etc. in collaboration with foreign experts. Altogether six events were organised with eight different foreign experts, and these were the source of citizens' inputs. All events were organised in a similar way. Following identification of interesting topics, appropriate experts were invited who would manage the event. All stakeholders were invited via email and Facebook. While the latter was not a key communication tool, it added value to the whole process. Every event had time reserved for interaction and discussion, where participants could express their opinions and suggestions about



planning and implementing thematic measures in Ljubljana. The events were closely linked to other ELAN measures. Interest and responses varied from one event to another. Some events were attended by only 10 or 20 people. At one event there were more than 100 participants. The method of invitation was always the same, but the number of participants could not be predicted.

The results of the CEOA events can be described as positive and valuable. Participants now seem more interested in topics relating to sustainable mobility than before, and according to their feedback, they are more aware about the CIVITAS ELAN project and sustainable mobility topics. Participation grew from a few attendees to more than 100, which shows that the efforts of the ELAN team were not in vain. An important factor is that participants included those who usually opposed views promoting the use of sustainable transport modes. The foreign experts advised the ELAN team in Ljubljana on the SUTP, and participants provided input about how the traffic situation in Ljubljana could be improved, which led to the inclusion of useful suggestions in the SUTP. Furthermore, the media recognised the importance of the topic, as many journalists had attended and reported on the events.

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4.3. Lessons learned and recommendations related to planning and preparing citizen engagement

During the CIVITAS ELAN project the following lessons were learned with regard to the planning and preparation of citizen engagement activities³.

I A participatory culture and strong political support are preconditions for successful citizen engagement. Demonstration by politicians of their commitment and support for dialogue with citizens creates the necessary trust among citizens that their voices will be heard, and motivates them to participate more.

The experience in Gent showed how political support enhanced the whole participatory process in relationship to the restructuring of the main train station (see Case Study 1). In other CIVITAS ELAN cities, however, where the participatory tradition was weaker, the processes of citizen engagement required significant time and effort to generate political support. Local governments and citizens often did not recognise the importance and benefits of the participatory approach and stakeholders often lacked appropriate knowledge and skill for citizen engagement. This was the case in Zagreb (see Case Study 12) and in Ljubljana (see Case Study 2). The ELAN team in Porto was faced with limited acquiescence from the local government to engage citizens, and in the decision-making process political issues prevailed over citizen's opinions due to the weak participatory culture (see Case Study 14).

II Measure Leaders usually need professional support in planning and implementing citizen engagement, as they are mostly technical staff unused to conducting such participatory processes. They are also usually preoccupied with other activities.

A poorly designed public involvement process, carried out by inexperienced staff, is a waste of time and resources, and does not produce the desired results.

Professional support for public involvement is therefore one of the prerequisites for success.

It proved very useful to have an identified coordinator for citizen engagement at the city level, who could coordinate the information and consultation activities for individual measures or several measures at the same time. In the ELAN project, this role was taken by Site Dissemination Managers.

Most of the Measure Leaders only realised the complexity of the participatory process, and what was required of them, through being involved in the implementation of citizen engagement activities. With the experience gained in CIVITAS ELAN it will be much easier for them to plan similar participatory processes in the future, including the type and timing of any external support that might be needed.

III Detailed knowledge about the characteristics and interests of stakeholders' and citizens' groups helps in identifying ways of motivating them to become engaged.

Several groups were targeted by CIVITAS ELAN, characterised according to age (students, senior citizens, etc.), mobility behaviour (car drivers, commuters, PT users, and cyclists), profession (shopkeepers, bus drivers), or other criteria. It transpired during implementation of the mobility dialogue and marketing measures in Zagreb, Gent, Brno and Ljubljana that car drivers and commuters in particular were not always easy to target. In general it was easier to engage people who were already interested in the measure and convinced of sustainable mobility. Another important group that was difficult to target, but cannot be neglected,

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In Gent every political leader is convinced that discussion with people is necessary.

³ - Lessons learned were gathered from experiences from all ELAN measures dealing with citizen engagement, not only those included as case studies in this publication.

included decision-makers, such as politicians and department heads in the city administration (see Case Study 12).

Experience with ELAN showed that it is worth carrying out an analysis of the initial situation, including a stakeholder analysis, if this is possible. Such an analysis provides an opportunity to gain a broader general view of the whole situation, and gather information about key stakeholders and their potential interests, which is especially important when special groups are being targeted.

IV Citizens are more willing to get involved when they are acquainted with a concrete engagement plan, which includes objectives, issues for discussion, timing of consultations, and explanations of how their proposals will be considered.

The implementation of citizen engagement was more effective when objectives, participation rules and principles were clearly presented to the participants at the very beginning. This was especially valid when influential stakeholders were involved. Principles should be agreed and accepted by all involved in order to avoid one faction outmanoeuvring another. Such an approach might have been helpful in one of Porto's measures, where a single powerful stakeholder prevailed over the opinions of other stakeholders (see Case Study 14).

V An early start followed by continuous communication with citizens and stakeholders is crucial for the success of a consultation process. Citizens also demand to be informed in a direct and honest way.

A key concern for any citizen engagement process is to gain and maintain credibility.

Making unrealistic promises may lead to a negative perception of the process. In addition, citizens and stakeholders should be able to trust that actions are taken and that the city administration has heard their views. To ensure credibility in the ELAN measures, it was important that the participants in engagement activities were informed about the purpose of the discussion, and how their views and proposals would be considered and included in the further implementation of the Measure (see Case Study 3).

VI The engagement processes implemented in the CIVITAS ELAN cities proved that – in spite of some reservations at the beginning – citizens are interested to learn more, to communicate about mobility issues, to consider solutions in their cities, and to learn how to be more efficient in communication with the city authorities, how to articulate their concerns, and with whom to communicate.

Citizens were more eager to state their opinions where the issues concerned their own working and living environment or were of common interest. In general, where mobility solutions directly influenced their lives, they were motivated to participate. However, there were several exceptions where ELAN partners struggled to interest citizens and motivate them to participate (see Case Study 5).

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Everybody likes to be a part of the process, to feel included.

Further general recommendations have been formulated that may help in planning and organising a citizen engagement process.

It is important to note that there are **different levels of engaging citizens**: from information dissemination and information gathering all the way to genuine consultation and involvement in decision making, where the opinions and suggestions of the public have real influence in shaping the final decision. The chosen level depends on the goals and planned effects of citizen engagement.

A precondition for a successful engagement process is a good citizen engagement plan, which appropriately interweaves measure phases with the activities of informing and consulting with stakeholders and the public.

Key elements of an engagement plan are:

- setting goals and defining the issues/challenges about which it is meaningful to consult with stakeholders and the public;
- identifying key stakeholders and interested public to be involved in the process;
- providing appropriate information and effective communication;
- motivating the public and ensuring appropriate support;
- providing consultations at various stages of preparing the plan (starting early and continuing throughout);
- redirecting conflicts into constructive cooperation;
- addressing and stating positions on public opinions and suggestions;
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the extent of integration, and the nature of its contribution to the quality and acceptability of decisions.

A good plan of citizen engagement activity ensures that:

- essential questions and challenges for information or consultation with stakeholders and the public are not overlooked;
- implementation of the measure is closely integrated with the most appropriate

activities to inform and consult with the public, at the most appropriate times, with availability of the necessary human and financial resources;

- the engagement plan can be presented to all interested stakeholders and the public, and if needed supplemented;
- the process of measuring implementation and the role of the public becomes transparent, and therefore more attractive to the public and stakeholders (and avoids unrealistic expectations);
- trust with stakeholders and the public is generated, which can contribute to greater understanding, greater acceptability of the measure and increased support for its implementation;
- planners anticipate possible differences of opinion and even conflicts, which need to be redirected into a constructive dialogue;
- the process can be managed in a way that ensures achievement of the initial objectives.

The engagement plan and its potential benefits for citizens should be presented to decision-makers to gain their support for its implementation.

Although an engagement plan can contribute to greater predictability, it cannot prevent **unexpected events**. A good engagement plan therefore allows a certain amount of flexibility, so that stakeholders and citizens can redirect the discussion to include new challenges, or even return to the starting point. In particular, the participants' perception of existing problems or alternative solutions may lead them to propose discussion of entirely different issues. The plan should be able to accommodate this.

