Conclusions and recommendations for sustainable cycling in Central and Eastern Europe

Reflections from national seminars

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1. Introduction

The mobile2020 project addressed in particular the priority of encouraging a modal shift from the private car to using the bicycle, which does not consume primary energy. Affecting such shifts has the potential to improve the overall energy efficiency of the entire transport system in the participating countries. The goal of the project was to mobilise, educate and enable relevant stakeholders in small and medium sized towns in 11 Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries to promote and support cycling in their cities.

A substantial and sustainable modal shift requires creating and maintaining land-use patterns, which are conducive to bicycle use. There are urban areas, though, which already boast spatial patterns that are highly amenable to biking but where cycling modal share is nevertheless minimal. This is particularly the case in CEE countries where the increasing availability of car-based mobility is responsible for the lack of bike use. Car ownership increases rapidly and increasingly becomes a symbol of social and economic status within society. This is where mobile2020 activities were targeted. The project wanted to motivate changes in mobility behaviour and culture, to convince people to use their bicycle and above all to keep using their bike where they already do. In CEE countries the share of bicycle use is pretty small compared to Western European countries and cities: in the German City of Münster, for example, the share of bicycle use is 38% (Stadt Münster, 2008) and it lies at 10% in Germany overall (Infas & DLR, 2010). For most CEE cities and countries, the bike’s modal share is on average below 5%, reflecting the comparative importance given to non-motorised modes of transport. On the one hand, people do not use the bike due to the absence of cycle-friendly infrastructure and on the other hand due to the lack of information, effective public promotions or campaigns - the bike simply does not play a role in most people’s awareness when they think transport.

Mobile2020 helped to increase the awareness, attractiveness and understanding of bicycle use and how to actively promote it, thus supporting the implementation of the EU Green Paper on Urban Mobility1, which advocates the creation of a new urban mobility culture. Competencies were strengthened, knowledge improved and local authorities and private stakeholders fully engaged in the process.

Capacity development and knowledge transfer. Capacity development has laid the foundation for increasing cycling expertise in the target countries. In order to have a wide dissemination range, the project employed a multiplier approach - by training 11 organisations-project partners in depth, the project has reached dozens of cities in each participating country through various events. Training seminars with study visits to Western European cities in the Netherlands, Sweden, Italy and Denmark, which were selected by the mobile2020 best practice analysis, was organized for the multipliers to guarantee the best knowledge transfer possible.

The expertise on cycling was spread amongst decision makers and local practitioners, specifically amongst urban and transport planners and local politicians in all CEE target countries. Focusing on small and medium sized towns

and municipalities where decision makers are closer to the citizens has enabled many municipalities to initiate measures to increase the share of cycling and increased their readiness for introducing the new cycling policies.

In each CEE country, a line of information events and thematic seminars was organized, dedicated to specific issues of cycling. The municipal representatives, cycling professionals and interest groups like departments of ministries (environment or transport), planning consultants, NGOs, energy agencies and other intermediaries in the field of transport and urban development were encouraged to make the right investments, improve their planning procedures and change the people’s mobility patterns at local level. Seminars have been used not only to transfer the knowledge and expertise on cycling and good practices from Western Europe, but also to get to know more about local and regional good practice solutions and the needs of the towns themselves in the context of their countries.

In essence, all national capacity building activities encompassed all 4 key strands of cycling as a system, aimed at communicating to the municipalities that cycling development is more than just building bike tracks:

- **Strategic and integrated urban and transport planning:** What is needed to set up a bicycle master plan, how does transport planning and urban planning interact to support the promotion of bicycle use, how to assess/audit the situation and identify potentials etc.;
- **Infrastructure planning:** what types of infrastructural measures like bike lanes, solutions at junctions, parking facilities etc. exist and fit to which situation;
- **Services:** what other non-infrastructural (soft) measures can support bicycle use - service and repair points, bike take-on/off on public transport, mobility information for new citizens, media/internet based platform with information related to bikes and cycling, rental bikes etc.;
- **The three previous strands are framed by the tasks of communication towards behavioural change.** Communication includes different levels like providing information (maps, webpages, and campaigns), participation in planning, image related and motivational communication (target group oriented, including symbolic and emotional aspects of mobility behaviour) as well as marketing. It also includes communication with different stakeholders (such as politicians, retail traders, and public transport federations), strategic partners in society (as bicycle clubs, schools, etc.) and users. Besides the standard information carriers, attention was paid to the possibilities of new communication tools like web videos, online social networks etc.

