

DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS CONTROL SCHEMES FOR TOURIST COACHES

Deliverable of the measure 6.2 of Success Project

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FOREWORD



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As senior political representatives of the SUCCESS cities we have been personally involved in the project from its beginnings as a Proposal submitted to the CIVITAS Programme in 2004. We have been honoured to take part in the second phase of CIVITAS and we have been pleased to see how well the plans have been implemented in our cities and how our citizens have benefited.

The rich cooperation that has been the hallmark of SUCCESS, both between the cities and between local partners in each city, has resulted in greater understanding and mutual respect between different organisations and different cultures. This will have long-lasting effects that will benefit all who have been involved in the project.

We have been pleased to cooperate with the European Commission and the wider CIVITAS family, and have contributed to the CIVITAS Political Advisory Committee.

We trust that this document will provide useful lessons for others considering the adoption of measures similar to those that we implemented in the SUCCESS project.

Denis Leroy, *Communauté Urbaine de La Rochelle, Vice Président en charge des transports*

Jean Yates, *Lancashire County Council, County Councillor*

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1 SUCCESS PROJECT

SUCCESS (Smaller Urban Communities in Civitas for Environmentally Sustainable Solutions) is a 4-year project, within the European Research and Demonstration Programme CIVITAS II, with 12 partners including local authorities, transport companies, universities and experts from La Rochelle (FR), Preston (UK) and Ploiesti (RO). The main objective of SUCCESS is to demonstrate that, with an ambitious package of mobility and traffic management measures, significant results can be provided regarding sustainable transport and energy policy in small and medium sized cities. SUCCESS addresses technical, social, environmental and economic aspects of an integrated mobility strategy. As a demonstration project, SUCCESS involves extensive investment in the participating cities, along with a large range of stakeholders and integrated packages of demonstration measures. Several actions have been engaged in each city ranging from controlled access zones to biofuels, from real time information systems to alternative modes for transport, from cycle and walking paths to integrated ticketing. In total, more than 50 different projects have been set up involving a large number of stakeholders leading to a very wide scope of sustainable mobility management and implementation.



The main goals of SUCCESS are :

- To demonstrate that vehicles using clean and alternative fuels can be an efficient choice for urban transport
- To demonstrate that, with an ambitious package of mobility and traffic management measures, significant results can be seen regarding sustainable transport and energy policy
- To demonstrate that accession countries, soon to be new member states, can learn from our previous mistakes and contribute to urban collective transport issues, while implementing at the same time actions promoting alternative transport modes
- To contribute deeply to many different related research and assessment activities such as new, all-inclusive training and communication initiatives supporting the project objectives

La Rochelle, Preston and Ploiesti represent well the medium-sized cities in Europe. Most of medium sized cities are built around an historical city centre. This city centre is quite often rich with several types of shops as well as craftsmen and small industries, with other commercial or tourist areas scattered around in the city. Commercial and industrial zones have grown up in the surrounding areas and are accessible within a short time.

Regarding transport, the main characteristics of such cities are their small surface area, the human size of relationships and their small investment capacity. Buses often provide the main form of public transport.

Medium sized cities generally have a low demographic density, with the population often spread over a large area, sometimes in surrounding small towns which are included in the "life zone". On the one hand this means short travel times, good accessibility and freedom for travelling, but on the other hand it makes collective transport very difficult to organise.

In such cities, relationships between citizens and between citizens and politicians are closer. The proportion of inhabitants involved in the city life is quite often higher than in larger ones: through different associations and clubs, inhabitants come to know each other more easily and have often direct access to politicians involved in these motors of the city life. So the city culture is more widespread and is shared by a many inhabitants.

Smaller cities have in general lower investment capacity; this capacity is not proportional to size and it is sometimes difficult for the local authority to raise financial levers to fund projects.

1.1 The Project Consortium Cities

PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR :

Communauté d'Agglomération de La Rochelle (CdA), FR

PARTNERS :