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Citizen engagement was a learning process; today we know what to ask and how deep to go.

5. Implementing citizen engagement activities

5.1. Summary of how CIVITAS ELAN addressed the implementation of citizen engagement activities

Within the numerous ELAN measures, many different activities were undertaken and a variety of different public involvement techniques were used:

- when the purpose was **to inform** the public about the measure (for example new mobility centres in Brno and Porto, reconstruction of the station in Gent, new buses in Ljubljana, LCD displays in Porto, mobility development in Zagreb), Measure Leaders included the following communication techniques:
 - direct letter, information market, open air event, presentation, personal explanation, photo contest, video, media contribution, website, social networks, informal meeting, Questions and Answers, lectures, site visit, and engagement of volunteers.
- when the purpose was **to obtain information and data** from the public, for example carrying out surveys, for monitoring implementation, the techniques were included:
 - questionnaires, interviews, book of impressions, opinion polls, and test groups.
- when Measure Leaders wanted **to consult stakeholders and citizens** on different topics (such as a vision for an urban transport strategy, citizens' needs related to mobility, or problems perceived by citizens in all ELAN cities), or when they wished to discuss alternative solutions to these problems, they included techniques for consultation and deliberation:
 - soundboard group, open council sessions, dialogue platforms and workshops, focus groups, district platform discussion, stakeholder

meeting, dialogue café, or formal meetings.

- there were only few cases where stakeholders and citizens could **directly decide together** about a certain solution. In such cases the technique of citizen jury or consensus workshop was used.

Stakeholders and interested citizens were **involved in various phases of measure implementation**, depending on the nature of the measure and the engagement objectives. Stakeholders were for example involved in the early stage in the process of preparing the Cycling Strategy in Ljubljana, as it was necessary to include citizen opinions of the existing traffic and cycling problems and their needs in a situation analysis. Inclusion was then continued in the phase of creating a vision, defining objectives and the measure, and preparing an action plan (see Case Study 3). In this case participation took place continuously from start to finish of the strategy preparation process. Similarly, there were also continuous information and consultation activities for the reconstruction of the main train station in Gent, which was an extensive and multi-level process (see Case Study 1). There were many other examples of early and continuous engagement (including Case Studies 3, 7, and 9).

In some other measures, participation was required in the initial stage, i.e. in formulating appropriate solutions, like the demand-responsive transport in Porto and Ljubljana (see Case Studies 10 and 15). Thereafter, only information about the new service and its proper use was needed.

Other Measures focused participation in the middle phase, for example in cases



The better the information, the better the debate and the decision.

where public response to the proposed solutions was needed. In general it has proven useful to begin with **open communication and with consultation** (where relevant) **at the earliest possible stage, and maintain it continuously until the end of implementation** (see Case Studies 2, 3, 4, and 7).

During the four-year project implementation period, the **use of IT and social network tools** under ELAN flourished, so these were also used as experimental tools in the implementation of communication and public involvement:

- In **Brno**, the CIVITAS ELAN group used the municipality website and Facebook to disseminate effectively information about the project and related news and events. Often interaction with stakeholders was planned using such media to gather feedback on relevant issues. YouTube and Flickr were used for dissemination of photos and videos.
- In **Gent**, a local CIVITAS ELAN website was set up for efficient communication with stakeholders. Some experiments with Facebook and Twitter were undertaken at measure level, and proved to be good additional tools to reach different target groups. A structural Facebook Fan page was created together with the new cycling website, which has a slowly growing audience.
- In **Ljubljana**, the CIVITAS ELAN team created a local ELAN website with emphasis on “putting citizens first”. The website provides a place for citizens to express views, opinions, comments and suggestions. A Facebook profile was established to inform fans about news, events and campaigns, interesting facts, related links, videos,

invitations, etc. In addition, Ljubljana tried to interact with stakeholders through Twitter. Similarly to Brno, they use YouTube to disseminate videos.

- The CIVITAS ELAN team in **Porto** contacted citizens for surveys by e-mail, as well as face to face. The Mobility Shop and the Car Pooling Service established Facebook profiles. The communication and visibility of the project was enhanced through an improved website.
- The CIVITAS ELAN team in **Zagreb** was quite effective in communication through the local website www.civitaszagreb.hr, and through the fan page on Facebook “*Za bijeli Zagreb grad*” (*For the White City of Zagreb*), where several approaches to attract fans were used (e.g. a photo contest). In addition, journalists and interested stakeholders were continuously supplied with information by means of an electronic bulletin.

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The number of fans on Facebook can be misleading; it creates imaginary popularity as not all fans are active.

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The right dose of appropriate information to the right people at the right time through the right channels – this brings effects.

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At the beginning the information should be broader, later on specific groups should be addressed with focused topics.

5.2. Implementing citizen engagement activities – CASE STUDIES

Case study 6: Mobility management for schools in Gent

Case study 7: Mobility management for companies in Gent (event Mobi-weeks at Technologiepark site)

Case study 8: Comprehensive mobility dialogue and marketing in Zagreb

Case study 9: Safety and security for seniors in Zagreb

Case study 10: Demand responsive transport service in Porto

Case study 11: Institutional platform for city freight management in Gent

Case study 12: Informing citizens

Mobility management for schools in Gent

The objective of this Measure was to implement school travel plans for secondary schools. Public involvement was essential in the mobility management for schools because the behaviour of young people can only be influenced if they are directly involved from the beginning of the project.

The aim of the involvement of the students was:

- to make them more aware of mobility problems in their neighbourhood;
- to convince them that they could find solutions themselves;
- to empower them to use their talents to work out solutions;
- to give them a feeling of responsibility for their behaviour and achievements.

A key step in the planning and preparation phase was the preparation of a Measure description with clear expectations and a rigid time table of activities. First, the project was presented to an interested teacher/school and afterwards to the students. The teacher was asked to consult the students about obstacles on their way from home to school and select the most confronting obstacles that could be influenced by the students themselves. If necessary, Measure team facilitated this consultation by working on specific issues of interest. The next step was a brainstorming session with the students about how to tackle the chosen obstacles.

All 26 secondary schools of the CIVITAS corridor were asked to participate in the CIVITAS School Measure by mail. This proved not to be an efficient means of communication as it was too informal and without obligation. Contacting the teacher or director personally gave far better results, although it was more time consuming.

It was very important to adapt the method of information dissemination and consultation to the level and interest of the students (language problems, other interests in technical schools, etc.) and to motivate them to achieve something



themselves, otherwise it was very difficult to keep them enthusiastic. It was also important to encourage teachers by monitoring the progress of the project and to keep the timeline on track.

In the first two school years, a mobility consultancy coached the participating schools. In the last school year, Gent's Mobility Company coached the nine participating secondary schools. At the beginning, the teachers and students were reserved, but following presentation of the expectations, time planning and examples from other schools they were more at ease. The formula for success was to find an item within the capabilities and interests of the students.

Four schools used social networks in their communication, either to encourage other students to participate in this ELAN Measure or to show results. Two schools put a film on their own website and on YouTube, and two other schools used their own website and Facebook to implement their activity. One school used its digital platform to prepare a very detailed modal split analysis.

The Measure on mobility management for schools would not have been possible without the engagement of students and teachers. The evaluation shows that the activities had an impact on the awareness of the students and other stakeholders about sustainable mobility.

