



PRESS PACK

European Mobility Week 2010

“Travel Smarter, Live Better”

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1. Press Release

EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK 2010 - “Travel Smarter, Live Better”

From 16 to 22 September 2010, hundreds of European towns and cities will participate in the ninth edition of European Mobility Week and invite their citizens to a wide range of activities promoting sustainable mobility. The 2010 campaign theme - “Travel Smarter, Live Better” - was selected as the focal theme for European Mobility Week 2010 in recognition of the detrimental effects that current urban transportation trends have on health, both for citizens and for the towns and cities in which they live.

The heavy use of motorised vehicles in cities, particularly private cars, creates many health challenges for citizens. These include injuries and fatalities due to road traffic collisions, respiratory infections and diseases from air pollution, and chronic diseases such as being overweight/obesity as well as cardiovascular diseases due to increasingly sedentary lifestyles. Other risk factors to physical and mental health include phenomena triggered by climate change such as extreme weather events (e.g. flooding, storms and heat waves), social isolation and community breakdown triggered by traffic congestion and reduced public space, and noise pollution leading to sleep disturbance and annoyance.

European Mobility Week 2010 therefore aims to get more European citizens living in urban areas to travel ‘smarter’ on foot, by bike and by public transport. By choosing these healthier and more sustainable modes of travel over the private car, citizens can positively influence their health and wellbeing, and also enhance the environment and quality of life in cities, to help them “live better”.

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for the Environment, stated:

“Too many Europeans rely on their cars for both long and, more worryingly, for short journeys. This is a concern for many reasons: more driving means more accidents on the road and more air pollution. What’s more, greater car use means less exercise, a factor that has contributed to high levels of overweight people and obesity across Europe. The main theme of European Mobility Week 2010 - ‘Travel Smarter, Live Better’- is a wake up call to local authorities, to consider more the impact of travel policies on the urban environment and quality of life, and to help people make smarter, healthier travel choices.”

Participating towns and cities are encouraged to sign the European Mobility Week Charter and register their activities at www.mobilityweek.eu.

In addition, participating towns and cities meeting certain eligibility criteria are encouraged to apply for the European Mobility Week Award 2010. This prestigious accolade rewards those cities judged to have organised the most innovative EMW 2010 campaigns in terms of quality of activities linked to the annual theme and range of permanent measures implemented. The city of Gävle (Sweden) was the European Mobility Week 2009 Award Winner, with Leon (Spain) and Ivanić-Grad (Croatia) as joint runners-up.

2. About European Mobility Week

2.1. Overview

The European Mobility Week aims to influence mobility and urban transport issues for the long-term as well as enhance the health and quality of life of European citizens and help meet important environmental objectives. The Week is organised each year from **16 to 22 September**, the last day preferably designated as Car Free Day, also known as “In Town Without My Car Day”.

European Mobility Week (EMW) represents an ideal platform for local authorities and other associations and organisations to:

- promote existing policies, initiatives and best practices related to sustainable urban mobility;
- contribute to raising citizens' awareness on the detrimental effect that current urban mobility trends have on the environment and their quality of life;
- establish effective partnerships with local stakeholders;
- be part of a European wide campaign, sharing a common goal and a common identity with other towns and cities;
- emphasise the local commitment towards sustainable urban transport policies; and
- launch new longer term policies and permanent measures.