Ville de La Rochelle (Ville de LR), FR

EIGSI, Ecole d'Ingénieurs de Génie de Systèmes Industriels, FR

Lancashire County Council (LCC), UK

Preston Bus Ltd (PB), UK

Transport and Travel Research Ltd (TTR), UK/FR

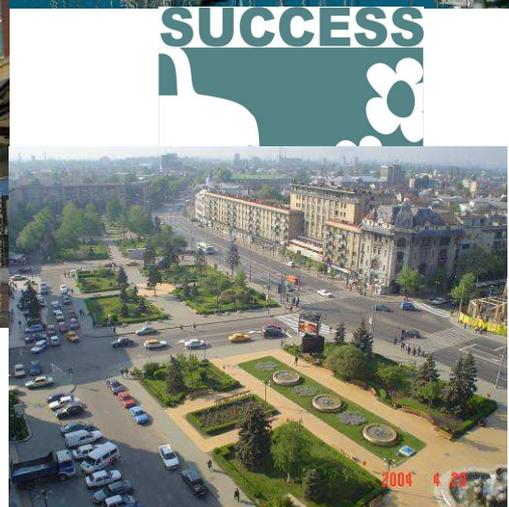
Preston City Council (PCC), UK

South Ribble Borough Council (SRBC), UK

Primaria Municipiului Ploiesti (PMP), RO

Regia Autonoma de Transport Public (RATPP), RO

Universitatea Petrol-Gaze Ploiesti (UPGP), RO



1.2 La Rochelle

La Rochelle lies on the Atlantic Coast of Western France. The Urban Community of La Rochelle includes 17 surrounding towns and La Rochelle itself. 160,000 inhabitants live in this area of 20,650 hectares and the total population may reach 250,000 people in summer. Based on a strong maritime heritage with several ports (commercial, leisure, fishing), the economic dynamism of the Urban Community of La Rochelle is the main factor of evolution of the city and the foundation of the urban strategies among which policies in favour of the framework of life and urban ecology (sustainable transport and protection of the landscape) stand in first position.

The Urban Community of La Rochelle has been involved for several years in improving urban transport and more specifically in introducing clean vehicles, developing new concepts for sharing vehicles, bicycles, in implementing Park + Ride, and even starting the "car-free day". Clean transport is not the only environmentally friendly improvement introduced in the town. Other actions have already been started to make the city one of the best in the country for environmental issues. Among these are "master planning" for wind turbines in urban areas, an observatory for air quality (ATMO existing since 1976), coastal protection studies (with La Rochelle University) and littoral management, electric boats for collective transport in the harbour. So SUCCESS is clearly part of the global environmental strategy of the local authority for improving quality of life in all of the city's communal areas.

1.3 Preston

Preston is England's newest city – city status was granted in 2002. It has a population of 129,000 plus suburban areas in South Ribble (combined population 250,000). Preston is the administrative capital and largest commercial centre of Lancashire in the North-West of England.

Preston is, however, an ancient place, receiving its Charter in 1179 - its historic Preston Guild is celebrated every 20 years with the last celebration in 1992. Preston has a strong economic and retail base. The area is also on the threshold of major regeneration, which will see a transformation of Preston's inner urban areas. This transformation is community-led with the Council and its key partners giving full support. The Council - in partnership with the private sector - is also working on a multi million pound scheme to redevelop Preston's City Centre through better retail, transport, housing, office, leisure and other mixed uses. Preston's student population is acting as a major catalyst too. With over 30,000 students, the University of Central Lancashire in Preston is the sixth largest and one of the fastest growing Universities in the UK.

Preston is already UK leader in the field of transport telematics through its involvement in the UK UTMC programme and Lancashire County Council was recently awarded the title of UK Local Transport Authority of the Year 2004. The planned major regeneration of the city centre has created

an opportunity for SUCCESS to support a step-change in the provision of sustainable transport systems within the city.

1.4 Ploiesti

Ploiesti City is located in the south of Romania 60 km north of Bucharest, the capital of Romania. Ploiesti is the capital of Prahova County and is located south of the Sub-Carpathian hills and north-west of the confluence point of two main rivers, Prahova and Teleajen. The municipal economy is characterised by a concentration of large and very large businesses. The population of Ploiesti went from 56,460 as indicated by the December 1912 census returns, up to 252,715 in January 1992. At the end of the year 2001, the population had slightly reduced to 248,688.

Ploiesti City (5,844 ha) is intended to become the nucleus of a metropolitan area, which will include some nearby villages adding around 70,000 new inhabitants to the administrative area. The road network has a radial-ring structure and extends from the city to the neighbouring villages. The municipal roads comprise over 800 streets with a total length of 324 km. East and West ring belts mean around 5,300 vehicles transit Ploiesti each day.

Ploiesti is situated at the crossing of the European Corridors IV and IX.

Ploiesti is a railway hub providing connections between Bucharest, Transylvania and Moldavia. The city has several railway stations for passenger and goods transportation.

Ploiesti is also an important national and regional motorway hub. The municipality lies at the confluence point of the North-South and East-West axes, respectively at the crossroads of Transylvania-Bucharest (Danube River or the Black Sea) and Moldavia-Oltenia (the sub-Carpathian connection).