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Mobility management for companies in Gent (event Mobi-weeks at *Technologiepark* site)

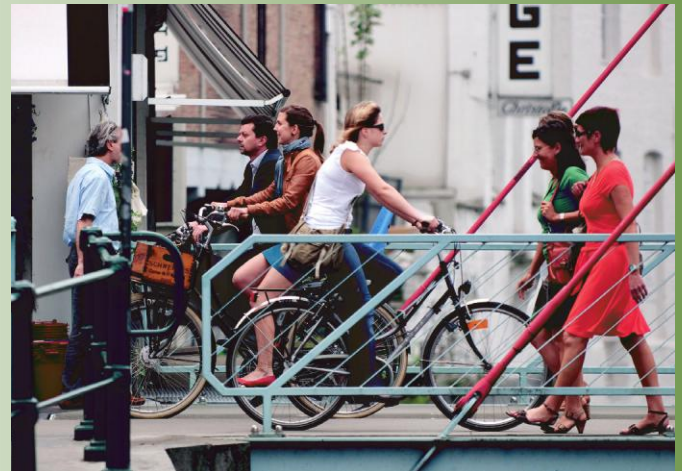
The main goal of this Measure was to coordinate companies' mobility and stimulate sustainable traffic modes between companies with company mobility plans. The aim was to increase public awareness of sustainable mobility, improve citizens' awareness of their own contribution to a sustainable and liveable city, and motivate citizens and stakeholders to become involved.

It was important to include major stakeholders in defining problems, working out solutions and being involved in measure implementation. The major stakeholders were the employers and employees of the companies located at the *Technologiepark* site.

The strategy was very clear from the beginning: the Mobility Company would launch the principle of mobility management and set up an event in this business area. Gradually, the involved companies should take over and organise everything themselves. The City of Gent decided to support the activities financially up to one year after the end of the ELAN project.

First step was to organise an information session and make contact with companies at the *Technologiepark* site. A "mobility workgroup", consisting of mobility managers from several companies, was established to discuss the evolution of mobility on the *Technologiepark* site. The companies were responsible for providing information to their employees, and each company was provided with posters and flyers. A website with mobility-related information was set up especially for employees in the *Technologiepark*.

Gent's Mobility Company helped to set up the first occurrence of the so-called "Mobi-week", a one-week campaign in September, promoting all kinds of measures that were proposed in the mobility plan for the site (September 2009). The second occurrence of the Mobi-week (September 2010) was organised in cooperation with a voluntary group of employees, called the "Mobi-team". Employees of the companies were all invited to join this Mobi-team. The third occurrence of the Mobi-week was to a large extent



organised by the Mobi-team itself, with the support of the Measure Leader (September 2011). Mobi-week participants that tried different sustainable transport modes were rewarded during the Mobi-weeks with incentives, such as a tasty breakfast, a foot massage, a concert, etc. Participants were asked to give feedback on the Mobi-week, which was taken into account in the organisation of the Mobi-week the following year.

A survey (by questionnaire) was conducted to analyse the mobility behaviour of employees from the *Technologiepark* site and to identify barriers against the use of sustainable transport. Cooperation with the "Mobi-team" and the "mobility workgroup", which were kept updated on the process, was very good.

Over the three Mobi-weeks, an average of 9.1% of the total number of employees from the *Technologiepark* registered per Mobi-week. However, there were also many unregistered employees who did participate for a while. The most remarkable shift in the mode of transport used was the decrease of the share of cars by more than 5.5%.

Political support was always present, and the organisation of future Mobi-weeks after the end of the ELAN project will also be supported by the City of Gent.

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Comprehensive mobility dialogue and marketing in Zagreb

Different approaches and methods were considered when planning and preparing the citizen engagement process, depending on the nature and purpose of the activity. The main goals were to increase citizens' interest and understanding of mobility issues and encourage them to contribute actively to improving local mobility conditions, to teach citizens how to communicate with the authorities, and to convince authorities, other mobility actors, planners and project partners that involving citizens in decision making repays the effort.

When planning various events, the utmost importance was given to broadly disseminated announcements and invitations, with key issues to be addressed including: how to convene a gathering on mobility, how to reach citizens who are not accustomed to attending similar events, and how to make those events attractive for citizens.

An important starting point was the establishment of the ELAN Info Point, a refurbished old tram, situated in front of the Technical Museum in the middle of the demonstration corridor. The information-point was the source of broad and continuous dissemination of information via e-mails, electronic newsletters and the media, as a basis for raising citizens' interest and motivating involvement in the search for mobility solutions. Channels of communication including a website and Facebook were established and continuously upgraded in line with the expectations of the stakeholders target groups.

A special challenge was the fact that there was no previous practice of meetings related to mobility issues with "ordinary" citizens at the local committee level. Preparatory meetings were held with representatives of city districts and local committees to explain the purpose and to engage them in the activities. Cooperation was established with the Volunteers' Centre Zagreb and local institutions (associations, cultural centre, schools, kindergartens, etc.) to announce events and invite citizens from their neighbourhood. The local radio station, *Sljeme*, announced events. The Centre for Philosophy and Media and the CSO, *Sunce*, contributed in making the invitations and the events themselves more attractive. To raise interest for mobility issues among various groups of citizens, the ELAN team organised campaigns, photo contests, exhibitions, students' visit to Brno, etc.



Care was taken to upgrade regularly skills and capabilities for dialogue, communication and interaction at different levels – among partners, among different mobility actors and groups, between stakeholders' groups and relevant City services. Almost 150 citizens took part in training on efficient communication with the City authorities and service providers.

The project offered many opportunities for developing, upgrading and/or practising skills in public dialogue. The continuously growing number of visitors to the website and Facebook site shows the increasing interest of the public in mobility issues and the project themes. Citizens' prompt response to questionnaires and their views, comments and proposals written in the Comment Book at the Info Point clearly confirm their interest for mobility issues and their readiness to offer opinions and suggestions. The City authorities and services were responsible for making the best use of the valuable contributions. Information on local mobility encounters and accompanying video extracts were presented to the Coordination of the Mayor, the Assembly President and City District presidents, which took a decision to take the upgrading of local self-government structure into consideration.

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Safety and security for seniors in Zagreb

The Measure was designed to improve the safety and security of senior citizens using public transport and to raise its reliability. This was to be achieved through dedicated communication between senior citizens and the public transport operator, and by an increased understanding of senior citizens' expectations and needs among public transport staff. Active involvement of senior citizens was therefore a key factor in the achievement of good results from the Measure.

Through involvement of this specific stakeholder group the ELAN team aimed to:

- inform them about the Measure and its objectives, and establish direct communication;
- show them that they are seen as part of the solution, not as a problem;
- gather first-hand their suggestions for improvements.

As this was the first activity of this kind, the process of involvement of senior citizens was carefully planned during an internal workshop. Based on a stakeholder analysis, the Office for Social Welfare of the City of Zagreb was invited to participate, so that it could organise workshops in all the homes for the elderly owned by the City of Zagreb. A detailed action plan and programme of workshops was prepared by the NGO, ODRAZ (Sustainable Community Development). An active role was planned for ZET, Zagreb's public transport operator.

Inspired by activities of the PT provider in Salzburg under the AENEAS project (*'Attaining energy-efficient Mobility in an Ageing Society'*), several sets of engagement activities were organised, including 17 workshops in different homes for the elderly and other relevant places, with the participation of almost 500 elderly persons. A discussion on city mobility followed presentation of a brochure with practical advice for senior citizens on how to use PT safely and a promotional film "*Alojz and Vlatka*". ZET drivers gave recommendations for safety in public transport vehicles. The senior citizens were very interested in participation, and provided comments and proposals for mobility improvements. Over a hundred different suggestions were collected.



The elderly appreciated the activities organised to raise awareness of PT drivers of the senior citizens' needs (160 bus and tram drivers attended four workshops on the safety of elderly in public transport).

The implementation of the Measure proved that the plan had been good, as senior citizens were satisfied with the opportunity to learn and to be heard. The public transport operator is now aware of the importance of addressing specific stakeholder groups, and is motivated to start similar activities for young people. There were also concrete results, for example the submission to the City's Traffic Department of a proposal for a more user-friendly crossroad, based on a discussion during a workshop with the assistance of the traffic police. The brochure and promotional film that were made, and the proven format of the workshop will allow the continuation of the activities beyond the lifetime of the project.

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Demand responsive transport service in Porto

A demand-responsive transport service (DRT) was a new concept of travelling for citizens of Porto. In order to show them the advantages of such a service it was necessary to involve them in the planning and implementation of the Measure.

