

Case Study: Two Shop-by-bike Campaigns 2012 in Vienna and Graz



Introduction

As part of the EU-funded project Cyclelogistics Shop-by-bike campaigns are carried out all over Europe to convince people to leave their car at home and use their bicycle instead when going shopping. At the same time the campaigns aim to find out what retailers can improve to make their shops more welcoming to cycling customers. Evaluation results of such campaigns in Vienna and Graz are now available.

Background & Objectives

The Cyclelogistics projects aims to achieve a reduction in energy used in urban freight transport, specifically through the transport and delivery of goods by bicycle rather than by car, with a focus on inner cities. Where the transport of goods in cities is concerned people mostly think about the delivery of goods through big lorries and vans. However, around 60% of all trips in a city are related to the transportation of light goods (ranging from a few kilograms to 400kgs). This clearly illustrates the high potential of a shift from motorised traffic to (cargo) bicycles.

And the project not only focuses on what is traditionally perceived as logistics and the delivery of goods by cargo bikes but taps into the huge potential for private individuals to use the bike for transporting their shopping – as a form of private logistics. After all, more than 80% of all shopping trips are for every-day consumer goods (see Baseline Study Cyclelogistics LINK) and already a partial shift of these trips will considerably improve the quality of life in our cities. With Shop-by-bike campaigns at 15 different sites all over Europe the Cyclelogistics project aims to:

- Tap into the enormous potential contained in the private transportation of goods
- Motivate individuals to use their bikes for shopping and leisure trips
- Convince supermarkets, malls, hardware stores, chain stores, etc. to establish supporting frame conditions and services for bicycle use.

Implementation

Especially in urban areas there is a big potential to use bicycles for shopping, as 83% of the shopping trips are for daily goods and in urban areas there is a dense network of these shops (e.g. supermarkets). The average distance to shops selling daily supplies is never more than 1,5 km - an ideal cycling distance.

At the same time, research has also demonstrated that in 9 out of 10 cases (92%) the goods we buy could be transported on a bicycle.

Therefore, Shop-by-bike campaigns at 15 locations in 11 European countries are carried out during the EU-funded Cyclelogistics project in 2012 and 2013. This will result in over 3000 test buyers doing their shopping by bike rather than by car for a one-month test period. Evaluation results from these campaigns are meant to help improve the conditions for cycling customers and to ultimately lead to a higher share of people using the bicycle for short, everyday shopping trips.

In Austria the first run of these campaigns have taken place in Vienna and Graz, in May and June 2012 and were carried out with the support of the supermarket chain SPAR as well as the City of Vienna and Graz. Extensive evaluation results of the test trials are already available.

Care was taken to select at least 50% motorists among customers of the SPAR supermarket chain. Pedestrians and Public Transport users were excluded as the target group. In total 232 testers (150 in Graz and 82 in Vienna) agreed to use bicycles instead of cars to do their daily shopping, as often as possible. As an incentive for participation test buyers could choose among a XL bicycle basket, a good kick stand or a discount towards panniers. This equipment considerably improves the suitability of the bicycles when it comes to goods transport. SPAR provided a €20 voucher for each of the test buyers to get them to take part in the evaluation.

It was interesting to find out what kept customers from just giving it a try. About half of those who refused to participate simply were not interested, followed by a combined trip chain or the perception that cycling would be too tiring or too dangerous. But those who tried were positively surprised! 66% of the testers in Graz / 59% in Vienna found it saver than expected, more than 60% found the transport capacity better than expected.

Consumers that would normally have used the car for shopping now used the bike in 77% of the cases.

Certainly the test cyclists' were also questioned about suggestions for the city as well as for supermarkets on how to improve the situations for cyclists. Top of the wish list for administrations was more and better bicycle infrastructure (65%). From supermarkets they requested more promotional activities (58%) and more/better bicycle parking facilities (44%).

The detailed evaluation report of the campaign is available on the projects website (http://www.cyclelogistics.eu/index.php?id=39&folder_id=114). It gives information on what consumers, especially motorists think about shopping by bike after a month-long trial period, describes the differences between the two largest Austrian cities that also have a difference in bike share (Graz 16% to Vienna 6%).

Conclusions

These campaigns Shop-by-bike campaigns were a big success. It was easier than expected to find participants ready to participate. However, it took 2.5 times longer in Vienna to recruit testers than in Graz. This might be an indication that in cities with a higher bicycle share it is easier to find participants ready to try out cycling related campaigns.

During the campaigns in Austria it also became clear that incentives are a good way to recruit testers and should, if possible, be an integral part of such campaigns.

Looking at the facts it is clear that European cities should try to encourage more of their citizens to use their bikes for more shopping trips. If just the shopping trips in European urban areas could be shifted from car to bicycle this would lead to massive CO₂ savings of 18-20 million tons a year!