

Reporting from the Rural Mobility Seminar on November 12th, Bielsko-Biała, Poland

Rural Development and Mobility – More Than Just Transportation

Background

Mobility is far more than just transportation. Improving transport – in the sense of travel times, road connections and the like – is an important task, yet alone it does not suffice (and could be even counterproductive, if focused too much on inter-city connections, and too little on the local vicinity). Mobility, seen from a holistic perspective, includes more than this and is inextricably related to sustainable rural development in general. Mobility is not about “kilometres” and “speed”, it is about meeting the demands of individuals in local communities, it is about safeguarding access to social services, to shops and leisure activities. In short: Mobility means access to community life. Only if this is understood and respected, mobility policies and projects could have a real impact.



Introduction

Mr **Andrzej Płonka**, the Head of Bielsko District opens the 4th Rural Mobility seminar of project MAMBA and welcoming words are also said by Mr **Maciej Jeleń**, The President of the Regional Development Agency in Bielsko-Biała.



On behalf of MAMBA consortium and Lead partner Diaconie of Schleswig Holstein, Mr **Hakan Uraz** (REM Consult) welcomes the audience and express delight to see the high interest on the topic of mobility and MAMBA project. Says it is interesting to see the topic from different local and regional perspectives, to exchange best practices and find the most working ones. MAMBA is also interested in the higher policy level perspective, to change the policy affecting mobility issues.

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This is the fourth rural seminar of MAMBA, and so far, very fruitful idea exchange has been experienced. But this is also not the last one.

Rural development and mobility – more than transportation. Is it just bringing people from A to B, or is it more? This is the topic of discussions today.

Mr Uraz presents very brief MAMBA project saying that rural areas all around the Europe have the same mobility problems. Shows the audience the photo of Vidzeme Planning Region pilot project ToD to drive the old lady to the library to give her back the quality of life. There are different scales and types how to improve the mobility in the rural areas – the photos are shown to demonstrate what MAMBA project already does in the rural areas all around the Baltic Sea Region. It is also about changing the mindset and rising the trust for new systems offered for the local citizens.

He briefly informs about the planned deliverables to share project knowledge to other interest, different outputs will be issued which will be uploaded to the project website, like Manual for self-organized mobility (new approach for the people to come up with new solutions by themselves).

Mr Uraz invites to visit MAMBA project website to get more inspiration and knowledge.

He welcomes to visit also next rural seminar, which will be organized in Sweden and will focus on digitalization in mobility development. Invites also to join the final conference of the project in Berlin, 4-5th June 2020.



Modern mobility in the Context of Cohesion Policy and Sustainable Development in the European Union

Video presentation by Elżbieta Bieńkowska – European Commissioner for Internal Market and Services, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, Minister of Regional Development, Ministry of Infrastructure and Development

Ms. Bieńkowska gives a strong message to the audience related to the importance of the rural mobility. She says people should not be excluded or let behind because of the place they are living. One of the challenges Europe tackles is the dependency on the cars because of lack of alternative options. The main goal of this area is to develop new solutions for both private and public transportation. We see that creation of necessary infrastructure and especially in rural areas can be challenging. Therefore, EU programs support coordinated actions in this field. A good coordination among national, regional, and local partners is needed.

Remarks on Rural Transport

Presented by Bartosz Mazur, PhD –UX Mobility; College Of Economics and Computer Science

Starts his presentation saying, he is sure mobility is more than transport, but transport is the background. So, therefore the presentation will be focused on the transport. Shows as an example the bus station in Bielsko-Biala, saying it is well served by public transport, but normally in Poland the public transport is really a high problem. It is sometimes hard to realize it when people are living in the cities. Sometimes interconnection is poor. In many areas there are no service on weekends or holidays. Living near the railway line is a good luck. Price policy between cities and rural areas is also not fair – while in the city with the same price you can go just one stop and then hop-off or do the trip through the whole city, in the rural areas the prices for the distances are really high and the price depends on the distance, which is always pretty big. Sometimes it is not possible to move without a car. As it was today, to reach this seminar premises without a car – it was rather difficult.

Shares his experience working in one project where one of activities was to go to villages and talk to local people – this was a challenge. The focus was not only on transportation but also how does it influence people. His one conversation to village pupils showed that at that age only few think they might go to school in big cities and the only chance is because they have relatives there who could give a shelter.

What is rural mobility? On one hand, rural is something near big town with many people who are moving from the town to outskirts to home, but rural is also a place far, far in the end with one bus per day and third- rural is also a place where people are going because of tourism purposes.

