

Encouraging a modal shift to public transport with the use of ITS

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The improvement in the use and adoption of ICT in public transport services is essential for raising their efficiency, effectiveness, attractiveness and level of use. POLITE¹ (Policy Learning in Information Technologies for Public Transport Enhancement) is a project with a goal to increase the use of public transport across different cities and regions in Europe by sharing good practices and thus facilitating the implementation of ITS measures for public transport.

In recent years, public transport policies have developed many different services for citizens – such as ‘infomobility’ which provides travellers with information on the public transport services available in their location. However, not all EU regions make use of the same services which makes it difficult to spread their use at different geographic levels. In this context, the POLITE project aims to enhance the use of public transport by increasing the awareness of infomobility services and providing travellers with adequate and complete information on the choices available. Infomobility refers to procedures, systems and devices based on Intelligent Transport Systems and Services (ITS) that improve the mobility of persons and goods by collecting, processing and distributing information. Infomobility applications can be used both by mobility operators and by the final users for all modes of transport.

POLITE is funded by the INTERREG IVC and started in early-2012 and will last for three years.

POLITE will aim at enhancing: Public transport services organisation; ITS services level in public transport and for public transport; The attractiveness of public transport services via better infomobility; The amount of public transport users; Sustainability of transport via higher public transport share.

POLITE partners work together in the exchange and transfer of experiences and improvement of policies, knowledge and good practices on infomobility services in their regions,

with the goal of improving their public transport information, control and payment systems. The project is coordinated by Calabria Regional Administration (IT) and involves Reading Borough Council (UK), Province of Ferrara (IT), CDZ – Transport Research Centre (CZ), LaTDEA – Latvian Transport Development and Education Association (LV), ILIM – Institute of Logistics and Warehousing (PL) and Polis (BE).

POLITE step-by-step

During the first year of POLITE, the project partners finalised the definition of the infomobility measures and policies that they intend to share as well as to see implemented in their sites. This was performed in a process consisting of mapping the experience of the partners, followed by mapping of their future plans, i.e. measures on which they will be working on in the next couple of years. Ten groups of public infomobility related measures/policies have been identified, amongst which, for example: ‘Public transport information measures’; ‘Public transport operation reorganisation into multimodal system’; ‘Public transport legislation and regulation’; and ‘Infrastructural measures’. In total, they are covering 54 more detailed sub-measures.

A detailed methodology for search and exchange of good practices was then prepared to ensure a common framework for all partners’ searches and analyses. A good practice in the context of POLITE is a system or service which can

be identified as a clearly separate measure and which could be implemented on its own, such as RTPI, smart ticketing, bus priority at signals, etc.

At the beginning of 2013, the project partners shortlisted the good practices by means of specific questionnaires and six visits to non-project sites. Thirty-one good practices were selected from around Europe, which address the previously identified measures and policies. The infomobility good practices come from the UK, Italy, Czech Republic, Spain, Latvia, Poland, Belgium, Denmark and go even beyond the borders of the EU countries to Switzerland, Croatia and Serbia. These 31 good practices have been analysed by the partners so that each of them selects those which best meet their site policy requirements.

During a good practice ‘roundtable’ meeting in Reading, UK, in May 2013, first, a methodology was used to objectively weigh each of the 31 measures and compare them against one another. The analysis was predominantly quantitative rather than qualitative. It classified each good practice into one of five key areas: Public Transport and/or Multimodal Information Systems; Public Transport Fleet Management Systems; Public Transport Interchanges; Public Transport Payment Systems; and Public Transport Priority Systems. The key areas were then further separated into competing measures. By giving weight to certain measures in pairwise comparisons, the consortium achieved objective results ranking the five measure groups according

to importance for reaching certain goals. In addition, a more subjective initial prioritising of the good practices was undertaken by each partner. Results of the final analysis report will be used as an input to the transfer-oriented sessions in which project partners, in a three-step path, will mutually learn how to improve infomobility policies.

