

European Mobility Week - Money talks when it comes to promoting cycling in Germany

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European Mobility Week 2009 is the first campaign for André Muno as national coordinator for the event in Germany. He tells *MindsinMotion.net* why he wants as many politicians as possible to get on their bikes.

[F065 Image 1](#)

André Muno's day job is with climate protection campaign group Climate Alliance, which is a Europe-wide association of cities, municipalities, districts and other non-governmental organisations.

Climate Alliance has been involved with European Mobility Week (EMW) since its initial launch in 2002, although André only joined the group last year, and took over as EMW coordinator this year. There is one other member of staff, who occasionally covers for him, but André is pretty much a one-man band when it comes to EMW in Germany. And he is banging his drums for more political backing at a national level.

Not enough

"In Germany we don't have enough support at a national level. Of course, budgets have to be managed, but if there were more money to actually get out there and talk to cities and give them some financial backing, and more pressure from above for them to get involved, then participation would improve and Germany's transport options would improve," he says.

Political cycling

This desire for more political support is perhaps why one of the main events planned for EMW is aimed at getting more politicians onto their bikes.

Across Germany 3,600 people – including three hundred members of local parliaments – will get on their bikes for *Stadtradeln* (City cycling). Stadtradeln is a three-week competition between cities and municipalities to see who can get the most local people, particularly politicians, to get on their bicycles.

One of the principal aims is to make politicians themselves more aware of the issues people face when they use bicycles every day in and around their cities.

[F065 Image 2](#)

“We’re targeting decision-makers and the actual people who give the go-ahead for bicycle lanes and such. They will learn what it’s like to cycle in a city and see how dangerous it is. Then maybe they will realise the need for better cycling facilities,” says André.

Most active

The cities that cycle the most during the three weeks will be rewarded, while there will also be prizes for individual participants who cycle the most kilometres and for cities that get the most politicians involved.

One city aiming for the top prize will be Chemnitz, which, says André, is one of the German cities that are most active in sustainable mobility.

In line with EMW's aim to promote long-term, permanent sustainable mobility measures, Chemnitz's civil engineering department has established a working group involving shop owners, clubs, police and citizens to improve cycling in Chemnitz. Its public transport company CVAG has also purchased six natural gas buses.

Healthy total

If André's expectations are accurate, Chemnitz will be one of around fifty cities taking part in EMW. It's a healthy total, but it will probably fall short of last year's total of 57, due largely to the downturn in the international economy.

Measuring how many cities actually take part is not made any easier, André says, by the fact that many do not register with EMW properly.

“We are pushing cities to register online in advance so they get the best possible exposure and publicity, but it's always the way that some do not register until afterwards. Often the final figure of participants is not available until October,” he says.

So what about that famous German efficiency then?