Based on a survey among Asprela students, it was possible to define the route between the city centre and the Asprela quarter and to schedule transport operation for Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights between 0:30 and 5:30. During these times students normally go out in the city centre, but the metro did not run. Having defined the operating times, a dissemination campaign to raise awareness of the service among potential users was organised. Flyers and street posters were distributed featuring the name of the service: "GATO" (cat). On launch day a press conference was held in the city centre, to which several universities, students associations, stakeholders and CIVITAS ELAN partners were invited. Following the press conference people were invited to try the "GATO" bus.

To increase citizens' acceptance of the service, STCP, Porto's public bus operator, made an agreement with a sponsor and some local bars to provide additional benefits to DRT users. The sponsor provided free tickets during the first month and the bars provided for example free tickets for drinks and for cultural events. Through this partnership, the number of users increased and information about DRT spread through their publicity materials. A website was launched where users could find information about the service.

When the service ended after a demonstration period of 19 weeks, citizens were invited to express their opinion about the service, whether they were satisfied, and whether the service met their needs and expectations.



The citizens' engagement process was very helpful and contributed greatly to the success of the Measure. It enabled the transport operator to choose the best route and operating times of the DRT service and to make it a valuable option for students travelling between the city centre and the Asprela quarter. The engagement process enabled potential users to become familiar with the DRT service.

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Institutional platform for city freight management in Gent

The focus of this Measure was to engage stakeholders in order to facilitate implementation of a policy concerning city distribution in the city of Gent. After a bad experience with a top-down approach, when the city tried to launch the implementation of a city distribution centre that was welcomed with a big 'no' from the shopkeepers in Gent, the city decided to try a bottom-up approach within CIVITAS ELAN.



The aim was:

- to raise awareness amongst stakeholders (store owners, public transport, experts, interest groups, etc.) about the need for organising more efficient distribution in the city;
- to discuss jointly the needs and problems and to consider solutions through creating a city distribution platform;
- to gather data and describe 'the problem';
- to decide together about future actions plans.

The citizen engagement process consisted of three major 'pillars':

- Three workshops with stakeholders asking three simple questions: What problems do you experience regarding deliveries? What solutions do you suggest? How would you implement these solutions in one particular case "Vlaanderenstraat"?
- A survey among 265 shopkeepers asking them how they organise their deliveries. By analysing this data and combining this with the input from the workshops, enough knowledge was gathered to decide which actions to take for achieving a more efficient city distribution;
- Creation of a platform for city distribution, where the city of Gent was in constant dialogue with shopkeepers, interest groups and transporters. The implementation of a new distribution policy was started through discussion of several themes and the launch of a concrete pilot project in the field.

All the measures were implemented bottom-up instead of top-down, in dialogue with the members of the

platform of city distribution and with the shopkeepers in the area where pilot projects are in progress. Pilot projects include silent deliveries from particular supermarkets, a new system of loading and unloading spots in *Vlaanderenstraat*, street management regarding deliveries, and a new policy for control of the pedestrian area. Concretely, the input of the citizen has been used to design the services which the people now know.

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Informing citizens

In CIVITAS ELAN special attention was paid to making mobility information accessible to citizens. For this reason, Info Points, mobility shops or mobility centres were established in Zagreb, Brno and Porto. In all three cities they played an important role as a basis for many of the citizen engagement activities. At these venues a lot of information was provided to citizens about the project and they were regarded as a CIVITAS ELAN “citizen office” in each of the three cities.

The CIVITAS ELAN Info Point in Zagreb

In November 2009 a stationary tram vehicle positioned in the demonstration corridor of *Savska cesta* was refurbished and equipped to become the Info Point for the project. Besides printed information, visitors can watch 15 slide presentations about particular project activities and three short promotion films. They can write down their messages, suggestions and/or ask questions on mobility issues.

In the past three years, almost 22,000 people visited the Info Point, including citizens, tourists, different stakeholder groups and/ or organised visits of scholars, students, and representatives from other towns. The Info Point hosted 23 expert presentations with discussions on specific project-related themes linked together in a series called “*Wednesdays in the Tram*”. The total number of participants was 350, of which most listened rather than posing questions. Nevertheless, participants gave valuable feedback on the presented issues, which was noted, shared and used among partners. The City office in charge of transport, the most important mobility player in Zagreb, was rather reluctant to participate in these events. Unexpectedly, the tram, as a place for focused discussions on mobility issues, became highly attractive for journalists.

There is no doubt that the Info Point activity resulted in more informed citizens and raised public interest in the CIVITAS ELAN project and on mobility issues



in Zagreb. However, the opportunity to discuss project ideas and proposals on specific issues was used to a modest extent only, as citizens are still not accustomed to take an active role in mobility discussions. The encouragement given by CIVITAS ELAN should be further practised and expanded.

Integrated Mobility Centre in Brno

The involvement of citizens in the establishment of an Integrated Mobility Centre (IMC) ensured that the services offered matched users’ needs and demands, as citizens were mainly consulted on the scope of the services to be provided. To gather citizens’ views on the future service of IMC, a short questionnaire was prepared and distributed through the local project website, and the project’s Facebook profile was used to gather the filled in questionnaires and advertise a discussion, which took place in December 2011. The use of the website and social networks was not successful (only one filled in questionnaire was received). Personal contact during the discussion was more useful. The remarks and suggestions received were considered and if relevant incorporated to ensure that the IMC’s services were tailor-made to fit citizens’ needs. In March 2012, the Integrated Mobility Centre welcomed its 4,000th visitor.

The Integrated Mobility Centre is one of the most visible results of the CIVITAS ELAN project in Brno,

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and it was therefore used as the “ELAN centre” during various events (e.g. European Mobility Week 2011, ELAN 2012 Summer Competition). The IMC provides transport information for the city and the South Moravian Region (in close cooperation with Brno’s Public Transport Company and the coordinator of the Integrated Transport System of South Moravia, KORDIS JMK, information leaflets were prepared). These companies also provided data to the employees of the IMC. In addition, cooperation with car-sharing organisations to promote their activities was established. All these services are available for citizens and visitors of the city of Brno.

The Mobility Shop in Porto

Citizens were the main concern from the start of establishing a new Mobility Shop. This was because there already was a Mobility Shop in Porto city centre, but it shared premises with the Tourist Office, which made it not immediately obvious for citizens, and mostly used by tourists.

The first key decision was the location. The Asprela quarter is one of the busiest areas in the city generating a daily movement of 60,000 people. The ELAN team looked for a site close to where the majority of these people passed and also close to public transport stops. They chose an area in front of the Hospital de São João as a location with good



visibility for citizens and where the shop would be most useful.

The new Mobility Shop opened in the autumn of 2010 and became the citizen’s visible local headquarters of the CIVITAS ELAN project, with marketing campaigns and information about the project and all its measures. At the same time, information about the Mobility Shop and the project was disseminated in various ways (launch of new website, flyers, brochures, gadgets, rollups, etc.). To improve the visibility of the Mobility Shop the exterior design was changed in May 2011. The new look made it easier for citizens to recognise the kind of services offered, and proved to be very successful in increasing the number of visitors significantly.

In the last two years, two surveys of user satisfaction with the overall service of the Mobility Shop were carried out. They conclude that through the Mobility Shop citizens are more acquainted with CIVITAS ELAN and the sustainable mobility objectives.

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5.3. Lessons learned and recommendations related to the implementation of citizen engagement

During implementation of citizen engagement activities the following lessons were learned in CIVITAS ELAN cities:

VII Experience has shown that citizen participation is most effective when stakeholders and citizens are asked to contribute in identifying needs and problems in discussions and deliberations on various possible solutions, and when they can provide local information and knowledge.

In a variety of cases of planning measures, ELAN Measure Leaders have succeeded in integrating the feedback gained about citizens' needs, their values, and local information and knowledge. One of the most illustrative examples was the preparation of the Cycling Strategy in Ljubljana, where the interested citizens and stakeholders contributed to all the listed aspects (see Case Study 3). However, there were also several other good examples, namely in Gent, planning the cycling street or discussing freight delivery within the distribution platform (see Case Study 11); in Zagreb, planning the services for elderly (see Case Study 9); in Brno, planning bus transport for disabled people with special needs (see Case Study 13); and in Porto, planning a demand-responsive services for young people (see Case Study 10). In a number of cases, the Measure Leaders consulted with stakeholders and citizens on possible mobility solutions, and enabled them to influence final decisions.

