e-mobility NSR

E-Mobility NSR partner attends CATCH final conference

Richard Kotter (Northumbria University) attended the final EU FP7 project CATCH (Carbon Aware Cities: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Low Carbon Transport System) conference at the University of the Wets of England (Bristol) on the 13th of December 2011, raised awareness of the E-Mobility NSR project and networked with delegates from a range of institutions, many of whom were involved in a range of EU projects on low-carbon transport which have concluded such as CATCH http://www.carbonaware.eu/; DEMOCRITOS http://www.democritos.ipacv.ro/, TOSCA http://www.toscaproject.org/about.html (an assessment of Technology Opportunities and Strategies Toward Climate-Friendly Transport, which included road, maritime and air transport) and also REACT http://www.react-transport.eu/ (which was to assist the European Commission with a strategic overview of funding made in the area of low carbon transport).

A new EU project, Sunset http://www.sunset-project.eu/, was presented at conceptual stage which is investigating and testing a new approach to urban mobility management using the latest ICT technologies, and is meant to work through cooperation by information sharing and provision of positive incentives between travellers, road authorities and other parties, including by setting up and operating "living labs" in Enschede and in Gothenburg or Leeds. The information is targeted on individual travel behaviour, and thus allows road authorities to fine-tune their transport policies and individuals to meet their personal objectives. The personalized approach can also help to alleviate other societal problems as social safety, social exclusion and even personal health.

From the perspective of the E-Mobility NSR project, it was particularly interesting to hear how the concept of sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs) are argued by the Polis network of European cities and regions networking for innovative transport solutions (http://www.polis-online.org/) was describing prospective scenarios where European structural funding might become conditional or at least preferentially given to cities and regions which have made progress in the area of sustainable urban mobility plans in some formal and constituted way, though there was acknowledgment that some cities (including capital ones like Lisbon) which are active on a whole range of sustainable, and including e-mobility fronts) have embraced similar thinking but not in this more formal conceptual way. Political issues and timelines of elections may result in certain target groups, such as taxi drivers, not being included in the efforts by city hall to make progress through a range of interventions.

The CATCH "My City" tool http://www.carbonaware.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/IG_meeting/Final_event/2_Castangia_THE_MY_CITY_TOOL.pdf) allows for the benchmarking and comparison of over 50 cities in Europe by performance of their transport system in terms of carbon emission through various factors, but CATCH also explores the "co-benefits" from reduced carbon emissions (in the domains of health, budget, planning, travel time, safety and community). Most E-Mobility NSR cities will be captured here, but CATCH is looking for new content and data to input.

Urban Health Messaging was another interesting exploration from a colleague from the London Borough of Westminster, where the benefits from reduced carbon-intensive transport (including walking and cycling, as demonstrated well by the City of Odense) are accrued by the public health system, which appears not to invest in this, and where different potential public user engagement groups have to filtered out with segmented marketing and messaging to result in desired behavioural (travel mode) change. The WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Urban Environments at UWE made a case for integrating health into the research and practice of spatial planning across functional team and institutional boundaries (such as tested in the City of Bristol).

Insights were shared from a project on a "Mobility Credits Model" as a transport specific platform (conceived of in Italy, but eventually combining Genoa, Stuttgart, Lisbon and Craiova) is aiming to "enable travellers, mobility providers, technology providers and transport planners to understand the implications of climate policy and increasing prices for greenhouse gas emissions and to identify new opportunities in urban mobility first and in extra-urban mobility later. The rationale of the Mobility Credits Model is based on setting as quantitative target the 'sustainable load of GHG (Greenhouse Gases)' of the study area. Subsequently the GHG load is converted into a "total amount of mobility credits" distributed to all the travellers of the area. Based on their mobility behaviours, individuals 'consume' their initial endowment of mobility credits. In addition, depending on their mobility habits, people could have needs higher or lower than the mobility budget assigned: as a reaction, exchange mechanisms develop in the system, regulated through a sort of bank where credits are bought by the individuals or returned with monetary benefit in case they have been unused." (http://www.democritos.ipacv.ro) Commercial and practical implementation of this is as yet challenging after the project has concluded, but it may become reality in Genoa.