Good practices all around

The Czech journey planner

IDOS² is a multi-modal door-to-door journey planner for the Czech Republic and Slovakia. It also provides other cross-border travel connections around Europe by bus and train. IDOS addresses five of the 10 groups of public infomobility related measures/policies that have been identified for exchange in POLITE. It was awarded Europe's best multi-modal planner in 2012 in the EU's First Smart Mobility Challenge competition organised by the European Commission. This multi-modal journey planner provides an integrated service including all transport modes and addresses various levels – national, regional, local and international. Measures such as IDOS, which achieve vertical as well as horizontal integration, are of importance for reaching POLITE's goals. The IDOS application² allows searching not only for train, bus and public transport connections, but also flights departing from Prague airport, and a combination of all those. The service also includes tariff information, electronic ticket sales, the possibility of seat reservation on certain routes, information for people with reduced mobility, and is translated in several languages. Currently, the information in the journey planner is static, but it is continuously being developed and providing real-time information is the next step for IDOS. The traveller multi-modal public transport information, planning and payment system is available in four platforms: personal computers and networks; PDA and smartphones; Internet; and mobile phones. IDOS is user-friendly, making it widely used by different social groups – it attracts approximately 66 million online page views per month. Thanks to the long-term availability of reliable public transport data in nation-wide scope, the Czech Republic experiences the highest ratio of public transport users in the EU (34%).

The Reading Premier Route Bus Corridor Network, UK

The Reading Premier Route Bus Corridor

Network is another good practice identified in POLITE. It is a holistic approach including a complete route-by-route rebranding of bus services, the introduction of higher capacity, fully accessible vehicles on the most popular routes, a commitment to only making major changes to the bus network once a year, provision of new and additional bus shelters and accessible kerbing to complement the low-floor buses. A key element of innovation in this good practice relates to the branding of bus corridors with vivid colours to create an association between passengers and the particular colour of the route on which they live – for instance bronze for Premier Route 11. Another purpose of this measure has been to update the image of bus services. In addition, the provision of RTP1 displays at stops and on buses, and the provision of contactless smartcard ticketing combine to form a comprehensive package of improvements. The core elements of the network were implemented between 2004 and 2008.

The primary policy objectives of the Premier Route network were to improve bus service punctuality and reliability, increase service capacity and frequency, maintain a stable network, and significantly improve passenger facilities and information. A further significant objective was to provide greatly improved accessibility for people with reduced mobility by the provision of low-floor/wheelchair accessible vehicles across all of the Reading bus fleet. Overall, the expected benefits from the Premier Route network have been realised, including benefits relating to passenger satisfaction. An important lesson for POLITE coming out of this comprehensive approach is that doing all things at the same time brings about better outcomes than working on each measure on its own.

GIM project, Province of Ferrara

The Province of Ferrara together with the Municipality of Ferrara, Emilia Romagna Region, and other Italian Provinces and stakeholders are implementing the national project GIM focusing on ITS for private and public mobility. The aim of this project is to improve all available ITS systems for both private and public uses. The management of the information related to mobility is going to be performed in a centralised way – a mobility central unit is going to be set-up at Regional Level with important connections with the Provincial Level. This centralised system could help the harmoni-

sation of mobility information and its use. In this way, a big amount of data related to traffic among different cities of the region will be managed at regional level in order to develop common policies and technologies. Through the GIM National Project, the Province of Ferrara is setting-up in its territory some infrastructural measures useful to increase the ICT in public transport. The GIM project foresees the installation of Automatic Vehicle Monitoring (AVM) systems in each bus in the whole Emilia-Romagna region, of which Province of Ferrara is a part, and the consequent installation of electronic signs at bus stops. The infrastructural measures that GIM is setting-up can increase the quality of the information to the public transport users and help updating travel planners so that they become dynamic thanks to real-time travel information. Another important result sought with the GIM infrastructural measures is increased efficiency and attractiveness of public transport. The whole system will be installed throughout 2013.

Going forward

The next big step in the POLITE project is a training workshop to be held in September 2013 where experts will train the POLITE partners on some of the key good practices which have been favoured by the majority of the consortium. The POLITE project will produce, as a final outcome, an 'Infomobility Policy Document' on policy gaps to be covered by comparing the 'as is' with the 'to be' policy situation for each POLITE site and at EU level. 'Implementation plans' will be drafted for each site and a report/brochure including a collection of the good practices will be made widely available. The ultimate goal of POLITE is to encourage modal shift to public transport by making it more user-friendly thanks to the use of ITS measures.

References

1. www.polite-project.eu
2. www.idos.cz



Daniela Stoycheva is a Project Officer at Polis – the European network of cities and regions for innovative transport solutions. The projects Daniela is working on are with a focus on ITS, public transport and SUMPs. Daniela has previously gained work experience from the Committee of the Regions of the EU in Brussels and from the United Nations Development Programme, Unit for Sustainable Development in Brazil.