



SUMMARY

Field Trip #4 – Sustainable Mobility in Essen, Germany

Polish-German cooperation on low-emission economy in cities

21 September 2017

On September 21, 2017, a delegation of selected Polish municipality representatives was invited to experience sustainable mobility in Essen, Germany, following and illustrating the 4th German-Polish consultation meeting that took place from September 19-20. The group embarked on an exploration tour by bike, foot and public transport along three thematic axes: intermodality, enhanced bike infrastructure with the Germany's first bike highway under completion, and cooperation with various stakeholders and pupils to create safe ways to school. This field trip took place in the context of the European Green Capital Essen 2017 and the European Mobility Week.

Essen's first mobility station – piloting intermodality in the city

The participants first walked to a mobility station inaugurated in July 2017, the first of Essen's **eight mobility stations designed with the financial support of the National Climate Initiative**. The idea is to establish those stations in peripheral areas that are less connected to the public transportation system.

Ute Jansen (Mobility Manager, Ruhrbahn) presented the planning and implementation processes initiated back in 2013. The **European Green Capital** has been instrumental in getting a special authorization for reserving parking space to the car sharing system. Indeed, in Germany, private persons are usually not granted privileges regarding street use, and car sharing businesses are considered private. A lesson learned is therefore to always consider opportunities given by awards to pilot measures.

The **tramway** station is now equipped with **bike and car sharing systems**, and with a **charging pole for electric cars**. Cars of different capacities can be rented there to respond to various needs.

The experience of Essen is valuable as the city did not have much financial capacity. Solutions were found to **minimize costs**, while providing

user-friendly services. For instance, there is no screen on the station, but everybody can access information via a smartphone app or check the map and the transporting options directly at the mobility station's column. On the down side, it proved too complex to establish one registration to access all services.

Some **benefits** are already visible: 3 jobs were created for the maintenance of the station. As the number of mobility stations increases, additional jobs should be created. In addition, traffic should be reduced: 1 shared car replaces approx. 10 private cars, which can durably improve urban planning and the quality of life in neighbourhoods.

A **second station** was opened on the East side of the city only two days before the field trip. It is located in a district that is less well-off, thereby contributing to **social inclusion**. This second station also provides **bike garages** that can be rented on a daily basis, a solution that is particularly important for the increasing group of pedelec owners. An additional, smaller station is under planning as part of a different project in a residential neighbourhood.

Essen **wants to achieve a modal split of 25% per transport mode (public transportation, private motorized vehicles, biking, walking) by 2050**. Currently, private motorized vehicles amount for about half of the journeys

– a high percentage compared to other large German cities.

Ruhrbahn will evaluate the project with the data collected (anonymously) by the car sharing provider. NextBike, the promoter of the bike sharing system, has recorded 5.000 to 6.000 uses per month in Essen so far, and about 300.000 rentals per year for the whole Ruhr area.

More information: [website of Ruhrbahn](#) (German)

A highway for bikes running through the Ruhr area – Radschnellweg Ruhr RS1

Ulrich Malburg (head of unit at the Transport Ministry of the region North Rhine Westphalia) introduced participants to a new category of a bike path: the first cycling highway under realisation in Germany – the *Radschnellweg Ruhr RS 1*. The group cycled along the bike path, which is set to cross the Ruhr area for more than 100 km by the end of the construction period. The idea of the RS1 was born in 2010. Five years later, the first segment between Essen and Mülheim an der Ruhr (11 km) was opened. The Polish delegates rode their bikes until that point.

In spite of its name, the bike highway is not about speed; rather the goal is to allow for a **safe, direct and seamless connection** throughout the Ruhr area. Its main **characteristics** are: a shared, yet separated space for walking and cycling, a minimum width of 4 meters, no intersections and a wide range of services provided incl. lighting, winter maintenance service, and standardized sign-posting.

Several factors led to a successful implementation of the RS1. In Essen, the bike lane was **built on a former train track**, which provided for space and ideal conditions to redevelop the area. Further, the project was undertaken at the intermunicipal level through the association *Regionalverband Ruhr*. It shows that **cooperation with neighbouring municipalities** pays off, especially when it comes to infrastructural development and to the promotion of and benefits for the whole region. Along the RS1, several urban development projects take form, e.g. the newly built residential neighbourhood.

The city of Essen is taking measures to support the expansion of cycling in the city. A **new police unit** is for instance dedicated to bike traffic and safety only.

More information: [website of RS1](#) (German)



Safe ways to school - planned with children, implemented by the municipality

The project „Safe ways to school“ was initiated by the foundation *Kinderstiftung Essen*. The NGO wanted to bring teachers, external experts and pupils together to find out **how pupils could get to school walking and biking safely**. Bockmühle is one of the two schools selected for this pilot phase. Participants met **Christiane Voigt**, architect and initiator of the project, and some kids involved in the project.

The NGO paid for the initial technical evaluation and presented the outcomes to the municipal administration. The project will now enter its implementation phase: the traffic light crossing will be moved to be more convenient and safer for pedestrians and bikes that cross this 4-lane street. The connection to the RS1 – a few meters away – will be improved and made more visible.

The city is paying for the implementation of the measure – overall about 150.000 EUR. The kids have learnt with this project how to read maps and to think about their environment and mobility habits. The whole neighbourhood, not only the school, will eventually benefit from a safer crossing and a better access to the bike highway. The project fosters social inclusion and increased quality of life. It has been possible thanks to the **cooperation of a wide range of actors**: NGOs, teachers, pupils, an external transport expert from a neighbouring city and the road authority of Essen.

More information: [website of Kinderstiftung Essen](#) (German)

Supported by:

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