The multipliers in each CEE country adapted the number of seminars and approach to seminar structure to the specific national circumstances, size of the country and other aspects. This brochure presents a short overview of the impacts of capacity building activities in the 11 CEE target countries, together with some recommendations for future development of sustainable transport towards increasing a modal share of cycling in the region.

- **375 municipalities** participated in training seminars
- **63 seminar events** held
- **26 multipliers** trained
- **76 training days**, on average 7 per country
- **11 national-language Handbooks on cycling inclusive planning and promotion** developed & disseminated
- **11 sets of national-language thematic factsheets** prepared
- **20 CEE municipal representatives** experienced practical cycling solutions in a study visit to the Netherlands and Germany
2. Impact of mobile2020 capacity building on the development of cycling

Municipalities increasingly develop their cycling plans, incorporating cycling into spatial plans or local development plans

Lithuanian cities of Vilnius and Klaipeda benefitted from the mobile2020 seminar „Planning of Cycling transportation in the cities and towns“ in April 2013, feeding into the preparation process of the Vilnius special cycling plan and revision of similar plan for Klaipeda city. Other cities were learning about procedures, public involvement into planning process, taking into consideration interests of all stakeholders. In result, Vilnius city administration presented their draft version of special cycling plan for review and feedback from the general public in October 2013.

In Croatian coastal towns such as Dubrovnik, Umag, Zadar, there is a growing number of cycling-inclusive sustainable transport studies, and a noticeable rise in the number of small local cycling infrastructure investments (bike-parkings etc.), funded by EU programs, also evidencing the increased capacities of absorbing EU funds.

Several towns in Slovenia and Estonia initiated development of their own cycling strategies and cycling action plans (for instance, Brežice, Maribor, Tallinn, Pärnu) inspired by the inclusive approach to integrated planning presented at Mobile 2020 seminars.

Concrete cycling measures

Many Hungarian cities took an active part in the capacity building seminars, and as result implemented a number of cycling network-development infrastructure measures, as well as promotional actions such as bike-to-work-and-school contest in Szeged, regional cycling marathons in Szolnok, and the like.

Before Mobile 2020, the Croatian town of Split had just one cycle path a few hundred metres in length; after hosting two seminars, Split was inspired to do preparatory work on two new paths and to consider further steps to promote cycling.

In several Bulgarian towns, such as Burgas and Ruse, the mobile2020 seminars helped to convince the town authorities to hire specific cycling officers which will be in charge of planning and implementation of sustainable cycling measures at town level, as well as coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Promotion of local good practice examples

According to feedback from Pro-Cycling municipality winners of all national competitions, participation was motivated by attending the project’s capacity building seminars. Through this competition, the towns got public recognition of achievements in the field of integrated development of cycling and were additionally motivated to continue those efforts. Good practices and experience exchange among municipalities during the seminars triggered positive competition between different municipalities having the good examples from their colleagues to start developing cycling policy or other concrete measures - competition means better quality.
3. **Main successes of the capacity building activities**

**Finding good partners**

Connecting with cycling associations, national authorities, other cycling projects in the country and local/national campaigns, as well as with active national working groups on cycling helped in promotion of the seminar events and getting the interest of municipalities.

Thanking to cooperation with Central MeetBike project in Czech Republic and Slovakia since the very start of mobile2020, a significant positive shift in usage of bicycles within the cities and towns has been noticed, whose inhabitants started to reflect on new measures, seminars, cycling tours and information disseminated through both projects. It also enabled a much larger number of educational and dissemination events and reaching to a considerably larger municipal audience than in other countries - for instance, 145 towns altogether in 11 seminar events in Czech Republic and 6 seminar events in Slovakia.

In Slovenia and Estonia, due to the good timing and interest of municipalities themselves in the topics of cycling and sustainable urban planning, as well as good relations with the cyclists civil movements, all towns in both countries have participated in the thematic seminars. The excellent response in Slovenia was also to be thanked to a very engaged approach of the Slovenian national coordinator, who also introduced some specific topics, including a separate seminar on traffic safety, and a 2-day workshop on the prospects of cycling infrastructure financing in the new EU financial perspective organized as a joint cross-border effort for Slovenian and Croatian participants.