For those living in the city and having public transport every 5 or 10 minutes is hard to imagine that there are places where if you don't catch a bus then next will come next day. He says the best way to understand it is to experience it.

Mr. Mazur gives lot of local examples about the mobility – like old or not sufficient infrastructure (old buses, lack of light on the bus stop, also too big bus stations in rural areas which are hard to maintain), incomplete schedule information or not the same in real life they are on internet, poor bus connection.

From his experience Mr. Mazur says sometimes local people don't point at their problems unless somebody from outside do it.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Mazur says transport system in Poland is in a rather poor condition and there are certain efforts from the government to solve the problems, but expert is strongly convinced some of them should be already invented at least 10 years ago. There is a lack of smart solutions, the only solution is seen on the bus route, not



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including there a taxi, ride-sharing service etc. But there are already some places where mobility innovations exist. Considering there is a problem also towards access to services – it does not mean access to services of transport, but access to school, job, pharmacies, cash-machines. This is a problem, which is hard to be recognized if you live in a big city.

On the edges of the Policentric Metropolis – Challenges of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan

Presented by Marcin Domański-Urząd Metropolitalny Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowskiej Metropolii

<https://metropoliagzm.pl/>

Metropolis is a polycentric region agglomeration 50 km North from there with 41 municipalities and 1.3 million inhabitants. Organization is more than a soft power. A practical task is to organize public transport in this area, other issues are more soft nature.

Sustainability is one of the challenges that should be considered when developing rural mobility. First task is to define, what is rural -is it a countryside or it could be also in the city?

Mr. Domański also shows the picture he has taken while walking to the seminar building from the nearest bus stop. It is a live example that there are still some places also in metropolis where it is hard to maintain good public transport or infrastructure.

Population density map of metropolis shows that in 95% there are less than 2500 inhabitants per square meter – around 25% of all inhabitants live in the rural area.

There are several types of villages – some of them are located stretched, some are more compact, so it is also related how easy is to serve this area.

Despite there are some offers promising to solve mobility problems in rural areas, which are autonomous vehicles or air taxi, Mr. Domański invites to think more realistic and look at options which are real today.



During his presentation Mr. Domański presents several case studies about rural areas, explaining different types and therefore needs different approaches.

One of them is one-street village with rather good connection of public transport, so it is easy to deal with mobility issues, as it is easy enough.

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Another village is located in the forest. There is also a train station next to village but still it is far away and there is no connection to it. The train operators are more than one, so there is no agreement on common ticket policy.

Third example describes the agricultural landscape, where the village is located between two main roads and serving public transport could be challenging. This is the issue of spatial planning, what can cause pretty much challenges is not done in a proper way.

As rural areas are so different, there should be also different approaches for each of them individually, and it is really challenging.

System ITS

Presented by Szymon Oleksiuk, MSc –The City Road Authority in Bielsko-Biała

<https://its.bielsko.pl/>



ITS was developed as a support tool to support the main objective: the effective commuting in the conditions of the dense communication with a particular focus on the public transport. It is very useful but it does not solve the problems of the city.

The stage I of the implementation took place within a UE-supported investment project (The Development of a Sustainable City Transport in Bielsko-Biała) as one of the supporting activities.

II stage of implementation focused on the development of wide monitoring and digitization of the services (location, estimation of the time of a journey, traffic management, TM Centre) aiming for the decrease of delays of buses, improved traffic in the city. In the system the rules of traffic management are embedded – e.g. the system avails the prioritization of the lights on chosen crossings based on the comparison with traffic jams and bus schedules, a dynamic passenger information system with the real-time arrival boards was installed on multiple bus stops, an information system for the sight-impaired pedestrians was introduced.



The system is equipped with the multilayer information maps including the public transport, traffic intensity, roadworks, alerts re. organizational issues in the traffic, information of the parking spaces (availability, fees etc.), location of the CCTV cameras of ITS. Apart from this, information about the bus routes and schedules is available as well as an interactive map. The entire system is joined by a quick optic fibre network. The project is implemented by the City Transport Corporation

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in cooperation with the City Road Authority. It is co-funded by the Regional Operating programme for the Śląskie Voivodship for 2014-2020.

The outcome of the system implementation is not just improved communication but also the safety of the passengers.

Innovative Solutions for Transport on Demand in Poland on the Example of Tele-Bus

Presented by Adrian Obuchowicz, -Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Komunikacyjne S.A. in Cracow, Kraków

<http://www.mpk.krakow.pl/pl/tele-bus/jak-dziala-tele-bus/>

The Tele-Bus initiative encompasses 18 communities around Krakow, including the city. It received the support from various project including Civitas Caravel to Genua working towards sustainable urban mobility in cooperation with public transport operators, industrial partners and research institutions. Within the project CIVITAS CARAVEL, Krakow implemented the first demand-responsive (bus) service in Poland. It was the result of a real transfer of ideas and IT solutions from Genoa to Krakow.