The local transportation company RATP, which is municipality owned, provides connections to all areas within the city. The municipal vehicle fleet comprised 193 buses, 62 trams and 10 trolleybuses carrying about 70 million passengers annually.

2 LA ROCHELLE

2.1 DESIGN&IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCESS CONTROL SCHEMES FOR TOURIST COACHES

2.1.1 Context

A large number of tourist coaches come to La Rochelle every year. In the absence of adapted signage and clear information, coaches naturally reach their destinations through the very heart of the city centre. They cause traffic troubles and contribute to pollution and disturbances in the city centre, to the regret of the population.

This has an impact on La Rochelle's as a sustainable destination.

2.1.2 City Objectives

The objectives in this measure are:

- to provide an access scheme for the coaches entering in the city of La Rochelle
- to optimize the itineraries for tourist coaches when entering La Rochelle- notably through GPS system.
- to rationalize their parking in the city

All this measure is an experimental action destined to coordinate and give directions unforeseeable, random and seasonal flows of such vehicles.

2.1.3 Achievements

Two main actions were carried out

- Information (brochures, website) on recommended itineraries for bypassing the town centre to find parking facilities;
- Using GPS to access suitable parking facilities:

The following achievements are worthwhile mentioning ;

- Increase the number of tourist coaches using recommended itineraries and suitable parking facilities and use of GPS files by coach drivers:
 - What revealed the 2008 survey is that very few coach drivers knew and use the GPS-based facility or the special brochure notably due to a lack of transmission of the information by the coach operators to their drivers. However, a majority of the interviewed declared that both sources of information are of interest for them and would be useful for their future trips to La Rochelle. These targets have not been achieved so far but thanks to the corrective actions (changes implemented by the Tourist Office) already undertaken, we have good hope that positive results should be noticeable in the future.

- Improved satisfaction for coach drivers: It should be worthwhile mentioning that, 62% of coach drivers surveyed in 2008 considered that La Rochelle was an easy city to drive in (against 53.6% in 2005). For the easiness to park in La Rochelle, no significant change has to be reported: about 50% of coach drivers were satisfactory.

2.1.4 Implementation and operation actions

The measure was implemented in the following stages:

- Stage 1: Market Study (May – September 2005)**

The first phase has consisted in consulting coach drivers to have a better knowledge on their needs and expectations when entering, circulating and parking in La Rochelle.

- Stage 2: Definition of specific parks for coaches and signage improvement (from End 2005 – spring 2007):**

The Urban Community and the City of La Rochelle adopted a common approach to identify the most appropriate places for the tourist coaches to park and to define a simple and adequate road signing for the coach drivers. The stop-times and connections with other transport modes were essential criteria for this definition. Following this study, signage for tourist coaches was improved.

- Stage 3: Specific brochure for coach drivers/operators (from End 2005 – summer 2007):**

A reflection was initiated in order to provide coach drivers with information on recommended itineraries, drop-off zones and parking possibilities when arriving in La Rochelle.

The brochure was completed and printed in summer 2007 and has been also available on the website of La Rochelle tourist office.

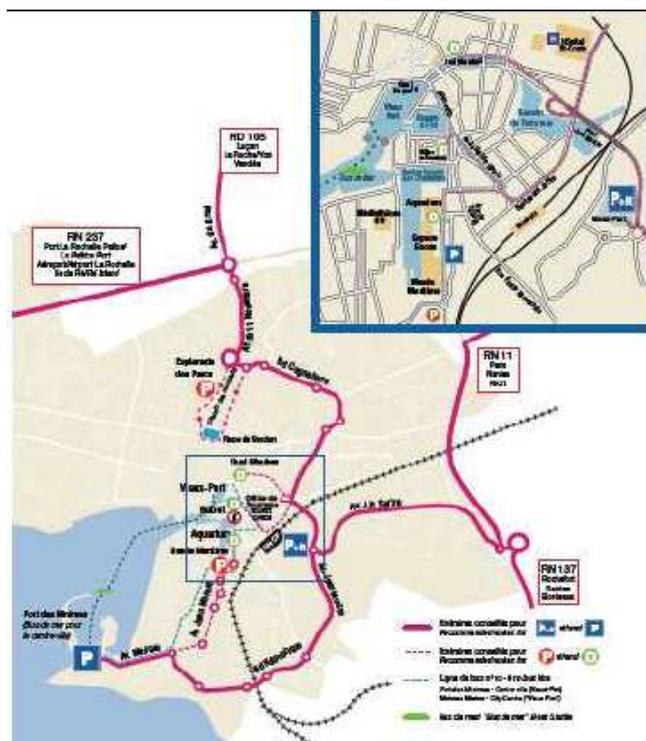


Figure 1 : Recommended routes and parking for coaches

- **Stage 4: Recommended routes and park areas for GPS (from September 2006 – summer 2007):**

- A study was launched in September 2006 for the implementation of a GPS system, which would help coach drivers follow the recommended routes and use the appropriate park areas.
- After a series of tests of the GPS files through various GPS devices, the implementation was completed in summer 2007.
- Coach drivers have the possibility to download GPS files from the Internet. The files are available on the same webpage as for the brochure.

