



Cycling Heroes
Advancing
sustainable Mobility
Practice

CHAMP Newsletter
No.1 - April 2012

Welcome to our launch issue!

We are happy to introduce you to the first issue of the CHAMP newsletter. CHAMP is a European project that kicked off in October 2011 and brings together champion cities in the field of cycling. By looking at their counterparts in Europe, the CHAMP cities want to find ways to upgrade and optimise their cycle policy and collect new ideas for making cycling even safer and more attractive. CHAMP is supported by the Intelligent Energy Europe funding programme of the European Commission and will run until autumn 2014.

The CHAMP newsletter aims to keep you informed about the project's progress and intermediate results. In this first issue, you will learn about the CHAMP objectives and expected outputs and the progress so far. Each issue will also put one of the CHAMP cities in the spotlight. We are kicking off with the city of Groningen, a true cycling champion in Europe!

We encourage you to stay informed and sign up to our newsletter on www.champ-cycling.eu and wish you a pleasant read!



About CHAMP

Why CHAMP, who are the CHAMP Cities, how to stay a CHAMP and how to become one?

Vincent Meerschaert (VM), project coordinator of the CHAMP project, provides some answers to give you an idea of what you can expect from this challenging project!

What was the background to initiating the CHAMP project?

VM: CHAMP started from the basic question of why some European cities have a much higher share of cycling compared to other cities with the same characteristics. How did CHAMP cities become the leading cycling cities they are today? It is a question that the project would like to answer in order to see how their successes and failures can help other cities to become cycling champions themselves.

Which cities are involved in CHAMP?

CHAMP gathers 7 cities. For each of them we had good reasons

to bring them on board. Bolzano has a cycle mode share of 29 %, thanks to its well-developed network of cycle paths and a long tradition of successful local cycling campaigns. Burgos is currently the second city in Spain when it comes to using the bike as a means of transport and the first city in terms of km of bike lanes per inhabitant. Edinburgh leads Scottish cities in terms of its cycle mode share and commitment to cycling. Groningen has a cycle mode share of 47 % and wants to have 60 to 65 % of all trips made by bike in 2014. Also Örebro, with a share of 25 % has clear aspirations to do even better and continues to rebuild the city to promote bike use. Ljubljana has made cycling a priority by steadily improving the infrastructure and parking facilities, promoting park and bike and introducing public bikes. Finally, with Kaunas, we also included a climber city which is clearly committed to improving the local conditions for cycling. In addition to CHAMP's 7 partner cities, Shkodra is on board as associate city, as they are the leading cycling city in Southeast Europe with a 29% modal share for cycling.

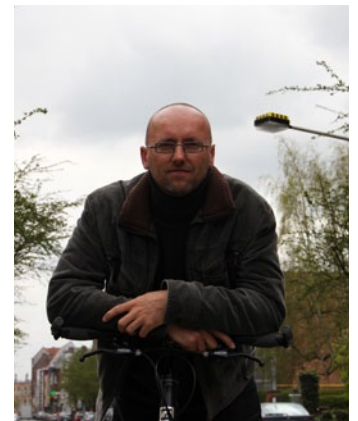
How do you plan to work with these cities?

Cities cannot reach new goals and further improve their performance if they do not have a clear picture of their starting point and their strengths and weaknesses in the field of cycling. CHAMP is therefore developing and testing a performance assessment tool, which builds on two elements: a self-analysis and a peer review. It will allow cities to carry out a gap analysis and draw up a resulting action plan with clear and measurable targets for further improving their cycling policy.

How will non-CHAMP cities be able to benefit from the project?

CHAMP will develop strategic conclusions about how cycling policy in cities develops over time and how impetus may be maintained. This includes giving advice on how to maintain the momentum of a high quality cycling strategy over a long period and on possible barriers and drivers in relation to good and safe cycling practice. We will also provide reliable data on the

possible impacts of soft measures to promote cycling, examine the transferability of policies, and assess the costs of a successful cycling action plan. Moreover, we will open up our internal training and exchange programme to a selected number of cities from outside the consortium. Contact us if you're interested!