**Customising activities according to country needs**

One of the specific points in the project approach was the deployment of national multipliers in planning and implementation of the activities in countries. Although the main concept revolved around the 4 key topics of cycling as a system, each country used its own approach that was found best fitting to the needs of stakeholders and characteristics of a country - some countries opted for a 2-day seminar programme encompassing all key topics replicated in different regions, while some others organized shorter single-topic events which could be attended by municipalities according to specific topical preferences. In Poland, the training was done in the form of a master class and train-the-trainer approach was used, in order to increase the local multipliers base which will be at disposal for a wider educational campaign later.

**Existing cycling framework**

The interest among municipalities was easiest to trigger where there was an existing cycling framework in the form of a national cycling strategy and/or financing mechanisms to support cycling development.

In Slovakia, for example, the National Strategy on development of cycling transport and cycling tourism in the Slovak Republic (May 2013) recently adopted by the Government has given the boost to local cycling planning. It enabled the Permanent financial mechanism for the implementation of the national strategy, which in turn triggered development of new technical conditions for the designation and planning of cycling infrastructure, which will legally oblige all Slovakian towns by mid 2014. The National Cycling Coordinator at the Ministry of Transport and Rural Development had already been coordinating a national working group consisting of eight regional-level cycling coordinators, and mobile 2020 contributed by mobilising cycling NGOs to get involved.
In Hungary there is a tradition of organized regional and national cycling promotion - Pro-cycling municipality awards are given annually, in a joint effort between the Hungarian government and the Cycling Hungary Association, and the “National Cycling Development Agreement” has been signed by 27 cities so far with a strategic aim to “improve local cycling conditions and strive to build cycling modal share”, while also urging the national government to apply for EU Regional Support for local cycling infrastructure. Due to the national orientation towards cycling as a sustainable transport mode, many towns are spending a growing share of their transport investments on cycling. In 2011, the average share was 11% while in 2012 it rose to 14%.

In Estonia, timing of the trainings played an important role of attracting participants as bicycle planning is more on the agenda mainly due to the EU initiatives and funding but also due to cycling and civic organisations who have become more vocal. In bigger cities such as Tallinn and Tartu critical mass has been developed which has also forced authorities to take actions.

Local practical examples and interactive exercises

Local and international good practice cases were appreciated equally to the bad examples - the bad ones being considered as very good learning points in the context of still developing cycling culture in the CEE countries. A good balance between theory, best practice examples, real-case practical work and short guided cycling tours was implemented in all seminars, which provided opportunity to test the theoretical knowledge on the actual (lack of) infrastructure during cycling tours and by discussing real-life examples of the participating towns.

Bad infrastructure examples and ineffective communication on cycling were frowned upon in seminars in Estonia, but the positive side of it was definitely the discussion that it helped to trigger. Some of the trainees admitted later on that they started to look streets in a different way - from a pedestrian or cyclist perspective. In Latvia, the participants appreciated how the practical cycling tours uncovered mistakes in the cities infrastructure and experts gave concrete advice how to improve or eliminate them.

Interactive discussions in a seminar in Békéscsaba, Hungary (February 2014)
Moving the focus out of infrastructure

The aspect of infrastructure planning was considered to be of great importance for majority of seminar participants in all CEE countries. The participants also indicated - as an equally important priority - that towns need information how to get money for implementation of their cycling projects. This is related to the background of officials and their understanding on transport planning which currently mainly equals with construction activities. Holistic planning and communication are still seen rather as a soft measure not concretely linked to the everyday work of planning and transport departments.

Therefore communicating with citizens, campaigning and providing information about cycling services were additionally stressed in the seminars, as well as the holistic town and transport planning - which is still something new and not fully implemented. When talking about cycling targets state and town officials still tend to count kilometres of cycling infrastructure, and not evaluating the effect of taken measures to bicycle traffic or to urban environment in general. The seminars helped to look at the cycling as a system and become aware of many other measures that can (and need to) be taken before ‘jumping’ onto infrastructure investments.