Krakow introduced an integrated ticket covering public and private transport operators from the city and the region, and took steps towards opening a transfer centre where interested cities can find vital information for their own mobility projects. Krakow was the first city in Poland to implement a public bike scheme.

The service was developed especially with the thought of the areas difficult to reach for the big vehicles as a “regular” buses.

The important feature is the reliability of the service.

The minibuses serve the communities and their passengers are mainly seniors, pupils, disabled persons, mothers with the buggies and others with the reduced mobility. The operator makes an effort to maintain the stable staff so the drivers and telephone/internet operators know the service users and their needs and habits. The transport can be ordered by the phone – the operator confirms the order and gives the time of the departure from one of 77 stops. The orders are collected for the next week, and the system optimises the route of the minibus. The orders can be declared up to 30 minutes before the journey. The possibility exists to join the travel at any point on the established route given the availability of the seats. The resignation is allowed free of charge on any stage.

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Telebus increases the frequency of the connections in the areas served thanks to the connection with the interchange points. The introduction of the service met the resistance of the private city transport providers but the solution was supported strongly by the local communities due its efficiency. The further enhancement of the service to children's transport requires the changes in the national Public Transport Act.



Accessibility of the Public Road Transport for Seniors and Disabled in the City of Szczyrk

Presented by Irena Szewczyk, PhD Eng., Technical University in Bielsko-Biała

Seniors and disabled persons are currently described as the persons of reduced mobility; however, the group includes also mothers with the baby strollers or any person, whose capacity to move independently is limited in the physical way. Depending on the self-sufficiency of the mobility, seniors and disabled persons can be also divided to various groups.



The research of the adjustment to the needs of the persons with the reduced mobility and the accessibility of the transport was performed on the route Szczyrk – Bielsko-Biała. The commuters are mostly women 75 to 84 years old, travelling sporadically or 1-2 times per week. A small group uses the specialised medical transport. One of the techniques used in the research was the analysis of the tickets sold by PKS – public transport provider in the suburb areas and intercity routes. The private provider serving the route did not answer the request for data.

The reasons for travel are mostly the health and the company of the group of friends.

The seniors rarely use the public transport because of the high price of the transport in relation to their capacity, unadjusted vehicles (especially of the private provider).

The information about the transport availability is assessed as rather poor as for the private provider. The information on the stops is usually missing, very poor information available on-line, there are very few connections to many places. The state of many stops is very bad with few adjusted to the needs of the disabled persons; they are also marked poorly.

The public provider PKS informed that to 2021 will have all vehicles adjusted to the needs of the persons with the reduced mobility.

Project SMARTA



Presented by Timothy Durant, representative of project SMARTA

<https://ruralsharedmobility.eu/>

Project SMARTA is operated on the European Commission level. Mr. Durant looks at the background of the project saying there are two aspects of rural mobility. Firstly, the project looks at the frameworks of the rural mobility – how is it organized and financed and secondly – about the solutions of cross- Europe best practices. People who use these services are at the centre.

SMARTA project tackles the same problems – populations are decreasing, migrations happen towards urban areas. There have been a lot of investments for the urban mobility plans, there is a smart city concept – lots of work done in an urban area.

SMARTA first is looking at how the rural mobility is managed in different countries and is it concluded that there is a very different situation in Europe. Rural mobility can be a national or regional issue. For instance, in Belgium mobility is defined as the right. But mobility can be also organized in a local level, like in Denmark, where local municipalities are coming together to contribute and organize on demand mobility service.

Analysing if there are specific rural mobility transport policy targets, so there are some activities related to transport school children or related to some social and health issues. It is also discovered that there are not so many rural mobility plans, there are some for individual regions but not as a whole country. All the inside papers are available on the project website – there you can find summaries and recommendations to the European Parliament and European Commission.

SMARTA is working also on good practices covering several different categories and more detailed information is also available on the project website. All the good practices are divided between three main categories – public transport networks, demand responsive transport and shared mobility. The main task is to define innovation and the factors of the success of each good practice.

Mr. Durant gives several examples about the possible solutions on mobility issues in rural areas which already are implemented. One of them shows that a key to success is to have on the board members



from the local community as well locals also participate running the scheme. This is a proper bottom-up approach.