VIII Consultation should be based on good provision of information to all involved actors. This includes content information related to the Measure, and information about opportunities for engagement.

In ELAN cities, citizens appreciated receiving relevant information on mobility issues. Often good dissemination of information encouraged citizens to become involved in public discussions. Provision of information to media as multipliers increased the outreach (see Case Studies 8 and 12).

IX Innovative techniques proved to be effective, and were also appreciated by stakeholders. However, the challenge was to prepare them well in every detail in order to enable people to grasp the message quickly and avoid failures.

Specific techniques like surveys proved to be more efficient when using the combination of face-to-face and online methods. Experience in Porto and Brno showed that citizens were more willing to respond to a person who could provide additional information than to an online survey (see Case Studies 14 and 7).

X Citizens and stakeholders are more prepared to respond and become involved if they are approached professionally.

A professional approach includes a degree of sophistication, sympathetic address, clear explanations, and a recognisable uniform or project logo. Appropriate incentives (like useful gadgets or similar small awards) can help significantly to encourage citizens to share their opinions. On the other hand, the citizens' feeling that sharing their opinion could change something in the city can be seen as an incentive itself.

” Our plan was not the best one; more emphasis should be put on stakeholder identification and techniques that would enable more feedback.

In cases where a new Measure was restrictive and brought “limitations” to citizens’ lives, it was necessary to provide citizens with alternative solutions. This approach helped Measure Leaders in ELAN cities to motivate citizens.

XI Sometimes it was difficult to reach a certain target group, especially “die-hard” car drivers and citizens with a negative attitude towards sustainable mobility measures.

With difficult target groups, it was helpful to catch people at important moments in their lives, e.g. birth, marriage, divorce, new job or moving house, as they were then more open for change. It proved useful to use a combination of push-pull actions and link citizen engagement activities and campaigns to change in traffic infrastructure or other visible changes in the city.

XII Experiments with social media have shown that using this tool can be very fruitful. However, experience with CIVITAS ELAN has shown that citizen involvement is more efficient meeting person to person. Today both are necessary – use of social media and direct communication with people in the field.

Based on their experience, ELAN Site Dissemination Managers have pointed out that internet content (pictures, videos, interesting facts, and links) must be easily sharable, and more creative than regular news. To transmit a message using social

media, it is crucial to be creative and to react quickly. The most interesting online debates usually arose when there was a collision of opinions. In thematic groups or networks there were often people with similar opinions, and although the discussions were active, they were usually meaningless, as there was nothing to argue about. In general, citizens were not eager to participate in CIVITAS ELAN online debates, and they had to be especially motivated or provoked. Success was more pronounced when the target group was narrow and specific (e.g. students) (see Case Study 12). The number of fans, e. g. on Facebook, can be misleading, as a large number of fans creates an image of popularity whereas only a few fans may be active. If too much new information is launched (more than one post/day), people may feel that their personal digital space is somehow invaded. Too much information often gets lost in the general flood of information.



With the experience gained in ELAN future citizen engagement activities can be planned and implemented better.



If you are not on the internet, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr ... you don't exist!

Further general recommendations have been formulated that may help in implementing citizen engagement activities:

Establishing trust is crucial for effective public participation. This can be achieved by presenting to all the participants the purpose and plan of engagement, as well as the ways in which their opinions and suggestions will be considered and included in the future process of measure design and implementation. In addition, the basic participation principles like openness, transparency, and serious intent to consider citizens' suggestions should be respected.

It is important to ensure representativeness, and involve key stakeholder groups in the consultations: representatives of the public administration, businesses, experts, and interested public. In this way different views are included in the discussion, which should increase knowledge and mutual understanding. However, this also increases the possibility of conflict, which must be properly managed and redirected into constructive solutions. Special support should be provided to marginalized groups, including specific approaches for specific groups.

Always strive for good participation of invited stakeholders and citizens. Sometimes, despite well-prepared events and a broad range of invitations, the effort does not bear the expected fruits. A small-scale turnout can be disappointing for the organisers. The reasons for such a lack of interest are manifold. Firstly, citizens in many EU societies are not used to being asked and express their opinions, and secondly they do not believe that participating in such events has any effect or that their proposals will have any influence. In societies with a low level of participatory culture the reasons for such an attitude might be bad previous experience, when there was no participation at all or it was even abused. In such cases it will take time and a lot of repeated attempts to establish greater mutual trust. A third reason can be "the wrong topic" of consultation. If the subject of the consultation is not in the citizens' focus, i.e. if it is not very important in their

daily lives, then they will not waste their valuable time on it. Another possible reason can be poor communication, when the invitations do not reach enough of the addressees or the invitation itself lacks motivation.

For effective dissemination, an appropriate content for the target audience should be used and delivered through proper channels to ensure that invitations will definitely reach the target audiences and motivate them to participate. Among the instruments to improve participation are interesting and fun events and little rewards for participants for their time and shared ideas.

To find out other possible reasons for lack of interest, the best way is simply to ask citizens (through a survey), on which subjects, in what way and under which conditions they would wish to participate in making decisions about public affairs. The collected proposals can be considered when preparing a plan for a participatory process.

Unexpected events that may emerge during the participatory process require flexibility and rapid changes. Unexpected events are mostly due to an unclear engagement plan, which has led to unrealistic expectations by participants. If it is not stated clearly enough what will be discussed, and what sort of impact citizens' proposals will have, then at some point a mismatch between expectations can result in the need to change "direction". This problem can sometimes be solved by including new (unexpected) insights and suggestions into the discussion, which must be accordingly modified. However, unrealistic expectations can also trigger a conflict that must be resolved in a way acceptable to participants. Such cases obviously require extra effort and time, so it is especially important that the initial engagement plan determines all the key factors, but at the same time remains flexible for potential changes.

”

Trust is established slowly, and it's fragile.

6. Results and impacts of citizen engagement

6.1. Lessons learned regarding the impact of citizen engagement activities

XIII Consultation with stakeholders and the public under the CIVITAS ELAN Measures has resulted in a set of valuable information, data, opinions and suggestions.

In most of cases the gathered feedback was carefully studied by the measure experts and included in the further processes of planning and measure implementation. Stakeholder and public opinion was thus added to the technical background and had an indirect impact on final decisions and solutions. Measure Leaders in most cases informed the participating stakeholders and the public about the final results and implications of their participation.

Most engagement activities were dedicated **to informing citizens** about measures. Through the organised activities, Measure Leaders informed the public about mobility issues, new solutions and services and their appropriate use. This kind of awareness was among the prerequisites for the success of a new measure. Therefore, the most common impact of public involvement was raised awareness, specifically on problems of urban transport, ways to solve them, and on the specific solutions deriving from the measure. Examples include new public transport services (see Case Studies 7, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 17), mobility centres (see Case Studies 12 and 17), and a new transport policy (see Case Study 5). A special case of raising public awareness was provided by the individualised mobility marketing campaigns in Ljubljana, Brno and Zagreb, which focused on the individual approach in changing citizens travelling habits (choice of travel mode).

In many cases, citizen engagement

resulted in **a set of data and information concerning citizen's daily travelling habits and needs** as well as their **perception of the problems and barriers** in the field of mobility. An example is the public opinion survey on changing the traffic regime in the Ljubljana region. Many citizens proposed practical solutions or commented on proposals from others.

XIV Mobility policies, plans and measures, formed in a participatory manner and including people's needs, values and opinions, are of higher quality and have greater legitimacy. These are two of the most important effects of citizen engagement.

Solutions adopted by citizens as useful and necessary, gain more legitimacy, support and cooperation in implementation. Among the important effects of the citizen engagement activities was greater **acceptance** of individual measures (i.e. major infrastructural intervention in Gent (see Case Study 1), or the new cycling policy in Ljubljana (see Case Study 3 and many others).

XV In many CIVITAS ELAN measures, citizens had an opportunity to test new technical solutions and services and state their opinions on their usefulness and effectiveness.