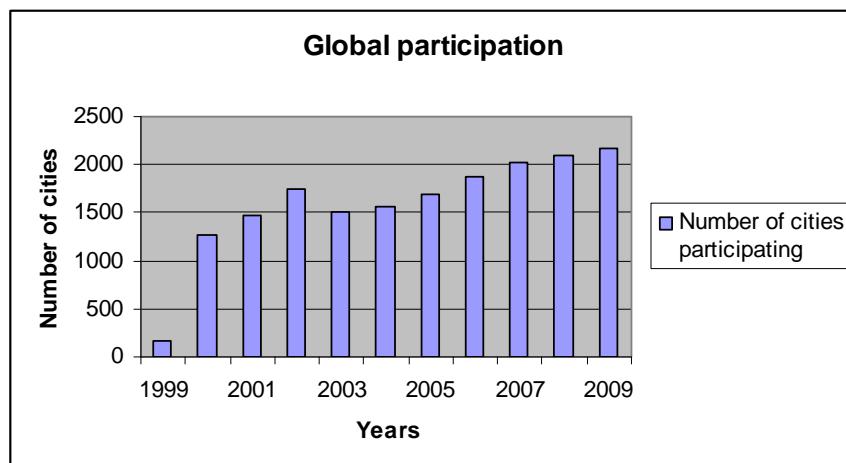
Most towns and cities participating in EMW devise a **week-long public programme of innovative activities and events promoting sustainable urban mobility**. They also commit to launching at least one **permanent measure** which will continue to exist after the Week is over, ranging from small-scale improvements such as the development of school travel plans or establishment of an online car-pooling system, to larger infrastructural works such as the creation of new cycle routes or the re-allocation of road space in favour of pedestrians.

2.2. Facts & Figures

Participation

In 2009, under the focal theme of ‘Improving City Climates’, a record number of **2,178 local authorities** signed the EMW charter and/or registered their activities on the campaign site www.mobilityweek.eu. In terms of population, this translates into **227 million citizens in 39 countries** potentially engaged by EMW 2009, with a good participation of old and new EU Member States, Accession Countries and EEA/EFTA countries. EMW’s successful campaigning model is also increasingly being adopted by countries outside Europe, including Brazil, Venezuela, Columbia, Canada, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, with the major cities of Seoul, Rio de Janeiro, Taipei, Montréal, Yokohama and Quito all participants in EMW 2009.

As the graph below illustrates, there has been a gradual year-on-year increase in EMW participation since 2003, with 2009 having the highest ever rates of participation.



Permanent measures

Although local governments are in the frontline of the global economic crisis, more than **4,441 permanent measures** were implemented all over Europe as part of EMW 2009, mainly focusing on infrastructure for cycling and walking, traffic calming, improving transport accessibility and raising awareness about sustainable travel behaviour.

Impacts

As for the overall impact of European Mobility Week 2009, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Media coverage was wide, particularly at local and regional level. The initiative gained a positive media response in most countries.
- The reduction of car use was illustrated by a decrease in cars parked in city centres and an increase in citizens using other modes of transport (cycling, walking, car-pooling, and public transport).
- Many partnerships between participating local authorities and schools, police stations, shopkeepers, companies, federations etc. have been created. This demonstrates that broad alliances were built, which will ensure a more sustainable and coherent transport policy at local level.

Success factors

After 8 years of existence, the key success factors of European Mobility Week have proven to be the following:

- Strong political support at national and regional level
- Strong national coordination with sufficient budget and means
- Ownership and support of the objectives of EMW at local level
- Involvement of politicians and technical services at local level
- Establishment of strong partnerships and involvement of local associations, civil groups and stakeholders
- Activities that have a broad coverage
- Integration of EMW in the local transport policy

2.3. History

The “European Mobility Week” journey started over a decade ago in 1998 with the French “In Town Without My Car!” day. The aim of this initiative, which is still running today and is officially organised on 22 September, is to encourage towns and cities to close one or several streets to motorised vehicles for an entire day. Thus for one day, local authorities can present their urban centres in a different light and implement key actions aimed at restricting motorised traffic in certain areas, encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport and raising awareness on the environmental impacts of citizens’ modal choice.

Witnessing the success of the “In Town Without My Car!” day and its popularity amongst citizens, the former European Commissioner for Environment, Margot Wallström, decided to further support the project by launching an even more ambitious initiative in 2002: “European Mobility Week”.

2.4. Focal Theme 2010

Why “Travel Smarter, Live Better”?

Health and mobility are the overall topics of the 2010 European Mobility Week. The massive increase in motor vehicle traffic over recent years, especially in our cities, has led to a strong public reaction against the noise, air pollutants and congestion that result. Road traffic injuries lead to the death of about 127,000 people and injure around at least 2.4 million in the EU every year. Indirectly, motorised transport has an impact on both our respiratory and cardiovascular systems and causes stress. Vulnerable groups - such as children and the elderly in particular - suffer the worst consequences. For children and young people between the age 5-29, road accidents have even become the main cause of death. Furthermore, dangerous traffic conditions limit citizens’ mobility and opportunities to lead a physically-active life through cycling, walking or playing outdoors.