Digitalization is also an important issue and the project has looked at this more in detail. One of the examples Mr. Durant gives shows a great example to create a platform for booking public transport where all means of transportation available is possible to combine to complete the trip with an integrated ticket from A to B. There is also integrated small-scale transportation, like buses or hotels etc. so tourism can benefit

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from this as well to easy access to locations of tourism objects. Demand responsive transport is one more option to replace public transport in the rural areas to maintain mobility there. Mr. Durant gives also a ride-sharing example, saying that there are often different kinds of informal ride-sharing forms. Some work done there can make this form of mobility safer, more popular and increase the number of involved. Marketing campaign plays a high role as well to make the solution successful. It should be also considered that not all solutions work for everybody and it is very important to give an opportunity for locals to try these mobility solutions.

Project MARA

Presented by Marc Altenburg, The Ministry of Energy, Infrastructure and Digitalization, Germany and the Lead partner of the project MARA (Interreg Baltic Sea Region 2014-2020)



<https://www.mara-mobility.eu/>

Project MARA has similar goal MAMBA project has and it is also strongly related to rural mobility and is looking for new approaches and concepts. It is rather new project, as has started only in the beginning of 2019 and will end in 2021. Mr. Altenburg introduce the audience with the partnership of the project which covers nine countries represented by 12 partners. The main targets are set towards improving accessibility and mobility in rural areas and increase capacity of transport, new tools and methods which could be used to improve mobility in rural areas. Pilots are also planned to improve already existing mobility and testing and developing new models. Main target groups are tourists as well as those new solutions should serve also local people who experience problems with mobility.

Mr. Altenburg explains how it is planned to develop the project, where the process begins with the analysis of partners` regions and identifying important stakeholders in different levels, later it is planned to use different methods to identify mobility needs in these particular territories and last but not least, it is planned to analyse mobility models which already exist to improve them or offer completely new ones. This will become a basis for the planned pilots. It is also important for the MARA project to exchange the knowledge and good practices with other projects like MAMBA project, for example. Pilots ideas covers car-sharing, e-bike sharing, cargo e-bike sharing, call-a-bus system, citizen bus system. Results of the pilots have different aims – not only practical, but it also involves feasibility studies, implementation strategy and management plans.

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Mr. Altenburg gives a short insight of the case study of Mecklenburg Vorpommern, which is located in the North of Germany and has pretty the same problems other rural areas have in other countries – it is less populated with 45 people per square meter and therefore the capacity of the public buses are really low, so it runs less and less. What makes it even worth the number of population is going down. Internal migration has been observed and the population of the pilot area is growing. One quarter of the population is over 65 years. Federal state has a law which claims public transport should meet the requirements of the population and should be an adequate alternative to motor car traffic. As public bus service becomes more expensive, call-a-bus system is planned to be implemented in the region although it already exists in some territories.

Besides the questionnaires to analyse existing mobility, also some more modern tools are used, for example, population mobility monitor which should show the ways and behaviour of people telling how they are using public transportation. This would let analyse movement patterns to receive hints how to improve the mobility.

Project SUMBA

Presented by Michal Brennek

<http://sumba.eu/en>



Many of the projects in Interreg BSR has the status of the flag projects, which means that they treat about very important issues. There are also many project concerning the multimodality. SUMBA supports the creation the multimodal transportation mix. Some partners focused on the transport modelling, like Olsztyn (Poland), which decided to extend the tram lines; however, as the research shows, for the Last Mile the cab was usually used. The project deals with the commuting with crossing the borders of the city, where the commuters are forced to change the transport medium.

The project creates the plans of the multimodal transport mobility in the user friendly way. It is based on the exchange of the experiences. The project maps the city of the similar features and similar transport problems. The benchmarking based on various features of the users is to show, which solutions are the best for the given issue and the city of the given set of features based on the researched existing successful implemented solutions. The project was presented based on the example of Polish partners. The sustainable plan of the suburb mobility is being created for the area. In the project, the so called



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Warsaw Bagel participates, i.e. the suburb communities, while the capital city is looked at the relation to the plan albeit from entirely different point of view. Similar experiences are shared by Bratislava.

The city does not need to spend a big budget for the research but focuses on the key features. The index created within the SUMBA project has several key dimensions, presented in the benchmarking tables. The user friendly tool presents various cities and based on the identified features the city with the most successful good practices are described. The social participation is the most important success factor.

The reports of the implementations will be ready soon as well as the fully working Benchmarking scheme for intermodal commuting, Compendium of implemented solutions, Guidance for modelling and data collection and the Commuting master plan template.