Well organised study-visit program

The study visit that took place during 5 days in mid April 2014 in four towns in the Netherlands (Utrecht, Zwolle) and Germany (Münster, Bünde) gathered representatives of 20 municipalities from Central and Eastern Europe to present good examples of integrating cycling considerations into municipal urban planning and transport policies. It offered a unique opportunity for experts to exchange information on sustainable cycling development in urban areas in the context of two cycling-pioneer countries, and learn how they actually started. Visiting of locations has demonstrated a number of best practices, including bike-friendly parking policies, cycling in the service of daily commuting, regional bicycle planning, and some simple cycling promotion and marketing measures. The study visit was very much appreciated by all participants, as it provided opportunities to analyse concrete applicability of different cycling practices in the CEE municipalities’ context.

Handbook on cycling inclusive planning and promotion

Production of the Handbook in 11 local languages, with a locally adapted content that takes into consideration regional, infrastructural and political specifics, proved to be the most useful legacy of the project. In most countries the Handbook presents the first such comprehensive overview of cycling planning in one place, with
inspirational examples from Western Europe combined with practically applicable regional and local examples and case studies, guidelines for strategic and infrastructure planning as well as a large set of easily applicable communication measures and cycling services. In almost all countries the Handbook is also the first comprehensive glossary of cycling terminology, while in Bulgaria the local edition of the Handbook has even made it to the official curriculum of the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia.

The Handbook was printed and distributed to hundreds of local authorities all over the Central and Eastern Europe, as additional material for the seminars, as a guidance and a resource material for town planners, as well as in further upgrading the knowledge of cycling activists and enthusiasts. It can help the decision makers in developing an initial town’s vision of sustainable transport development, as well as suggest low-cost soft measures to cycling starters.
4. Challenges in implementing national seminars

Getting municipalities to seminars

Many project countries faced low turnouts of municipal participants in the national seminars. Reasons for that were found in the fact that cycling development is not high on priority lists since there is no law obliging the municipalities to have effective cycling development programs. There is only a handful of towns in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary which have dedicated Cycling Officers as part of their municipal structure; others had to be attracted in other ways. Country multipliers used different approaches, but what worked best was the direct (marketing) approach to municipalities, which then yielded those really interested and dedicated municipalities and their active participation and feedback in the seminars.

In Poland, the strong national and regional cycling NGOs perceived Mobile 2020 as competition and declined initial invitations for joint work, which delayed considerably the timing of seminars until the spring of 2014, and eventually the direct approach to over 300 towns after initial interest resulted in only 8 of them actively attending the seminar. The seminar was then held in the form of train-the-trainer following the format of international training for multipliers, and despite the initial setbacks, the proactive approach during the ToT seminar resulted in recruitment of four additional national multipliers who will further train the other towns in their regions in the framework of regional transport development planning.

Another challenge appeared in some countries in the fluctuation of seminar participants, as it was difficult to get the people for more than a single, one-day seminar event, due to their conflicting work obligations, so the project partners had to adapt to this situation by adapting also the seminar content sometimes, fitting the most relevant topics into one day programs.

Non-applicable (too advanced) solutions for the local/CEE circumstances

Although the German and Dutch experts developed the original capacity building materials having in mind the specifics of the CEE region, there have been examples from Western European countries which most municipal seminar participants found non-applicable to Central and Eastern European circumstances in the long-term, such as roundabouts giving way to cyclists, high-tech bicycle parking facilities etc..

In the process of Handbook adaptation in 11 countries, such examples have been mainly replaced by local or regional good practices with which the CEE municipalities could more easily identify and which would seem more likely to be implemented in specific local circumstances.
5. How cycling fits into the next 10 years in CEE municipalities - Recommendations for growing the cycling modal share

Experience from the project shows that in most CEE countries municipalities are increasingly developing their cycling plans, incorporate cycling into spatial plans or into local development plans. They are quite active and bring forward ambitious goals in cycling promotion. At the moment cycling plans are not obligatory, however when planning infrastructure, cycling should be considered. This is a positive outcome of many sustainable transport related efforts of international projects (including mobile2020) and national initiatives triggered by the overall EU sustainable transport goals.