CHAMP City in the Spotlight!



Each newsletter issue will put a CHAMP city and its accomplishments in the field of cycling in the spotlight. This time our focus is on Groningen.

The bicycle is the preferred means of transport in the city of Groningen. It is used for around half of all the trips in the city, while cycling accounts for only a quarter of all trips nation-wide. The city has 190,000 inhabitants, 75,000 cars and around 300,000 bikes. Despite these excellent numbers, the city does not cease its ambitions: the goal is to have 60-65 % of trips made by bike in 2014.



Thanks to its integrated approach of town planning and mobility, Groningen is a compact city and this has resulted in high bicycle usage. The city has a small and beautiful city centre of only 1 km², 80 % of the inhabitants live within 3 km of the city centre, and most of the distances to be covered are less than 5 km.

Groningen builds on a long tradition when it comes to cycling policy. During the last

few decades, the focus has mainly been on implementing the necessary cycling infrastructure, such as cycling lanes and paths, cycling bridges, cycle friendly traffic lights and guarded parking facilities. Below, we highlight some dedicated facilities which make cycling an easy, pleasant and efficient experience in Groningen.

Cyclists in Groningen have access to a closely knit network of primary and secondary cycling routes. The secondary routes connect residential areas to the primary routes. The latter ensure that cyclists cross as little vehicle traffic as possible. Groningen currently counts more than 200 km of bicycle paths or lanes, an amount comparable to the distance between Groningen and Amsterdam. Some routes have up to 14,500 cyclists per day. The average speed by bike is 14.2 km an hour and the average distance covered within 10 minutes is 2.4 km, while this is only 1.6 km if you take the car.

Whenever the type of road and traffic intensity allow, Groningen favours roundabouts. Cyclists on the roundabouts have right of way over turning vehicle traffic. Many traffic lights have separate waiting zones for bicycles. In these 'bubbled bicycle lanes', cyclists wait in front of the cars and thus have less discomfort from exhaust fumes. In addition, they can start more quickly, which at the same time accommodates the motorists who wish to turn.



Wherever possible, cyclists are given simultaneous green lights in all four directions of an intersection. Such green waves save time in the lights' sequence and reduce



waiting times for traffic. Moreover, a cyclist can cross the intersection diagonally during one light phase. Many traffic lights also provide a waiting time forecast. Wherever possible, right-turning cyclists do not need to wait at traffic lights, which enhances cycle traffic flows.

The tremendous success of the bicycle in Groningen also comes with some challenges, of which parking is the biggest one. There are more bikes than racks, which has led to lack of space on footpaths, bikes everywhere on the streets, reduced accessibility of houses (doors), unsafe situations for pedestrians, etc. A new balance needs to be found between accessibility, order and city appearance. Front-door destination however, is part of the bicycle's success and care is needed not to undermine this by organising and regulating bicycle parking in the wrong way.

Groningen has already invested considerably in providing parking facilities and will continue to

do so in the coming years. Groningen's 'City Bikes' project has tried to get a grip on the problem, introducing 1,500 extra parking places for bikes, free use of bicycle shelters, red carpets at 7 locations (for pedestrians), and peak hour parking facilities for cyclists (1,300). Currently, the Deltaplan project is being prepared for the five coming years, with bicycle shelters as the backbone of bicycle parking. A distinction is also made between target groups (living, working, shopping) and each hotspot will get its own tailor-made solution. Maintenance also plays a role: bikes that are not collected within a certain period of time or are parked outside facilities will be removed.



This is a concise overview of Groningen's cycling policy. The best way for you to experience the cycling city of the Netherlands, is to go there and get on a bike!

Further information:
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Cycling Measure in the Spotlight!