As scientific studies clearly indicate, regular physical activity is fundamental to our health and eases stress. Despite this, inactivity is becoming more and more widespread in Europe. Increased car usage and worsening conditions for physical activity are seen to be the main reasons for more sedentary, inactive ways of life and are also linked with obesity.

Walking and cycling as sustainable modes of transport can play an important role in promoting daily physical activity, as non-motorised movement allows for regular activity that can easily be incorporated into the daily routine at minimal cost. By boosting physical activity - to at least 30 minutes of regular, moderately intense activity on most days - several key risks can be tackled at once and improvements in health can be achieved (see table). In a society that is continually ageing, this is particularly important for the older generation, as regular physical activity can improve the likelihood of being able to live independently. In addition, it greatly benefits society by enhancing social interaction and community engagement.

Health effects associated with physical activity	
Condition	Effect
Heart disease	Reduced risk
Stroke	Reduced risk
Hypertension	Reduced risk
Overweight and obesity	Reduced risk
Type 2 diabetes	Reduced risk
Colon cancer	Reduced risk
Breast cancer	Reduced risk
Musculoskeletal health	Improved
Physical fitness	Improved
Falls in older people	Reduced risk
Psychological well-being	Improved
Depression	Reduced risk
Quality of life	Improved

Based on WHO, 2006

With "Travel Smarter, Live Better", participating cities and towns are invited to promote active travel to tackle the issue of physical inactivity, excess weight and obesity, and at the same time to improve both the physical and mental well-being of citizens. Furthermore, health and sustainable mobility are emphasized as a combination that clearly enhances the quality of life in cities, helping to reduce air and noise pollution, accidents and congestion and bring back more space for living rather than for driving.

2.5. EMW Activities

Each year, towns and cities are encouraged to develop creative campaigning activities and techniques to promote sustainable urban mobility during European Mobility Week. The examples below offer a brief overview of such activities planned for EMW 2010, and those implemented during EMW 2009.

EMW 2010 - "Travel Smarter, Live Better"

EMW Award 2009 winner **Gävle** (SE) has again developed an ambitious programme to promote the health benefits of active travel. Many of the activities involve a direct dialogue between politicians, citizens and experts on the topics of transport, health, environment and climate change, but there are also plenty of outdoor activities including a skateboard competition, cycling events and guided walking tours. The link between transport and health is also promoted through the organisation of traffic safety classes, simulations of car crashes, quizzes, bike parks and information sessions from the local Health Department on the importance of everyday exercise. Other activities include an exhibition on the future of (sustainable) transport and the presentation of a new type of electric bicycle which has been adapted to the needs of elderly people and people with reduced mobility.

Brno (Czech Republic) has developed a range of activities focusing on the promotion of (Nordic) walking, cycling and inline skating. The programme includes guided city tours, training and public exercises accompanied by open air music performances. The city will introduce a Mobility Information Centre and new infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians and will also organise a Car Free Day event with demonstrations of alternative transport modes and competitions and games on the topic of traffic safety.

Cork (Ireland) aims to promote the concept of active travel by encouraging sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. Activities include a "Rebel Pedal" cycle parade, the launch of walking and cycling programmes for schools, the introduction of 30 kph speed zones, cycle safety training and the organisation of a conference on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). On 22 September, Cork will close St Patrick's Street, its principal shopping street, to all traffic other than pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

From 16 to 22 September, **Porto** (Portugal) will organise traffic schools for children, a "Healthy Mobility Fair" with sustainable transport alternatives and free health screenings, a bike tour at night and free public transport rides. The city will also inaugurate real-time information screens for public transport passengers and sidewalk sensors for the visually impaired. To celebrate the Car Free Day on 22 September, one of the main avenues in the city centre will be closed for a solar car race.

