



APPLICATION FORM III

CATEGORY III

“CIVITAS City of the Year”

Please send your entry via e-mail to the CIVITAS Forum secretariat: civitas@fgm-amor.at
This call closes on 15. September 2008.

DETAILS OF APPLICANT

Local authority	> City of Graz	
Country	> AUSTRIA	
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CONTACT PERSON:		
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SIZE OF CITY/TOWN: Please tick / insert an "X".	<input type="checkbox"/>	up to 50.000 inhabitants
	<input type="checkbox"/>	50,000 to 150.000 inhabitants
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	150,000 to 500.000 inhabitants
	<input type="checkbox"/>	more than 500.000 inhabitants

DESCRIPTION

Please explain why your city can be considered as a good “ambassador” of the CIVITAS Initiative?

The city of Graz is a medium sized city with 240 000 inhabitants. It is the capital and the cultural, economic and university centre (with about 40 000 students) of the Styrian province.

In July 1997 transport experts predicted an increase in terms of car usage of 25% until the year 2010 if no sufficient change of the transport policy would be applied. This date formed the corner stone for a new and brave transport policy, named “**soft mobility**”. What does “soft mobility” mean? It aims to support and favour **walking, cycling** and **use of public transport** by a comprehensive set of measures. In a long run this policy should lead to a more liveable and enjoyable city, to a better environment and to an increase of transport safety.

CIVITAS TRENDSETTER formed the starting point for being an active ambassador of the CIVITAS Initiative on **local, national** and **international level**.

Ambassador on Local Level:

The Latin translation for CIVITAS stands also for citizenship. And what would be CIVITAS without its most important target group, the **citizens**. They are the great beneficiaries and therefore, they should know about the CIVITAS Initiative. Graz has introduced a set of **innovative** and well proofed (e.g. website, local folder, press conferences) dissemination actions to inform the citizens about CIVITAS.

As an example for an innovative dissemination action two examples will be illustrated.

In the year 2003 the city of Graz was Cultural Capital of Europe. Thus, a lot of exhibitions have been undertaken and the Museum for contemporary art was opened. This building, located right in the centre of the city, consists of a special surface allowing special effects via its **night illumination system**. So the writing CIVITAS TRENDSETTER was typed in big letters on the surface of the building.



Museum of contemporary art at night

A similar effect using the name TRENDSETTER was created by switching on and switching off lamps in a tower block in the inner city of Graz.



“ CIVITAS Trendsetter-light show” on a tower in the inner city of Graz

Ambassador on National Level:

Graz is actively promoting the CIVITAS Initiative on national level, as well. It was one of the first CIVITAS cities that produced its own web site in national language. This was very important to overcome the language barrier and to spread its knowledge to a broad national audience. To support this even further an own folder in national language was produced and sent to Austrian cities.

Furthermore, Graz was working in close cooperation with the Austrian Ministry for Transport and Innovation to promote the CIVITAS Initiative on national level.

Ambassador on International Level:

Graz hosted the **CIVITAS Forum 03**, where 139 people from 39 CIVITAS cities participated. It was the first time that a CIVITAS city presented its achievements through a series of **site visits** to the whole CIVITAS family and that such a high number of experts and politicians were able to discuss about sustainable urban transport solutions. This event has formed the fundamental basis for a series of wonderful and enjoyable CIVITAS Forum conferences in the following years.

Graz is one of only a handful of cities that has given a presentation during **each of the last six CIVITAS Forums**. This shows the strong commitment and engagement of the city and the willingness to share and spread its knowledge with the whole CIVITAS family.

CIVITAS CATALIST started last year and Graz is one of the city partners in this project. It hosted the **first project management meeting** and showed its strong commitment once more.

Due to the city’s internet presence (www.trendsetter-europe.org) several TV broadcasting stations visited Graz and broadcasted their experiences: E.g. **NIKKEI CNBC**, the Japanese Broadcasting Company, **BBC**, the British Broadcasting Company and **ZDF**, the German Broadcasting Company.

This whole bunch of activities assigns Graz as an “ambassador” and of the CIVITAS-Initiative was recognised by a high number of local, national and international awards. E.g. the “National Transport Safety Award 2005” and the “International Osmose Award – for New Non-polluting and Energy Efficient Vehicles 2007”.

Please describe how your city has been able to implement its CIVITAS policies in a timely manner and to overcome barriers and/or respond to them?

During the nineties the City of Graz decided to introduce a new traffic policy based on “soft mobility” measures. Thus, it was decided to limit the percentage of motor vehicles to a necessary proportion, by consistently promoting pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and by utilizing restrictive measures as well. “Soft mobility” principles also provided a basis for the “Verkehrspolitische Leitlinien 2000” (traffic policy guidelines, 2000). These defined five objectives and the corresponding implementation strategies intended to make “soft mobility” in Graz a reality.

In 1992 a **speed limit of 30 km/h** was implemented in the City of Graz. 802 of the 996 km of road network in Graz are part of this zone. Although very controversial at first, it later turned out that this “slowing down” of the traffic network in Graz was the most effective step ever taken by municipal traffic politics: the number of accidents decreased by 24% and in addition the noise level as well as the emission of pollutants was reduced.