We also ask each CHAMP city to highlight a local cycling measure that they consider particularly innovative and are keen to share with other cities. Groningen chose its rain sensors for cyclists at traffic lights.

Long waiting times at traffic lights are a recurring source of irritation for many cyclists, and Groningen has invested a lot over the last few years in making its traffic lights more cycle friendly. Examples include the green waves for cyclists at intersections or having two green phases for cyclists during one light sequence. Despite these improvements, waiting times in bad weather conditions could still be too long. That's why Groningen, as well as other Dutch cities, introduced the rain sensor, which makes sure that cyclists get a green light more often when it rains.

The optical rain sensor has the shape of a horseshoe and the size of a hand and emits infrared signals. The instrument is heated in order to be able to detect

snow as well. When rain or snow interrupts the infrared signal, this is detected and a signal is sent to a device that turns the traffic light for cyclists to green. The sensitivity (the delay signal) is adjustable. Currently, two types of optical rain sensors are on the market. The first one registers whether it rains/snows or not. The second type distinguishes between four levels, ranging from drizzle to heavy rain.

A rain sensor cannot be integrated within any existing traffic management system. It can only be applied to modern devices. It cannot be used with traffic lights which are part of a network because in that case, influencing one traffic light would impact on a whole chain of traffic lights, which would undermine the set regulations for that particular



Inauguration of the rain sensor by transport councillor Karin Dekker

network. Finally, it is clear that a rain sensor is most effective at intersections with many cyclists. That's why Groningen decided to have it implemented at the intersection near the Oosterbrug.

A rain sensor for cyclists gives more green to cyclists when it rains, but this of course implies that other traffic modes will have to wait longer, while the pressure

on traffic is already bigger in such weather conditions. Not only car drivers, but also bus passengers and emergency services will have longer waiting times. In order to avoid excessive waiting times for other road users, Groningen introduced a maximum traffic light cycle of 120 seconds (previous situation 90 seconds). In that case, cyclists no longer receive extra priority.

Ongoing Performance Assessment of CHAMP Cities' Cycling Policies

One of the first tasks in CHAMP, is to assess the performance of cycling policies in the respective CHAMP cities. The first phase of the assessment consisted of the self-analysis questionnaire that was developed by TRITEL and completed by all cities, covering a broad range of aspects related to cycling policy: from planning and financing, over infrastructure measures, to the promotion of cycling. The questionnaire will be updated with good examples from all CHAMP cities, so that



it can be used as a reference document covering all important characteristics and best practices in cycling policy.

Still, certain topics cannot be fully understood through a questionnaire: how does it feel to cycle in a city, how are the formal and informal relationships between the different stakeholders and decision makers, what are the main challenges the city is facing at the moment? To get a more profound insight into the cycling policies, each city was visited by a peer review team, consisting of cycling experts from the other CHAMP cities and partners.

Each peer review visit started with an unguided cycling tour during which partners could enjoy good examples of cycling infrastructure, while broken bicycles and steep or windy cycling conditions were

spicing up the trip! Bearing this on-field experience in mind, the peer review team talked with local stakeholders, such as politicians, cycling associations, and civil servants from different departments. By combining these different stakeholders' perspectives and the independent views of the peer review team, strong points as well as main challenges of each city were identified, and suggestions to face them will be made.

Having completed four out of seven peer review visits, significant similarities as well as differences between the cities can be distinguished already. After all peer review visits have taken place, the findings in the seven cities will be reported on in a gap analysis, drawing general conclusions on the success factors of a good cycling policy.



When this is completed, the actual implementation phase of the project can kick off. The next CHAMP newsletter will present the outcomes of the peer review and gap analysis for the respective cities.

Looking at our Colleagues

Each CHAMP newsletter will also feature another European project on cycling.

The first one in line is mobile2020, with which CHAMP has already established cooperation.