Based on this feedback, Measure Leaders gained important information for further development and additional improvement, or confirmed the success of their efforts (see for example Case Studies 13, 15, 16, and 17).

”

It's a bad signal for citizens if you ask for their opinion and then you don't do anything with it.

”

The impact of citizen participation should be made visible.

XVI The effects of the citizen engagement in the CIVITAS ELAN project extended across a wide social field, as in all the ELAN cities the level of participatory culture improved considerably.

Many examples of good practice and mainly positive effects have contributed to a stronger belief in the usefulness of citizen engagement by the involved technicians and other specialists, as well as individuals. In many cases, mutual trust between various stakeholders, the public administration and experts significantly increased. One of the best examples for this can be found in Zagreb, where many participants in the consultation events that took place during the CIVITAS ELAN project expressed their great appreciation of the participatory approach. They asked the ELAN partners to send a strong recommendation to the city authorities to continue and even improve the participation of citizens, not only with regard to mobility but in all public matters.

XVII The CIVITAS ELAN project contributed significantly to raising awareness about the importance of citizen engagement.

In Ljubljana, politicians who had been rather reserved towards citizen participation in the past, started to realise that they can no longer ignore the opinion of stakeholders and citizens. In Zagreb, engaging the elderly was not a common practice but the situation changed completely due to ELAN. In Brno, the Director of the City Transport Department became supportive of direct contact with

the target groups of measures. In Porto, before ELAN politicians had not been involved in citizen engagement activities. But due to ELAN the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes is most likely to increase.

XVIII In a very few cases, the involvement of stakeholders caused an obstruction.

This was more or less due to a lack of knowledge about the stakeholders, inadequate communication, and unclear objectives and rules of participation, i.e. poor planning (see Case Study 14). The lessons learned from these cases provide valuable experience for appropriate planning in the future, especially the necessity of setting and communicating clear participatory principles and rules with all involved actors at the beginning of a participatory process. Agreement at the beginning, and respect by participants during the participatory process, leads to successful cooperation and good results.



Citizen engagement in ELAN had an impact in Ljubljana. Awareness of decision makers was raised and citizens expect more now.



In Porto public transport operators now cooperate with each other, which they never did before. There is a hope that this could lead towards more cooperation in the public transport sector.

Further general recommendations have been formulated that may be of help:

Citizen engagement can have a negative instead of a positive effect.

It can happen that a solution that was developed in a participatory manner becomes at a later stage radically changed because of the sudden intervention of an influential stakeholder. This is a violation of the participatory process, and can be avoided with clear participation rules in the process, including transparency of discussions, equality of participants and rules about decision making. In addition, a careful stakeholder analysis at the start and taking into account the power of each stakeholder to influence decisions can help. Any solution proposed by any influential stakeholder should be discussed with all participating stakeholders in the same way as other proposals.

Citizens' opinion is an additional contribution to professionals' positions.

Sometimes it is argued that a certain solution is a poor solution because decision makers "give in" to public opinion. If this occurs it means that the experts and technicians have abandoned their duty of professional judgment. It should be noted that citizens' input (opinions and suggestions) is neither a substitute nor the only criterion, but only an additional contribution to professional considerations and technical baselines. In such a way, the public influences decisions indirectly. In some cases, one specific group may be invited to decide directly and jointly in making the final decision. However, even in these cases, the precedence of the professional judgement of experts and technicians is a precondition and all involved are responsible for the final decision.

Public interest should be put before individual interests.

In the public participation process various stakeholders contribute with different legitimate interests. However, in planning policies or measures with a strong public character the interests of the wider public must override individual interests. For example, there may be a solution that significantly slows down public transport vehicles that is in the interest of local car drivers, but it is clear that professional arguments in favour of a solution that is in the interest of the broader public should prevail over the interests of a narrow group. This principle must be clearly stated at the beginning of a participatory process and communicated with all stakeholders, as it dictates and directs the behaviour of participants in the discussions. Good communication allows minority stakeholders to understand and accept decisions taken, even if they do not agree.



Citizen engagement had a positive impact on some ELAN partners in Zagreb. The public transport provider is much more aware of the needs of older passengers now, and works actively with this target group.

6.2. Impacts and results of citizen engagement – CASE STUDIES

Case study 13: Improving bus service for the disabled in Brno

Case study 14: Integrated accessibility planning in Porto's Asprela quarter

Case study 15: Demand responsive service in Ljubljana

Case study 16: Innovative car sharing in Gent

Case study 17: Mobile mobility information in Porto

Improving bus service for the disabled in Brno

The prerequisite for success was the acceptance of the Measure by the final users, namely the disabled, especially those using wheelchairs, although the newly established bus service can also be used by any other passenger. The best way to achieve this was to involve this citizen group in the process of implementation from the start.

The main group of final users was therefore directly involved in the process of preparing the technical specifications for the tender for the new minibuses – they provided key information on how the minibuses should be designed and equipped.

The first minibus was introduced in September 2009. During demonstration rides, representatives from Brno's City Public Transport Company collected remarks on the interior of the minibus and on the routes where the buses were to operate (Nos. 81 and 82). The users' views were taken into account in the making of the remaining minibuses.

The Measure was presented during the European Mobility Weeks 2010 and 2011 and on CIVITAS Days. Citizens' suggestions were gathered and some were later implemented. Two discussions with the disabled took place in February 2011. The main topic was whether the minibus service should remain operating on regular routes or whether it should become a demand-responsive service. The participants in the debates decided that it should remain as a regular service.

Involving the main user group in the design of the minibuses had many benefits, as they could define their needs, for example, maximum interior free space without barriers, rounded edges, wide doors, anti-slip floor, etc. The minibuses now fulfil the expectations of the main user group, which is very satisfied with the result.



The introduction of the minibuses in the city also had other positive effects. There are some parts in the City of Brno, where demand for public transport is low due to the small population density in the area. Before the CIVITAS ELAN project, the only solution was to offer a standard transport service (large buses), which was not economic. In contrast, the minibuses offer a good solution to ensure operation with lower costs and also more suited to the needs of the disabled.

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http://www.civitas-initiative.org/index.php?id=79&sel_menu=19&measure_id=506

Integrated accessibility planning in Porto's Asprela quarter

The main objective of this Measure was to improve the mobility and accessibility in the Asprela area. As these changes would affect the everyday lives of local inhabitants, it was important to present the project to them and obtain their feedback in terms of general acceptance and possible suggestions for improvement. This was the first time such an approach was used in Porto.



Two years of traffic studies had resulted in 19 different possible solutions. After choosing the most appropriate one, it was presented to the identified stakeholders, namely inhabitants, students and local political representatives, in order to gather their opinions on it. For this purpose a simple flyer was prepared, which included a general description of the new traffic regime and an invitation to write any comments on the flyer, and bring it to the local community home or send it by e-mail. Interviewers distributed the flyer door-to-door and additionally explained the project to over 400 people living in the area. At the same time the Measure Leader presented the solution to the president of the local community, who accepted the idea.

The plan was to organise two public presentations following the collection of the feedback, one in the district facilities and the other in a teaching faculty located in the intervention area. In practice, however, the response was negligible (only three comments from 400 delivered flyers). It was assumed that everybody more or less agreed to the proposed changes, but later on there appeared to be a great deal of resistance. It turned out that the local priest was not in favour of the proposed change in the traffic regime because the street between the church and the cemetery would become a one-way street. The priest expressed his opposition to the district president (who had initially accepted the idea) and also gathered local inhabitant support to his cause. The ELAN team explained the general benefits of the proposed solution, but the position of

the community did not change. So the decision was made to change the proposal and keep the two-way street to make it acceptable for the local population, but as a result it was not possible to improve the pedestrian accessibility and increase safety along this street.

The main reason for the poor response was the preponderance of elderly people living in the area, which lacked mobility options and did not use the internet. Also more attention to stakeholder identification should have been paid, as the team clearly failed to identify a very important stakeholder in the initial citizen engagement process planning. It would have been better to start with focus groups, followed by public presentations with a wider audience, in order to explain project objectives clearly and generate local support. For this Measure, the so-called "mouth-to-mouth" dissemination was not the best approach.

