

Environmentally Friendly Travelling in Europe - Summary of Marta Calegaro -

Urban areas are a favourite destination for a large majority of tourists travelling in Europe. Attractive Cities like Barcelona, London, Lisbon, Paris, Prague, Rome, among so many others, can attract several millions or dozens of millions of tourists each year, creating specific challenges.

The first challenge to be faced is that services to be provided for tourists in urban areas have to be adequately adjusted, which usually involves a great variety of stakeholders, including public authorities. Some of these services might be received as constraints, e.g. the organisation of the parking of tourist coaches far enough from the most famous tourist places. Others are opportunities to facilitate the travel of tourists within the cities to the numerous places they usually want to visit. The UITP presentation shall focus on the latter.

UITP is a representative association of all urban, suburban and regional public transport stakeholders, and its commission "Transport and Urban Life" has produced in 2003 a so-called Core Brief on "Leisure and Tourism : an opportunity for Public Transport". This document highlights that a strategy for sustainable mobility within cities must take into account the trips for leisure and tourism, and that the promotion of environmentally friendly modes like public transport is especially appropriate for destinations in ecologically valuable areas.

The presentation by UITP begins by a short analysis of the environmental impact and competitive advantage of the use of public transport in comparison with private car, with regard to air pollution, accidents, energy consumption and space consumption over time.

Then some examples of actions developed by urban Public Transport operators in order to develop an attractive leisure and tourism market are presented, targeting the variety of clients' expectations and different profiles of customers : door-to-door offers; appropriate timetables, fares and tickets, in some cases in combination with other services like entrance to museums or "all-in" fares integrating local travel costs in an overall package including travel as well as accommodation, catering and leisure activities; dedicated services for specific issues; marketing through a variety of communications channels; special training of possibly dedicated staff; adaptation of rolling stock and infrastructure (for luggage, bicycles...).



However the very high concentration of tourists can in itself be also a challenge in some cities.

From a survey performed by UITP late 2001/early 2002, the key elements for success are good products, clear strategies and adequate marketing. Some leisure activities can be proposed by the public transport operator on his own (cycling tours, use of old public transport vehicles...), but the main challenge is certainly to offer continuously updated combined services through a good cooperation with other partners (multi-stakeholder approach). Examples of such partners are recreational parks (Disney in the Paris area), organisers of events (World Cup in Germany, Olympic Games in London...), out-door activity providers, local and regional tourist offices, including other "mobility providers" in the same area, in the neighbouring regions or even abroad. A European approach targeting some kind of harmonisation of services throughout Europe could be beneficial for tourists as well as for service providers : European projects on the model of CIVITAS could be proposed in FP7 research programs for such topics. Tourists rights and obligations charter might also be promoted. Analysis and promotion of best practice are certainly a guideline for future action at the European level. Innovative combined services for tourists, involving several cities from several countries at a time, should be investigated : at the end, these services would probably be basic services for all European citizen being "local" everywhere.