There are however only a few CEE countries where technical requirements and guidelines for cycling transport exist for the use of designers and urban planners. In other countries, lack of such requirements causes conflicts among different users of space, or results in the lack of common approach to signalization and transport organization for cyclists and pedestrians, and each municipality builds its infrastructure in a different way.

It is important to understand how to use urban space in cities for all traffic participants and keep in mind the idea that roads are not for cars - roads are for people. Cooperation networks among smaller municipalities could be a useful tool for optimizing cycling and public transport - to increase the number of commuters and improve services for them.

What follows is an overview of the recommendations resulting from discussions at national cycling seminars for municipalities held in the frame of the mobile2020 project. These recommendations are not country-specific but should be equally applicable to majority, if not all, of CEE countries targeted by mobile2020.

5.1 Regular capacity building for municipalities

It becomes increasingly important to change the way of thinking in the minds of the transport planners, to move from traditional to sustainable transport planning and change planners’ mind-set towards thinking MOBILITY instead of TRANSPORT, and improving communication among different stakeholders. In this context, communication with politicians i.e. municipal mayors should be inspirational, create a positive ground for practical work of the planners and convince them that soft measures can also give very good results in cycling development, given that at the moment the vast majority of municipal experts and politicians think only about infrastructure and investments.

Seminars for municipalities organised under the mobile2020 project were, for the involved CEE countries, the first such education targeting directly the municipality experts dealing with cycling/transport issues and policy makers which covered the urban cycling in a holistic manner. Similarly, the Handbook on cycling-inclusive planning and promotion was the first comprehensive educational and guidance material on urban cycling produced in CEE, while the work on the local Handbook adaptation involved the seminar participants in an interactive way, enabling the first-time introduction of specific local terminology on utility cycling in the project countries.
The interest and positive response of municipalities to the Handbook material and to the thematic seminars and various information events held in the frame of mobile2020, demonstrate a need for a permanent, or rather a more stable capacity building program on utility cycling. Suggestions include annual refreshment trainings focussed on refreshing the knowledge obtained during mobile2020 and on new developments of cycling policy at national level, a cycling academy, annual conferences, and even a post-graduate cycling-inclusive mobility training intended for transport engineers. Some municipal training participants were also very much interested to take part in the practical training programs in advanced EU cycling cities - combined with field visits - like the one in which the mobile2020 national multipliers have taken part. This would also enable further practical use (and periodical upgrading) of educational materials produced by the project, as well as gradually increase the rate of applicability of the concrete cycling solutions proposed by the guidance materials.

The seminar participants indicated that the information needed most by the local planners and decision-makers is about securing funding for implementation of their cycling projects, ways to communicate with citizens, implement awareness campaigns and provide information about cycling services. It was also pointed out that information and education activities in municipalities are to be strengthened - traffic safety, cycling-related health benefits and active lifestyle, communication among traffic participants are key topics to develop on in this context.

Many towns in CEE are still at the very start when it concerns cycling issues; therefore in the countries like Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia there is a pressing need for more focussed, customized capacity building support to be provided to towns which proved to be among the most active ones in mobile2020 activities. This could include advisory or technical support in development and implementation of already identified concrete cycling projects, in developing the projects pipeline, as well as providing practical education on managing EU-funded projects.

5.2 Financing of cycling infrastructure

In the immediate future municipalities are expected to have not only plans and targets but also clear vision how to implement plans and reach the best results in cycling integration. Very important in this context is to have strategic guidance as well as financial support from national-level-government. Municipal governments should have a clear vision about their town, what kind of a settlement they want it to be in the future (given the urbanization trends) and what kind of people will live there (age, welfare status), in order to be able to optimize their resources.

In order to increase applicability of this new cycling-related knowledge, possibilities for the financing of cycling infrastructure from national sources should be introduced wherever possible, as it would demonstrate the national support and strategic direction towards cycling integration, one possible source being the road maintenance funds. Working with municipalities, ministries in charge of transport and unions of municipalities should promote further national funding schemes for cycling infrastructure and promotion.