Discussion Panel

Participants:

Adrian Obuchowicz (Krakow City Public Transport) (AO)

Seweryn Kobiela (Inter Communal Beskid Transport Association) (SK)

Marcin Domański (Metropolia Gornośląsko-Zagłębiowska) (MD)

Michał Bieniek (SUMBA) (MB)

Jan Sienkiewicz (ARRSA) (JS)

Moderator: Bartosz Mazur, PhD (BM)



BM: asking Mr Obuchowicz from Kraków to explain the fees for the ToD Telebus

AO: Genoa was the template city and they have extra fee of € 1 per day; Kraków does not have extra fees, the transport is regular price. In his opinion, the fees should not be introduced because the delivery of the transport is more important than extra PLN5.

BM: in the presentation of Mr Durant there was an overview of all EU countries and the solutions introduced. MB asked Seweryn Kobiela from the Inter Communal Beskid Transport Association what are the standardised minimum standards of the transport from his point of view as the practitioner. SK: the environment, the disabled persons, the inhabitants – they all imply the quality of the vehicles – primarily the accessibility for the disabled persons, i.e. low entrance, the colourful and easy to read solutions, clearly marked bus stops and schedules, the solutions for the sight and hearing impaired should be delivered. Once the solutions like this are implemented we can think of applications and the real time boards.

BM in one of the presentations the expectations of the community were presented – the inhabitants expect that the transport will be present and available always, i.e. 24/7 alas it is difficult to materialise

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in the poorly urbanised areas. However, the practical expectations differ between countries; in Czechia it is expected that 6 courses will be delivered – for commuters from and to work, for students to and from the school and for the citizens during the day. MD was asked to comment on the expectations on the Metropolitan public transport and the fact that apart from the rush hours when the vehicles are full, other hours are rather deserted.

MD answered based on his own experiences that the multimodal transport is a solutions but it should operate also during the day.

MB SUMBA: the concept of self-sufficient transport where it earns for itself is bad. The train needs to be operational at all hours although it is not financially efficient. As an example he gave the Warmia railways and the example of Olsztyn, Poland where the trains were replaced by the overcrowded minibuses. The de-commuting of the rails took place, i.e. the phenomenon where one can commute to work but in the evening it is impossible to find the return connection in case of the delayed stay in the city (e.g. for the evening meeting or late shopping). The trains should be present at the same stable hour. The strategic rail tracks should not be disassembled as redundant without the consultation with e.g. military authorities. The policy like this discourages people from usage of the public transport and from travelling.

BM supported the opinion on the necessity of the stable frequent courses of the suburb trains regardless their financial self-efficiency. He addressed the topic of the sustainable transport on in this context the limiting of the transport need by the reverting the solution e.g. instead of the transport to the post office, the network of the post offices should be arranged denser. The lack of public transport often forces people to commute by car but against the frequently believed cliché, the car does not need to be used for the entire journey – it can be used for its part and left at the parking by the interexchange point. BM encouraged participants of the conference to use their cars at home and use the public transport.

JS summarised that when we travel across Europe or the world and we need to organise the transport between the airports and our destination, we experience what are the real commuters problems. He mentioned that during the conference we heard of multiple various solutions, among others the good practices of the public transport solutions in Bielsko-Biała.



The Conclusions

Janusz Okrzesik, the Head of the Council of the City Bielsko-Biała

During the breaks participants were mentioning that particularly precious are good practices solving similar problems presented during the conference. There are also new concepts, which are not commonly used in the during the creation the transport plans like persons of the reduced mobilities or transport exclusions, which indicates the tasks of the local authorities.

The problems of the mobility concerns persons with the reduced mobility, which causes the phenomenon of the transport exclusion.

The non-urbanised areas (suburbs) become deserted and show the aging. However, the city of Bielsko-Biała faces the opposite situation – The city is depopulating and aging while the suburbs gain more and more inhabitants of lower age and these areas gain more and more urbanized character. The borders dissolve and the inhabitants are discouraged from using the public transport. The observed structure needs to lay the basis for the further considerations about the public transport and its functions.

Within the Bielsko-Biała influence radius has an impact on the community of some 450 thousands of inhabitants. The region needs and integrated transport system. The future of the city depends on the prosperity of the region. The good connection with its centre and the urban functional areas is the key for the synergies of the particular districts and the joint successful development.

Mr. Janusz Okrzesik thanked the local governments – The city of Bielsko-Biała, the neighbouring communities, districts (powiat) of Bielsko-Biała, Cieszyn and Żywiec for the presence and interest, he also thanked the guests for the participation and sharing their knowledge.

There is a common understanding among the local and regional actors, including the local and regional governments and the Regional Development Agency that because of the multidimensional mutual links, the cooperation between districts is necessary. Thus, we are “sentenced” for the cooperation.

