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Study on signage for cyclists and pedestrians

Summary

September 2012

Transport,
Health and
Environment
Pan-European
Programme
(THE PEP)



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Background

At a workshop organized by THE PEP in Batumi, Georgia in September 2010, dedicated to promoting the use of active transport modes (walking and cycling), Member States presented their activities and experiences. Out of several ideas that might have a positive impact on the development of using these modes, in-depth and shared knowledge of signage interested the participants at Batumi.

By way of contributing to the programme, France offered to fund a summary of existing measures or those under negotiation at international level concerning signage applicable for cycle lanes or pedestrian routes and travel time on foot or by bicycle.

Objectives of the study

1. To provide an inventory of existing measures concerning signage applicable for cycle lanes or pedestrian routes with the travel time on foot, by bicycle, rollerblade or other active transport mode.
2. To prepare a compendium of best practices for states participating in THE PEP

The ultimate goal is to provide a document derived from THE PEP validation process concerning signage for green transport modes, which local authorities or Member States can use when they wish to develop this type of signalling.

Scope of the study:

The study focuses on the vertical or horizontal police, direction, temporary and tourist signage of fifteen countries. Direction signage for feeders to or among different means of public transport comes within the scope of the study. It deals with signs for cyclists, pedestrians and other active transport modes (rollerblades, etc.), both in urban and interurban environments.

Progress of the study:

The factsheets result from large-scale data collection based on:

- the more or less precise responses to the questionnaire on pedestrians and cyclists,
- interviews,
- bibliographical research.

	Questionnaire responses received from Member States	Pedestrian factsheets completed by CETE (Fr)			Cyclist factsheets completed by CETE (Fr)		
		V01	V02	VF	V01	V02	VF
Germany							
Austria							
Belgium							
Spain							
France							
Georgia							
Macedonia							
Poland							
United Kingdom							
Russia							
Switzerland							
Ukraine							
Denmark							
United States							
Italy							
Norway							
Czech Republic.							

First column: in orange, countries that have not responded to the questionnaire at September 1st 2012, in green, countries that have responded;

Columns V01, factsheets (cycle or pedestrian) in draft form.

First lessons learned:

It is first and foremost necessary to understand the political organization of the country and to identify the legislation in decision-making centres.

It is clear from these initial analyses that local signage policy is closely linked to the organization of the country, and that there is a need to understand:

- who deals with signage policy?
- who defines legislation and signage?
- who implements it in the field?
- how much room is there for manoeuvre in the local environment?

In countries with relatively centralized structures, such as Denmark, France, Norway and United Kingdom, legislation and signage are defined by the State and each local authority is required to apply them, whether this signage applies to a hierarchical network or not.

In countries with a more federalist structure, such as Austria, Belgium and Germany, the State establishes a general framework and the regions define their own direction signage, depending on the policy implemented locally.

It should be noted that police signage is generally defined by the State, regardless of how the country is organized, in accordance with the Vienna Convention. There is greater

heterogeneity in direction signage, some countries currently having no information on this topic, either legislation or recommendations. Note however that both police and direction signage are most often implemented by local authorities.

Some countries have developed and are implementing "national plans for green transport modes", such as Germany, France and the United Kingdom. These plans, with content focused on supporting the implementation of development work and on communication campaigns about the impact of cycling and walking on health, etc. are sometimes accompanied by funds intended to finance measures that have been decided upon locally.

The role of more or less institutional associations and the nature of the measures they take are very different from one country to another. Where they exist, they are an essential link in the development of walking and cycling.

- In France, the role of the many cycling associations is often to defend users, and make proposals and claims; for pedestrians, the FFRP and the Club Vosgien (for eastern France) have each defined their signage and implement it in the field, in partnership with local authorities for the F.F.R.P (Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre / French Hiking Fédération) or independently for the Club Vosgien;
- In Germany, as in Austria, there are organizations (FGSV etc.) who work for the federal government on legislation and which also draw up technical guidelines and methodologies;
- In Italy, the F.I.A.B. (Fédération Italiana Amici della bicicletta) offers a coherent set of signs which is often the basis for direction signage implemented by local authorities to overcome the lack of national legislation for cycle direction signage;
- In the United Kingdom, where signage is defined by the State, Sustrans « carries » the national cycle scheme and takes action locally, at the request of local authorities, for maintaining the direction signage;
- In Switzerland, the role of the "Suisse à vélo", an example among others, is similar to that of Sustrans; this association also popularizes legislation with local authorities and sometimes replaces them for implementation.

Preliminary conclusions

As long as quality, readability and consistency of the direction signage are guaranteed within the local organization, the signage heterogeneity does not seem to be a major obstacle to walking and cycling.

In an oversimplified explanation, some countries tend to have a culture of strong commitment to associations and to the local level to stimulate green transport modes signage (bottom up), whereas other countries tend toward the provision of a regulatory framework at the national level to set the standard for behaviour, which then acts as a trigger for local action (top down). In reality, the process is usually a combination of both top down and bottom up approaches. This shows the need for Member States to provide the overarching framework and for the local level administrators and associations to implement policies as close as possible to the needs and behavior of the users.