To further assist CEE cities in growing their cycling modal share and make the cycling development possibilities outlined in mobile2020 real, the EU should launch (more) funding programs specifically targeted at local and regional urban cycling infrastructure and promotions - lanes, paths, intersections, campaigns. Such funds could be complementary to the national/local sources, especially in the context of national operational programming and regional development funds, as well as following the strategic EU goals towards achieving sustainable mobility. Practically, for example in Bulgaria and Croatia, even though urban cycling is a part of the system in Integrated Transport Plans, very little money, experts and planning go to this issue, and most cities right now are doing just minimum efforts to develop urban cycling because Integrated Transport Plans require only this minimum.
5.3 Continuation of multi-level stakeholder cooperation

Networking to support the cycling development should continue through the work of national working groups which were set up within mobile2020. Such partnership among municipalities, relevant national and regional authorities, cyclist NGOs and specialised expert organisations/agencies for the promotion and further development of cycling was recognised by most CEE countries as a way forward in keeping the institutional momentum started by the mobile2020 project.

The role of networking is multifold:

- creating a unified voice to lobby for much needed changes in the legislation and provide advocacy services to municipalities
- enabling regional/national exchange of experiences and knowledge among municipalities in terms of infrastructure development, marketing and communication, provision of cycling services to citizens, as well as in financing of cycling measures, especially in the context of sustainable urban mobility planning;
- organised sharing of good cycling practices among municipalities, to boost general acceptance of cycling as a desirable mode of transport and encourage creation of national and local ‘demand’ for cycling.

Positive examples of such networking - triggered either by the mobile2020 project or through the organised lobbying efforts of various cycling stakeholders - include the Association of Bike Friendly Cities in Czech Republic, an institutionalized umbrella organization with a vision of cycling-inclusive mobility currently gathering more than 30 cities with designated coordinators and working groups, as well as the Hungarian Pro-cycling municipalities’ Alliance and the voluntary National Cycling Development Agreement committing more than 27 local governments “to improve local cycling conditions” while also urging the national government to apply for EU Regional Support for local cycling infrastructure.

5.3.1 Regulatory changes towards cycling-inclusive planning

Despite the positive examples of organized municipal and multi-stakeholder action, in most CEE countries there are still no imposed musts or tasks that municipalities are obliged to do regarding cycling transport, which keeps it still rather low on priority lists.

To capitalize on the mobile2020 project results, there should be stricter obligations for the municipalities to have introduced well defined cycling-inclusive measures. This could be achieved in different ways:

- as a result of bottom-up lobbying efforts coming from organized municipal or multi-stakeholder cooperation, such as the case in the Czech Republic, where the Association of Bike Friendly Cities and the designation of its national cycling coordinator serve as the public control mechanism towards the national, regional and local authorities in implementing the tasks assigned to them by the National Cycling Strategy;

- through a top-down strategic approach such as a positive example of Slovakia with its recent enactment of the National Strategy on development of cycling transport and cycling tourism (2013), which included adoption of new technical conditions for the designation and planning of cycling infrastructure that are mandatory for local authorities, and the Permanent financial mechanism for the implementation of the National Strategy. The guidelines for cooperation between local, regional and national level and the multi-stakeholder Interdepartmental Commission on cycling transport were set up for the purpose of Strategy implementation, and an 10% increase in cycling share by 2020 is envisaged by investing at least 3 EUR per capita on cycling measures and strategic actions.

5.3.2 Sharing good practices and 'shining' examples

Building on the good results of the competition for “Pro-Cycling Municipality” initiated in the frame of the mobile2020 project, its continuation and establishment of an annual award for most advanced municipalities in the
development of cycling could be a way to encourage local authorities for introducing cycling improvements by creating a positive competition among them. The primary focus of such a competition would be to serve as a data collection tool about the cycling developments in individual municipalities, with a database accessible to all the municipalities to draw inspiration and learn from each other.

5.4 Cycling promotion

A holistic and complex approach to cycling promotion should be applied - accent should be put on making more people use bicycles on their daily travel, making bike-sharing systems economically and socially viable/cost-effective, as well as intensifying communication with citizens and public participation in decision-making on mobility issues.