- **Stage 5: Promotion and diffusion (since summer 2007):**

- Dispatch of over 700 brochures (paper version) to various tour operators and travel agencies by the Tourist Office from November 2007. These brochures have been addressed to coach drivers.
- Improvements for a more efficient communication among coach drivers have been carried out by the La Rochelle Tourist Office since summer 2008. It consisted of the following:
 - guides accompanying groups on visits give – when possible – the brochures directly to the coach drivers;
 - all correspondence and e-mail sent out by the Tourist Office mention the brochure - which may be downloaded or is available upon request – and the GPS-based facility;
 - this information is also included in the Tourist Office's "group" brochure.

Partnership: A close cooperation between the Transport and Mobility department of the Urban Community of La Rochelle, and the Public Roads department of the City of La Rochelle has been needed for the definition of optimized itineraries and the conception of a brochure towards coach drivers.

La Rochelle Engineering School - EIGSI - has been involved in the study and development of the GPS files.

La Rochelle Tourist Office has had privileged contacts with various coach operators and travel agencies (contact persons in charge of guided tours for groups). Therefore, it has been a key actor for dispatching directly or indirectly the information to coach drivers. Involved from the beginning of the project, it has been a driving force for its implementation and for suggesting any adjustment.

2.1.5 Conclusions

Based on the lessons learnt from the actions implemented in La Rochelle for changing the behaviour of the coach drivers in the city, several recommendations can be drawn:

- Usually, coach drivers do not seem – at a first sight – a major target of the urban transport policies, which tend in France to focus more on buses and other urban public transport modes. This can be partly explained by the fact that the coach drivers are located outside the territory of the City/Urban Community. The experience in La Rochelle revealed that coach drivers really appreciated the interest shown by the local authorities and thus to be fully considered as actors of

the local transport policy. This is all the more relevant as La Rochelle is a major tourist destination in France.

- Together with recommendations on some itineraries and specific park areas to coach drivers, it is necessary to offer them a good level of reception facilities on their arrival in La Rochelle. This is the reason why their needs and expectations have to be taken into account as much as possible for expecting them change their behaviour.
- The GPS files that can be downloaded from the Internet cannot be in itself a unique vector of information (on the recommended routes) for coach drivers. A complementary brochure seems to be essential given that such technology (GPS) is not currently used by every coach driver.
- To make sure information fully reach the final user (i.e. coach drivers), one should try to avoid too many intermediaries for dispatching the information.

Information on recommended routes will continue to be dispatched among coach drivers notably thanks to La Rochelle Tourist Office (brochures, website, GPS files). Adjustments and improvements should be brought with the objective to reach more directly coach drivers.

3 REFERENCES

Carfree Cities website (www.carfree.com).

Carfree City USA (www.carfreecity.us) provides information on carfree promotion programs in the U.S.

The City on the Move Institute (www.ville-en-mouvement.com) supports the development of the cultures of urban mobility and of civilities, with particular attention to streetscape design and management.

Complete Streets (www.completestreets.org) is a campaign to promote roadway designs that effectively accommodate multiple modes and support local planning objectives.

European Commission, *Copenhagen Declaration* (www.edc.eu.int/cfc/copenhagen.html), 1996.

Living Streets Initiative (www.livingstreets.org.uk) is a campaign to create streets that give priority to walking, cycling and play.

Local Government Commission (www.lgc.org) has a variety of useful resources for neighborhood planning including "Designing Safe Streets and Neighborhoods", "The Economic Benefits of Walkable Communities" and "Why People Don't Walk and What City Planners Can Do About It" fact sheets.

The Lyon Protocol; The Design And Implementation Of Large Car-free Districts In Existing Cities, a protocol for the design and implementation of Car-free cities was first developed and presented during the "Towards Car-free Cities" conference in Lyon, France, October 1997. Posted at www.carfree.com.

Transportation for Livable Communities (www.hwcn.org/link/tlc).



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