Using your bicycle every day to get to work or for shopping is common in many cities in Germany, the Netherlands, or other Western European countries. In Central and Eastern Europe, bicycles are still reserved mainly for leisure purposes and are not yet considered a common mode of transportation.

mobile2020 wants to stimulate the rethinking of planning processes in small and medium-sized towns in 11 countries in Central and Eastern Europe and transfer suitable good experiences from Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, and other countries.

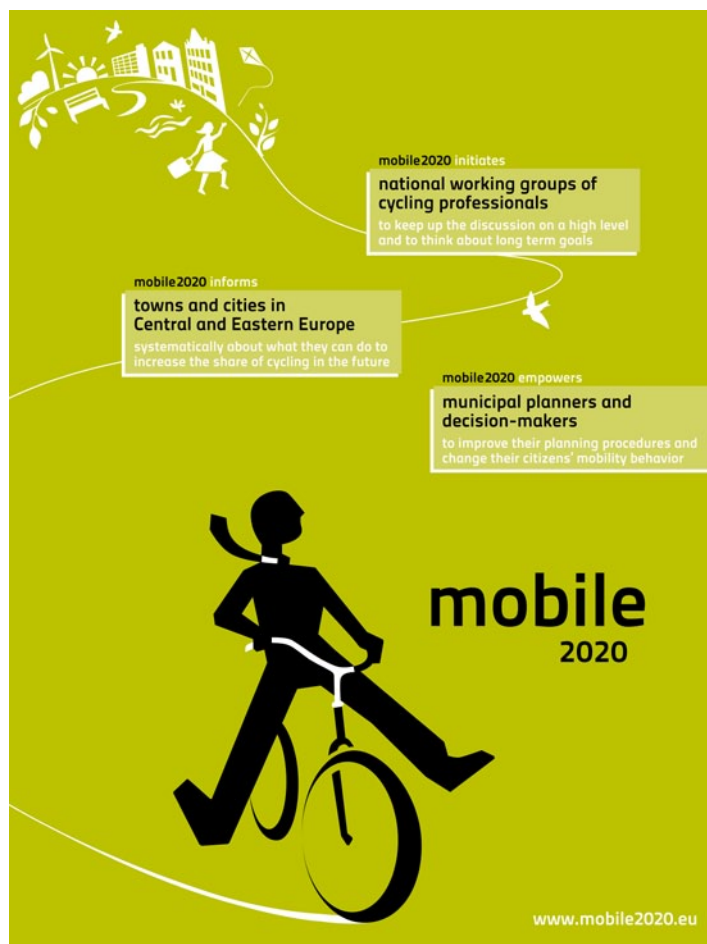
To this end, mobile2020 initiates national working groups of cycling professionals to discuss issues on a high level and consider long-term objectives. The project

seeks to inform towns and cities in Central and Eastern Europe about what they can do to increase the share of cycling in the future, and to empower municipal planners and decision makers to make the right investments, improve their planning procedures and trigger a change in their citizens' mobility behaviour.

The project will organise a number of workshops, seminars and study visits to spread good practice, knowledge and ideas that will improve the conditions for cycling in Central and Eastern Europe in the future.

The project started in May 2011 and will run until April 2014.

More information:
www.mobile2020.eu.



Upcoming Relevant Events

Representatives of the CHAMP project will be present at the following conferences:

ECOMM – European Conference on Mobility Management
Frankfurt
12-15.06.12
<http://ecomm2012.eu/>

European Sustainable Energy Week
Brussels
18-22.06.12
<http://eusew.eu/>

Velo-city Global
Vancouver
26-29.06.12
www.velo-city2012.com

CIVITAS Forum Conference
Vitoria-Gasteiz
24-27.09.12
www.civitas.eu

European Transport Conference
Glasgow
08-10.10.12
<http://abstracts.etcproceedings.org/>

Annual Polis Conference
Perugia
29-30.12.12
www.polisnetwork.eu

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