5.4.1 General awareness actions

So far cycling transport served more as a step towards public appreciation than as a real sustainability issue; only in the larger cities with ‘intellectual’/university tradition cycling becomes ‘fashionable’ and citizens think about sustainable mobility. In towns and cities of CEE where GDPs are lower, where transport conjunctions are not considered a problem, cars are still considered to be kind of a social status. Thus the EU could pursue a program or a project with an international scope- such as http://www.cyclingalternatives.org, which is a trans-European mobile seminar on bikes. It would serve as an active example with good advance promotion before it takes place, cycling and stopping in different places throughout CEE countries, providing workshops, campaigns and cultural venues on cycling, its health implications, qualitative differences of citizens’ lives in cities with a big modal share of cycling compared to those where cycling transport still needs to be enhanced. It could be covered by local media, to improve citizens’ understanding and promote cycling itself; it could be focused on educating youngsters and other vulnerable groups, with games, best available measurements, which might be presented to municipalities. Concrete steps at local level could be implemented through concrete small-scale actions - e.g. communities during the workshops could decide where it would be practical and possible to implement a small low-cost measure and altogether build, paint and implement it.

Awareness actions typically do not require big municipal investments, and therefore can bring about cycling improvements and positive citizen reactions even where infrastructure is lacking. The focus on general dissemination should be maintained regardless of affordability of other types of measures, in order to boost the positive attitude towards urban cycling and motivate or even force municipalities to take further action. Additionally to the above, typical low-cost awareness actions could include measures such as:

- Bike-to-work or bike-to-school campaigns or competitions, in cooperation with public and private sector
- Critical mass events and bike festivals
- Cycling maps and dedicated cycling websites
- Cycling information boards
- Cycling pilgrimages
- Communication campaigns on cycling in schools and kindergartens
- Public opinion surveys about cycling habits
- Introducing cycling police officers, in the combined service of cycling promotion and traffic safety...

5.4.2 Traffic safety campaigns

Traffic safety has been a topic specifically singled out in the context of communicating cycling as well as in the context of infrastructure planning. In additional to regular education for school children about traffic safety, campaigns on traffic safety are suggested to be implemented in the form of social advertising campaigns targeted to
all traffic participants, for instance by using billboards to illustrate how cyclists and other traffic participants should behave in order to avoid conflicts and injuries. There are already good examples of such campaigns coming from Lithuania (Kaunas).

5.5 Services for cyclists

The most commonly introduced cycling services in municipalities that were motivated by the mobile2020 project have focused on the development or improvement of intermodal connections at railway or bus stations, bike parkings and public/municipal bike sharing systems, often supported by the EU funding. Some additional, relatively low-cost, recommendations for cycling services could include:

- Practical cycling education for less experienced cyclists
- Designation of (local) cycling coordinators.

5.5.1 Practical education on cycling in the big cities

Due to lack of experience or lack of any preparatory education, the recreational and indecisive potential cyclists often find the cycling through urban areas difficult due to deficient infrastructure or busy traffic, and tend to avoid it. In order to motivate growth of the cycling modal share in the big cities, especially among these types of potential utility cyclists, ‘learning by driving’ could be offered as part of municipal cycling services in bigger towns, and would include advice and practical training, sharing examples on how to behave on the road, demonstrating the roads which are better to use for cycling etc.

5.5.2 Designated cycling coordinators

Wherever cycling is being recognized in the frame of local or regional transport planning, nomination of a full/part-time cycling coordinator (cycling office/officer) is recommended, in order to have a point of contact and source of holistic guidance and knowledge support to the local/regional administration regarding cycling-inclusive transport planning, as well as for coordination of planning and implementation of specific cycling measures in the local and and/or regional context.

In Slovakia, the National Cycling Strategy implementation is supported by nomination of the national cycling officer and 8 regional cycling officers, with a pending nomination of local cycling officers in all municipalities.

5.6 Cycling tourism

In lowland areas of many CEE countries, especially Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Slovakia and Romania, cyclotourism is gaining in momentum and is frequently the main driver for development of regional and local cycling infrastructure and services; this should be taken as an opportunity to benefit from tourism-related cycling measures also for utility cyclists. Synergies between utility and tourism-related cycling are already much used in EU-funded cross-border cooperation projects and such initiatives should be further strengthened also in the national context, for connecting regions within a same country, where small towns individually do not have capacity or need for sustainable transport planning, but when placed in a context of regional economic development possibilities offered by cyclotourism, they should be guided to recognize and utilize them. Cycling information boards along the existing regional cyclotourism routes combined with information on protected nature sites is one of possible examples, applicable also in the transboundary context.