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Demand-responsive service in Ljubljana

The introduction of any kind of new service in public transport is usually a complex process. However, an even more specific approach has to be used when introducing new services for groups with special needs. The main objective of this Measure was to study and implement a Demand-Responsive Public Transport System to serve the mobility needs of impaired people. This would be impossible without involving these target groups, as the PT provider had to learn about their needs and expectations and the target groups had to understand what the PT provider could offer.

So to establish the level of service suitable for both parties – provider and users – impaired people and their representatives were involved in the whole process from planning to implementation.

The PT provider first focused on persons who used wheelchairs. However, this approach proved to be too narrow, as there were many different disabilities to be considered. At the start feedback from focus groups was rather poor, probably because a demand-responsive service had never been considered in the past (organisations of impaired people provided transport with vans for their members). However, some groups accepted the new public transport opportunity and found it interesting. Later in the process good communication was established. The PT provider analysed all suggestions and comments and adapted its approach. They tried to solve possible problems through discussions before they could appear in real life situations. A lot of attention was given to educating and training drivers. The PT provider upgraded the 'trip manager' (a software tool) with a programme for information flow. First a trip is confirmed between the passenger and the controller; then information on who, when and what kind of approach is needed is passed to the driver. Special "identity cards" for users with mental health difficulties (persons with Down syndrome, autistic people, etc.) were provided. The purpose of these cards was to alert the driver to pay special attention to the holder and at the same time to provide information that might be needed in different situations and contact



information in case of an emergency. A dedicated approach is needed when guide dogs are involved in the transport process, and individual training for dogs is necessary.

The public transport provider broke new ground with this Measure in the field of transport for the disabled. The service is now operating successfully and satisfied customers are raising awareness and acceptance of new transport opportunity. A good communication channel was established, which will certainly be used in the future.

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http://www.civitas-initiative.org/index.php?id=79&sel_menu=22&measure_id=745

Innovative car sharing in Gent

The responsible partner, Cambio (a car-sharing organisation) wanted to improve its existing services and introduce new ones to reach new target groups, and this cannot be done without engaging relevant stakeholders to obtain their input (user requirements, potential user needs, etc.).

Citizen engagement was envisaged at different levels, so preparation and planning varied according to the kind of engagement. For the introduction of car sharing in new development areas, it was important to make contact with people and organisations responsible for such developments. Such one-on-one meetings need a different approach than for example a survey among all existing users or a survey among all citizens of the city. The responsible partner placed a lot of emphasis on defining appropriate actions for different stakeholders. For the development areas, the main stakeholder seemed to be the *Autonoom Gemeentelijk Stadsontwikkelingsbedrijf Gent (AGSOB)*, although other developers were contacted. For business pool cards, feedback from a relevant large business user – the University was needed. For general feedback, the stakeholders were existing users and people who had asked for information but had not joined. To localise potential new stations, stakeholders were all potentially interested people in the city, so the responsible partner had to find a way to get in touch with as many residents of Gent as possible.

Cambio had to implement most actions on its own, from scratch. For the survey they prepared an online form and a database with e-mail addresses (as this was done within the organisation, it was mainly a question of internal planning). The action '*Win a car sharing station in your neighbourhood*' needed more planning and preparation as it was organised together with the city (together, they prepared a questionnaire). Posters were printed and distributed, and contact was made with people working for the city in several boroughs, in order to make use of as many channels as possible to spread the word.



Practical implementation depended on the kind of engagement. For the survey among existing users the responsible partner prepared an online survey tool and sent an invitation by mail to all private customers for their input. Feedback and results of the survey appeared in the Cambio newsletter. Also an online tool for the broader citizen engagement campaign was prepared. They published an article in the city magazine, distributed posters over the city, and activated personal contacts were to spread the word. People could comment online, and feedback was provided by mail (if wanted).

Feedback was very important, especially for the pool card system and integration in new development areas, as the concept had to be integrated into a broader context, taking into account possible consequences that the responsible partner was not aware of. The feedback and input from the broader surveys was a little less detailed than from face-to-face contact with other stakeholders, but were also quite important. For example, the campaign for all citizens not only provided clear information about areas where new car sharing was most wanted, but people also suggested possible locations where new car sharing stations could be planned. As they know their neighbourhoods better than the partners or the city staff, this input was very welcome.

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http://www.civitas-initiative.org/index.php?id=79&sel_menu=22&measure_id=603

Mobile mobility information in Porto

The aim of this Measure was to develop new solutions for presenting real-time information in public transport. As this is fully dedicated to the end users, their involvement and cooperation was imperative to accomplish success.

Citizen engagement actions were planned for several stages of the project, always related to specific services, such as display of information on LCDs and the 'MOVE-ME' mobile application. Partners wanted to consider citizens' opinions to ensure the production of the best data that included the requirements identified among different potential users. Partners prepared several scenarios during the prototype development, and after first validation presented these to the general public to carry out a preliminary study of users' demands and needs. Interviews with potential users mostly concerned the different aspects that the presented information should include and how understandable it was.

After the information service became available to the general public, the partners collected new information to support a final analysis of the usefulness of the system. Different groups of users (including students and elderly people) were interviewed to ensure a wide range of views. The partners improved the system using the results of the evaluation, in order to satisfy users' needs.

Based on users' feedback, the responsible partner OPT started new research activities directly related to new developments of the mobile application 'MOVE-ME' for new platforms. This represented extra work and investment, but people had identified improvement of the system as a priority. This additional work will also be followed by a set of interviews and questionnaires. The main partners will invite some of the system's users to analyse their opinions.



With this kind of involvement, a service was developed that is useful and used by citizens. Citizen engagement activities also contributed to raising awareness and interest in the project and its services. At the beginning, some local administrations were not fully convinced of the Measure or had started to sub-contract competing products, but citizen feedback and evaluation changed their mind.

OPT will continue coordinating the good strategy to involve final users in the general process, and analysing their suggestions and "complaints", so that the final users feel that their requirements are always under consideration and that they have contributed to the success of the Measure. The final users are the main force that will ensure that the system is maintained after the end of the ELAN project.

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7. Evaluation of citizen engagement

Citizen engagement is considered as one of the core elements of CIVITAS ELAN, to raise the level of citizens' responsibility for addressing mobility problems and implementing solutions (to influence people's behaviour and lifestyles). The CIVITAS ELAN evaluation team therefore developed a specific evaluation approach to evaluate citizen engagement.

The main objectives of the evaluation were:

- gaining insight into which activities were implemented and how many people were reached;
- evaluating the quality of the activities;
- gaining insight into drivers and barriers during the preparation, implementation and operation of the citizen engagement activities;
- gaining insight into the impact of the citizen engagement activities on the decision-making process of the measure and general awareness and acceptance of sustainable mobility;
- contributing to cross-site evaluation and policy recommendations related to citizen engagement.

The evaluation of citizen engagement therefore focused on three aspects: the quality of the citizen engagement actions, process evaluation and impact evaluation. These three aspects were evidently strongly related, as the quality and implementation process of the actions was expected to influence their impact on citizens' behaviour.

The following measures have been selected for the evaluation of citizen engagement:

Porto

Light-weight bus shuttle
Participatory planning for new intermodal interchange
Integrated accessibility planning in the Asprela quarter
The Mobility Shop
Flexible Mobility Agency
Mobile mobility information

Zagreb

Intermodal high-quality mobility corridor
Study of congestion charging and dialogue on pricing
Comprehensive mobility dialogue and marketing
Safety and security for seniors
Freight delivery restrictions

Ljubljana

Integrated high-quality mobility corridor
Implementation of a sustainable congestion charging scheme in cooperation with actors at national and regional levels
Individualised mobility marketing based on public involvement and inclusion in defining city transport policy
Comprehensive cycling strategy
Update of the Sustainable Urban Transport Plan
Safe routes to school
Demand responsive service
Sustainable freight logistics

Gent

Semi-public clean car fleet
Participatory re-development of main train station area
Mobility management for companies
Mobility management for schools
"The House of Bike" and bicycle activities
Walking promotion
Comprehensive mobility dialogue and marketing campaign
Safe cycling corridor
Innovative car sharing
Holistic event management

Brno

Optimised energy consumption in tram and trolley bus networks
Improving bus services for the disabled
Comprehensive mobility dialogue and marketing research – new transport services
Integrated Mobility Centre
Ticket vending machine diagnostics

For these measures, the evaluation was carried out over the entire project lifetime. The Measure Leaders and the Site Evaluation Managers gathered evaluation information through different techniques, such as learning history workshops,

interviews, focus groups, etc. and reported this in a separate chapter in the Process Evaluation Forms, which the evaluation team of CIVITAS ELAN had developed.

