

## **“Slow Traffic” Approach in SWITZERLAND**

### **Topic**

“Slow Traffic” approach

### **Summary**

The term Langsamverkehr (“slow traffic”) stands in Switzerland for walking, cycling, hiking or inline skating. Urban agglomerations suffer particularly from traffic problems. To address this situation a comprehensive approach to enhance non-motorised transport has been introduced on national, regional (Cantons) and local level.

### **Case Study**

This example can provide interesting comparison with other cases in NICHES+. It might give important hints on how regional and national level need to become active to provide the right framework conditions for local level activities on neighbourhood accessibility planning. Furthermore Switzerland can provide many good examples of how walking and cycling on the neighbourhood level have been improved and contributed to a more sustainable urban mobility. It is embedded in an official strategy which provides favourable conditions for enhancing walking and cycling infrastructure.

### *Basic facts*

In Switzerland 12% of car trips are shorter than 1 km, 34% shorter than 3 Km and 50% shorter than 5 km.<sup>1</sup> To exploit the potential of walking and cycling the Swiss strategy aims at the provision of safe, coherent and well signalised networks for walking and cycling as well at their connection to the public transport network and car traffic. This is embedded in the official transport planning processes. The federal government provides strategies, legislation, standards, concepts and guidelines on non-motorised transport. Funding for the agglomeration programme of the federal government can only be obtained for integrated approaches which also include measures on non-motorised transport. The 26 Cantons (regional level) are elaborating cantonal transport plans which also consider walking and cycling networks. Cantons also provide part of the funding for many measures in the area of “slow traffic”. The local authorities finally are in charge of planning and implementing local and regional pedestrian and cycling networks and to improve the connection with other transport modes. Also the identification of safety hotspots for non-motorised transport and the accessibility of urban areas is their task. Cities as Basel, Zurich or smaller towns as Burgorf (the Swiss model city for walking and cycling) can provide valuable insights into how to run processes of neighbourhood accessibility planning. This also includes broad participatory processes, which was for example in Burgdorf very successful and established a culture of “looking jointly for solutions”.

### *Users and stakeholders*

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The city council was a continuous driving force for the strategic developments. The Mayor is known for his personal interest in cycling and walking and was an important driving force. A wide range of stakeholders and citizens has been consulted during the activities.

### *Implementation set-up*

Several plans contributed to the development of better conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users. As mentioned the 1995 Master plan was a crucial document to make a change towards a more sustainable mobility. The Strategic document Donostia walks (Donostia camina) from 2001 added further points to the development of the pedestrian network and the application of accessibility criteria and reduction of barriers. In 2001 also a cycling plan was issued which included a strategy for completing the inner city's cycling network. Furthermore there were special plans on public transport (2004), accessibility (2005) and road safety (2005). The years 1995-2000 saw an opening of three important pedestrian axes in the city centre, which interconnect activity areas and public transport terminals as well as the construction of a long pedestrian-cycling access to the three beaches from the centre and all peripheral districts. From 2000 onwards the network of pedestrian and cycling facilities was extended the entire city. District centres were optimised for pedestrians and some hilly parts of town were connected by means of elevators and escalators. In 2006 a plan for vertical transport was issued, aiming at the extension of the pedestrian and cycling network to the upper city. The case of San Sebastián can provide interesting insights on how to build a long-term planning strategy for neighbourhood accessibility. The city also ran participatory processes with citizens and stakeholders concerned by the activities. The consultative Urban Mobility Forum (Consejo Asesor de Movilidad) played an important role in this.

### *Results*

Despite initial resistance of certain stakeholders the strategy has been successfully implemented and meets high public acceptance. The mayor and other politicians strongly supported the approach constantly over the years.

Cities as Basel, Zurich or smaller towns as Burgdorf (the Swiss model city for walking and cycling) can provide valuable insights into how to run processes of neighbourhood accessibility planning. This also includes broad participatory processes, which was for example in Burgdorf very successful and established a culture of "looking jointly for solutions".

### *Future prospects and conclusions*

The Swiss approach to foster non-motorised transport is successful and seems to become mainstream transport policy within the country.

### **Web links**

[www.langsamverkehr.ch](http://www.langsamverkehr.ch)

<http://www.osmose-os.org/>

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