

Gerd-Axel AHRENS

Dresden Technical University

Helmholtzstraße 10, 01069 Dresden, Germany

*Corresponding author. E-mail: Gerd-Axel.Ahrens@tu-dresden.de

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE „MEETBIKE“. INFORMATION

Summary. The information is devoted European Conference „Meetbike“ 3-4 April 2008 in Dresden, Germany. Stronger networking of European bicycle-friendly cities and better cooperation of bike use and public transport has been considered. Results of the European Conference „MeetBike“ are presented.

EUROPEJSKA KONFERENCJA „MEETBIKE“. INFORMACJA

Streszczenie. Europejska Konferencja „Meetbike” odbyła się 3-4 kwietnia 2008 w Drezno, Niemcy. Była poświęcona nawiązaniu łączności sieciowej europejskich miast przyjaznych dla rowerzystów i lepszemu współpracy przy wykorzystaniu rowerów i publicznych środków transportu. Przedstawiono wyniki Europejskiej Konferencji „MeetBike”.

Between the Velo-City-Conferences in 2007 in Munich and in 2009 in Brussels, the European cycling conference “Meetbike” was taking place on 3-4 April 2008 in Dresden, Germany.

The conference was organised by the Department for Mobility of the City of Dresden and the Chair for Transport and Infrastructure Planning of the Faculty of Transportation and Traffic Sciences “Friedrich List” of Dresden Technical University. It was funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the EU and the Germany Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs.

Almost 200 transport experts from 24 countries were attending “MeetBike”. Most of them came from cities, regional and national administrations, while other participants represented cycling networks, industry, planners and consultants and scientists.

The exchange of knowledge and experience concerning the fostering of integrated approaches towards mobility management and of networking in the field of cycling was at the heart of all discussions. Special consideration was given to questions of multi- and intermodality, as well as the combined use and joint promotion of public transport and bicycling.

Existing cycling networks which usually are developed within EU-funded projects have the problem of a missing long-term financial basis after the end of the project. There is a high number of highly valuable networks, partially with a very good existing cooperation between these networks. These potentials for cooperation should be better used and networking efforts should be bundled. The conference delivered many suggestions on how to organise a much more professional and long-term cooperation between networks and bicycle friendly cities in the future. Existing networks of European cities could take up a leading and integrating role for this.

It became clear that the integrative approach towards bicycling and public transport could deliver remarkable potentials for an environmentally, socially and economically compatible urban transport with attractive offers. Not only in Germany research in this field is carried out like contributions from

France and Finland was showing. The participants learned from presentations of many practical examples – like modern bicycle parking facilities at stations of public transport which can be profitable investments or public bikes in Paris, Lyon, Barcelona and Vienna. Other speakers presented good examples on how to organise the transportation of bikes in busses, trams and trains. A special highlight was surely the cycling route planner in Stuttgart which enables its users to check the availability of public transport for each cycling route with an astonishing quality and detailedness.



Fig. 1. Key note speech of Radomira Pliskova
Rys. 1. Wystąpienie Radomiry Pliskovej

Survey results from London were suggesting surprising potentials for the use of bicycles in the city: 51 % of all respondents would like to use the bike, but only 1.6 % really cycle in London! Another topic – public bikes – currently draws a lot of attention in many European countries towards the stronger integration of bicycling in the urban transport system. A remarkable presentation dealing with this theme was from Bührmann. Thiemann-Linden was giving extensive information for Germany about how cycling strategies can be better implemented by the help of local public transport plans.

The participants of “MeetBike” themselves set good examples by using bicycles during the two days of the conference which were provided for free sponsored by Nextbike. They cycled to the evening event or on guided cycling tours in and around Dresden, got to know each other and the beautiful city Dresden: these offers were received with much enthusiasm by many and lots of visitors want to come back.



Fig. 2. Discussions at the poster exhibition

Rys. 2. Dyskusja podczas sesji posterowej

Professor Ahrens from the Chair for Transport and Infrastructure Planning of TU Dresden was announcing the final workshop of the German research project “Interdependencies of Bicycle and Public Transport Use” which will most likely take place on 12-13 March 2009 in Dresden. Many participants of “MeetBike” suggested developing this event as a regular conference between the Velo-City-conferences, especially to integrate Eastern European countries. Bicycling seems to develop to a more and more important theme for them as well and “MeetBike” could help to promote exchange and networking. TU Dresden will hopefully be able to deepen all these questions in a joint EU-research project together with partners from Poland and the Czech Republic.

The conference programme is available at www.meetbike.org. This site will also present the proceedings of “MeetBike” starting in May 2008.

Received 11.04.2008; accepted in revised form 25.06.2008