EMW 2009 - "Improving City Climates"

During EMW 2009, the central London borough of the **City of London (UK)** primarily targeted their activities at the thousands of commuters travelling daily to work in the City's business district. Working closely with different sponsors, the City of London organised activities such as a 'Bike to Work Day' breakfast, a movie night on climate change and a 'Walk to Work Day' exhibition. In addition to the permanent closure of a street to traffic, the City of London also improved accessibility for disabled people to the riverside walkway and began work on contra flow cycle lanes on several streets.

The city of **Hamburg (Germany)** made special efforts to highlight urban transport's impact on climate change. The city, which will be the European Green Capital in 2011, effectively integrated the campaign into its local version of the United Nation's Climate Week, organising discussions on extreme weather events, biodiversity and renewable energy, information stands on sustainable mobility for citizens and a unique 'Climate Night' event. During Car Free Day, the city offered a mix of street entertainment and awareness-raising activities on future mobility developments in the transformed street space. To support the long-term shift towards more sustainable modes of travel, Hamburg launched a new bicycle hire system, with 67 bike stations and over 1000 bikes, and implemented a comprehensive cycle strategy.

León (Spain) offered a comprehensive programme of promotional activities during EMW 2009, including a 'Street Gym' promoting physical activity; pollutant and noise tests on vehicles carried out by a mobile inspection unit and an outdoor screening of the climate change documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth'. The city's Car Free Day saw a main street in the city closed to private motorised vehicles and free public transport. To mark its commitment to sustainable urban mobility, Leon introduced 30 kph speed restrictions in the Old City and University neighbourhoods and inaugurated a new public bicycle loan system in proximity to a busy hostel.

The Croatian capital of **Zagreb** implemented a varied programme of educational and awareness raising activities during EMW 2009 chiefly addressing vulnerable citizens including children, young people and disabled people. The Week also presented an ideal opportunity for Zagreb to cross-promote its involvement in CIVITAS, a pan-European initiative in support of clean and sustainable transport in cities. EMW activities included a conference on access and mobility issues faced by public transport users with reduced mobility, workshops on traffic safety, and visits for children to the city's meteorological station to learn about climate change and the 'In Town Without My Car' event on 22 September, which saw 6km of the city centre's streets closed to motorised traffic. Zagreb also utilised the occasion of EMW to extend its pedestrian zone and cycle lane network and promote a city-wide speed reduction programme near schools.

2.6. Permanent Measures

From awareness → permanent action → change

European Mobility Week provides a unique opportunity to test, launch and/or inaugurate sustainable transport measures that become permanent after the Week has ended. From 2004, the introduction of at least one permanent measure within the framework of EMW became obligatory, with a new recommendation in 2007 that at least one of these measures should be the permanent reallocation of road space in favour of walking, cycling or public transport. The permanent measures guarantee the long-term effects of the campaign beyond the duration of the Week and help to ensure that sustainable mobility and its benefits remain visible to citizens all year round. Year after year, step-by-step, sustainable mobility will become reality in cities and towns.

While the Week's temporary activities could be viewed as quite interchangeable from one city to the next, the type of permanent measures implemented depends on cultural and urban tradition, political context, climate and of course on local mobility, environment and sustainability policies. Since European Mobility Week started in 2002, the most popular permanent measures that were tested and launched include:

- Creation or extension of pedestrian zones
- Cycle lanes (improvement, creation, extension, renovation etc)
- Public and intermodal transport: improvement or extension of the network
- Regular forums or surveys to gather public opinion and ideas
- Permanent information procedures for the general public
- Creation of car-pooling systems/car clubs
- Traffic calming, with reduced speed limits or limited access
- Safer school routes
- Workplace travel plans

3. Website & Contacts

The European Mobility Week website contains a wealth of information on the current campaign. For more information on the latest participation figures for EMW 2010, city-specific activities and links to national EMW websites, please visit www.mobilityweek.eu

European Mobility Week is an initiative supported by the European Commission, DG Environment, based on a partnership between the European Coordination - a consortium featuring the three city networks of EUROCITIES, Climate Alliance and Energy Cities - and a dedicated network of National Coordinators representing national ministries or stakeholder associations and organisations. Local coordinators are responsible for the EMW campaigns at local level.

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