Quality of the citizen engagement activities

The quality of citizen engagement was evaluated considering the following parameters:

- availability of timely, relevant and correct information for citizens (information related to technical aspects of the measure and to the engagement process);
- timing of the information sharing and engagement process (regularly and starting in an early phase of measure implementation);
- appropriate representatives of all main stakeholder groups during the engagement activity;
- provision of information to appropriate intermediaries/media;
- provision of appropriate incentives;
- provision of appropriate means/support that enabled citizens to participate actively (in considering problems and solutions with other stakeholders);
- provision of feedback on the decisions taken to stakeholders and citizens after their opinions and comments;
- provision of relevant information on the citizen engagement process to measures partners.

This has led to the main conclusion that there is not one ideal or “one size fits all” approach to involve citizens. For different target groups and for different involvement goals, a measure-specific approach was needed, as defined in the Citizen Engagement Action Plans of each city. Sometimes a personalised approach was needed, while in other cases a generalised approach was more suitable, especially if the aim was to reach a broader public.

Two-way interaction with citizens consisted of three phases. The first step was to

inform citizens on the selected topic in such a way that they received all the information that they needed in order to form a well-considered opinion. The second phase was giving the citizens the opportunity to share their opinion in order to be able to take it into account. In some measures, the focus was more on one-way communication with citizens, and this interaction was not taken into account. To be able to consider their input, it was important to involve citizens in an early phase of the project. The last step was providing feedback to citizens on how their opinion had been taken into account and informing them of the final decision or design of the measure. This step was not always included, although it was crucial to prevent citizens feeling neglected and to keep them motivated for further involvement.

Process evaluation of the citizen engagement activities

Process evaluation of citizen engagement actions consisted of determining the factors that work in favour of the actions (drivers), or against them (barriers).

The most important barriers that were observed during the project were lack of interaction between departments and/or other actors, lack of political support for citizen engagement, or lack of experience in involving citizens. Although this has improved, especially at the beginning of the project, citizens were not used to sharing their opinion, so additional efforts were needed to involve them. Gent was an exception in this area; here the most important barrier was steering the social media, as citizens’ reactions via these media were plentiful and fast.

The most important drivers were the interest of the citizens in the topics on the one hand, and the motivation from measure partners and other actors like NGOs on the other hand. These can be seen as key success factors. The interest of citizens is strongly related to trust in the city administration. If this is not present, citizen engagement must start with creating trust in order to convince citizens that it is in their own interest to share their opinions. Motivation from measure partners resulted in good planning, and an appropriate approach for the different actions.

Impact evaluation of the citizen engagement activities

Impact evaluation consisted of determining the impact of the citizen engagement activities on different aspects:

- useful comments and suggestions made by citizens, leading to changes in design;
- influence on decision making and measure implementation;
- increased use and acceptance of the measure;
- increased awareness and knowledge of citizens on the subject;
- increased public trust;
- increased openness of the measure partners towards citizens;
- displays of interest by other parties besides stakeholders;
- increased political support.

The impact of citizen engagement on these aspects was not always easy to distinguish. Sometimes changes in the design of the measure were applied after comments from citizens, to respond better to their needs. In this case, it was important to determine at the start to what

extent changes were possible - are only changes in the details of the measure allowed, or can the whole concept of the measure be influenced? Such changes in measure design were easily evaluated. However, it was more difficult to evaluate whether or not the use of the measure and public trust had increased thanks to the measure, as this could be the result of many other factors as well. In many cities, a higher acceptance of the measure and increased public trust was perceived, which was most likely affected (at least partially) by the citizen engagement activities.

Results from the CIVITAS ELAN citizen engagement activities

The results from the evaluation of the citizen engagement activities implemented in the ELAN project are expected to be a useful source of information for other projects or cities that are willing to engage citizens. They will be able to benefit from the broad experience that has been developed during the ELAN project in the form of lessons learned and recommendations about citizen engagement. Some preliminary evaluation results are already included in this document. A more detailed analysis and the final evaluation results will be published in the CIVITAS ELAN Final Evaluation Report that will be available on the ELAN website (www.civitas-initiative.org/elan) by the end of 2012.



www.civitas-initiative.org/elan

8. Summary of lessons learned and key benefits of citizen engagement within CIVITAS ELAN

Participatory culture is the key

Participatory culture and **strong political support** are preconditions for successful citizen engagement. If politicians are committed and if they support a dialogue with citizens, this creates the necessary trust among citizens that their voices will be heard, and they are more motivated to participate.

A good plan is a valuable start

A good plan at the start of a participatory process is beneficial for all participants, as it outlines the main directions and enables a consensus on the course of the process to be formed among all involved. It also helps in the management of the process. However, an engagement plan should not “cement” the process, but must remain flexible. Otherwise, it would be impossible to adapt to new circumstances that stakeholders might introduce.

Citizens are more willing to become involved when they are acquainted with a **concrete engagement plan**, which includes objectives and issues for discussions and timelines of consultations, and explains the way in which their proposals will be considered.

Detailed knowledge about the characteristics and interests of **stakeholders and citizen groups** helps in identifying the ways for motivating them to become involved. It is important to identify the strong and influential stakeholders who may be able to influence expert opinions and prevail over other stakeholders.

An **early start followed by continuous communication** with citizens and stakeholders is crucial for the success of the consultation process. Citizens also demand to be addressed in a direct and honest way.

A key concern for any citizen engagement process is to **gain and keep the credibility**. Making unrealistic promises will lead to a negative perception of the process. Citizens and stakeholders should be able to trust that actions are taken and that the city administration has heard their views.

In spite of potential reservations at the beginning of the participatory process, **citizens are interested to learn more, to communicate about mobility issues, and to consider solutions in their cities**, and to learn how to be more efficient in communication with city authorities, how to articulate their concerns, and with whom to communicate.

Citizens are more **eager to state their opinions**, where the issues concern their own working and living environment or are of common interest. As mobility solutions usually directly influence their lives, they are generally motivated to participate.

Measure Leaders usually **need professional support in planning and implementing citizen engagement**, as they mostly are technical staff unused to conduct such participatory processes. They are also usually preoccupied with other activities.

Ticket to effective engagement: provision of information and well-structured consultations

Experience has shown that **citizen participation is most effective** when stakeholders and citizens are asked to contribute:

- in identifying needs and problems;
- in discussions/ deliberations on various possible solutions;
- in providing local information and local knowledge.

Consultation with citizens and stakeholders should be based on **good provision of information for all involved actors**. This includes content information related to the measure, and information about opportunities for engagement. It is important that all information is clear and understandable.

Innovative engagement techniques prove to be effective and generate positive reactions from citizens as well. However, the challenge is to prepare them well in every detail in order to enable people to grasp the message quickly and avoid failures. Specific techniques like surveys prove to be more efficient when using the combination of face-to-face and on-line methods.

Experiments with **social media** have shown that using this tool can be very fruitful, and today it is necessary to combine use of social media and direct communication with people in the field.

Citizens and stakeholders are more prepared to respond and become involved if they are **approached professionally**, which includes a degree of sophistication, sympathetic address, clear explanations, and a recognisable uniform or project logo.

To encourage citizens to become involved and share their opinion, appropriate **incentives** (like useful gadgets or similar small awards) can help significantly. Where a new measure is restrictive and brings "limitations" to citizens' lives, it is necessary to provide citizens with alternative solutions.



We learned, that citizen engagement should be planned from the very beginning along with the planning of the measure.

Notes

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This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The background is a clean, solid white color.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

IMPRINT

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