

Getting set for European Mobility Week

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As European Mobility Week approaches its seventh year, its coordinator Peter Staelens talks about its role in instigating positive change not only in cities in Europe, but increasingly around the world.

[F006 Image 1](#)

Raising awareness

European Mobility Week, which takes place from 16 – 22 September, is a drive to promote sustainable mobility by raising awareness and encouraging the implementation of sustainable transport measures.

Cities participating in European Mobility Week plan a week-long programme of activities built around sustainable mobility, usually culminating in an "in town without my car" event to draw major media attention. Each year, the week focuses on one particular aspect of mobility. This year, the spotlight is on air quality, with the campaign slogan "Clean Air for All." City climate will be next year's theme.

A chance to experiment

"The most important objective of European Mobility Week is raising awareness," says Mr. Staelens. "But the event also provides cities with the perfect opportunity to experiment with sustainable transport. Recently we've seen cities outside Europe – Japan and Taiwan for example – joining the initiative, so it's no longer just about Europe. For countries all over the world, it's an ideal time to try out new schemes, and a real incentive to shift behaviours."

Promoting lasting change

However, European Mobility Week does not just promote temporary changes or test schemes. The event has specific admission requirements, designed to ensure that each city makes lasting changes to improve local mobility.

"Each participating city must sign a charter," explains Mr. Staelens. "This requires them not only to plan a programme of events for the full week and commit to the 'in town without my car' day, but also to implement at least one permanent change. This can range from building cycle paths, to devising public transport initiatives, to providing sustainable mobility strategies to businesses. Last year more than 2,000 cities participated in European Mobility Week, and we have already confirmed 1,453 permanent, positive changes in the drive for more sustainable mobility.

Most permanent measures focus on improving bicycle networks and pedestrian infrastructure, or launching awareness campaigns.

Examples range from Budapest's implementation of new bus lines, expansion of pedestrian zones, and extension of its underground metro line, to the launch of Reykjavik's first chevron-marked roads denoting shared car and bike usage, and development of a new, updated cycle map.

[F006 Image 2](#)

Test results

The European Mobility Week team measures the event's success every year, enabling them to compare results with previous years and draw conclusions on its effectiveness.

"We've developed evaluation methods and surveys, which we send out to every participating city after the event," Staelens says. "These tell us how citizens have reacted to the campaign, to what extent they were aware of it, and whether they support initiatives to implement sustainable mobility."

The future looks bright

The results are positive thus far. Since the first European Mobility Week in 2002, the number of participant cities has increased every year. This year, there are already more than 1,000 cities registered, and Staelens expects this figure to rise sharply as the event gets nearer.

"Many cities sign up at the end of August and beginning of September, so to have this number of participants so early on is very encouraging," he says. "The campaign is growing year by year, not just in Europe but internationally. Moreover, cities are no longer limiting themselves to a one-week campaign. We're seeing them really get behind a long-term, integrated approach to urban transport. European Mobility Week has a very bright future ahead."

Behind the scenes

European Mobility Week's core consortium is comprised of the Eurocities network; Energie-Cités, an association of European local authorities that promotes sustainable energy policy; and the Climate Alliance, a partnership of European cities that actively supports the inhabitants of rainforests.