By 1995 it already became possible to introduce a parking management concept as an effective instrument used to control motorized traffic: Short term parking within the so called “**Blue Zone**”. This **Blue Zone** aimed to shift the **enormous masses of commuters**, amounting to the considerable sum of at least **100.000 cars a day**, to public transport. Since 2005 the City of Graz manages more than 14.000 parking spaces, where payment of the parking charges is carried out with pay and display machines. In 2006 it was possible to expand the parking management to an additional “**Green Zone**” This zone also only has paid parking but permitted parking periods are longer and fees lower. To provide an alternative to these converted parking spaces a number of Park & Ride facilities were created, offering a comfortable transfer into the city centre for commuters.

Last but not least the City of Graz extended **three tramlines** finalized in the year 2007 one of the extensions directly connected with **P&R** and financed as an example of **PPP**.

As a result of the EU-Project **CIVITAS-Trendsetter** it was possible to pursue the direction of these measures, initiated in the nineties, in an even more target-orientated and intensive way since 2002 As one of the **CIVITAS measures** a special parking fee (reduction 33%) for environment friendly cars was created.

17 projects were realized in Graz due to this project, within the area of transport. These include, amongst others:

Public transport:

The best known initiative is the **conversion of the entire bus fleet to bio diesel**. Therefore, Graz owns the world’s largest bus fleet which is 100% operated with bio diesel. The bio diesel is obtained by recycling waste oil from gastronomy.

The **introduction of a night bus service** now makes it possible for more than 2500 passengers per weekend to reach their home at night time using public transport. Thus, the leisure-related motorized personal traffic was reduced and with it the risk of road accidents caused by alcohol consumption.

The **Installation of an electric information system** at stops and stations makes it possible to inform passengers precisely about how long it will take until their tram arrives.

The **establishment of a mobility centre and on-line information system** supports the public when searching for information regarding time tables and all types of public mobility. As demonstrated by a survey, approximately 20% of the customers of the mobility centre changed their mobility behaviour. Because the centre makes travelling with several operators easier, it is expected to increase the total use of public transport.



In Graz, the entire bus fleet is operated with bio diesel



Environmental token



The extension of three tramlines

More space for people:

Creation of “promenades” (areas to take a leisurely walk) in **traffic calmed areas:** By involving citizens in decision-making processes, it was possible to create a promenade that increases the quality of life, right in the centre of Graz.

It was necessary to eliminate parking spaces for the **redesigning of two squares** in the city centre to create more space and two pedestrian zones. For motorists new underground parking is provided as an alternative.



New square design, Karmeliterplatz

Bicycle traffic:

By **closing gaps in the bicycle network and optimizing the courses** of important main bicycle routes it was possible to eliminate many unnecessary barriers and detours for cyclists. The travelling comfort was significantly increased. The “Elise-Steininger-footbridge”, below the “Kepler-bridge”, near the city centre, can be mentioned as one of the most noteworthy improvements for pedestrians and cyclists.

The **digital bicycle city map** provides the possibility to determine the best route leading from A to B, and gives information about how to avoid highly frequented roads efficiently.



Elise-Steininger-footbridge, one of the most noteworthy improvements for pedestrians and cyclists

On account of the successful participation in the CIVITAS Project, Graz continued to focus on transport-related EU-projects. It is the objective of the project SURGE – “Sustainable Green Fleets” to organize urban public transport in an environmentally friendly way. Further important projects, supporting “soft mobility” measures in Graz, are PIMMS, ASTUTE and KAPA GS.

With the support of EU-projects, Graz has consistently and successfully succeeded in pursuing the path, already chosen in the nineties. Graz will continue to enforce “soft mobility” measures in the future as well!

Please explain how your city has actively involved stakeholders throughout the development and implementation of its policies?

Participation and involvement of citizens in decision-making processes has a long tradition in Graz. Numerous citizens' action committees apply themselves actively with regard to concerns and needs of the population, since more than 20 years. For this reason a citizens' participation committee was founded in the course of the CIVITAS-Trendsetter-Project to allow active participation in designing an area in the city centre. Reassured by the huge success of this participation project, Graz started a public communication and agreement process, titled "**PLANUNGSWERKSTATT.ZEIT FÜR GRAZ**" (which can be translated as: planning workshop. time for Graz), from autumn 2006 until winter 2007. The objective was to devise and agree upon concrete measures, increasing the quality of life and the attractiveness of the entire municipal area as a living, housing, working and leisure space. To solve traffic problems with soft mobility measures represents the main focus within this process.

Suggestions developed during this process were later checked and **amended by experts** with regard to jurisdiction, costs, regulatory framework and possible overlapping with already existing and running projects.

The participation and involvement of citizens and stakeholders in political decision-making processes represents a fundamental indication of a modern administration and is an important prerequisite of a sustainable and long-lasting development.

The involvement of the population and of all relevant stakeholders within the planning workshop is critical in order to:

- **Utilize local knowledge and capabilities of inhabitants as resources for the city development.**
- **Achieve acceptance, extensive support and with it an increased effectiveness of measures.**
- **Avoid and overcome impasses and political blockades and with it to accelerate decision-making and implementation processes.**



Public communication and agreement process, PLANUNGSWERKSTATT. ZEIT FÜR GRAZ

Please explain how your city has engaged other CIVITAS cities and CIVITAS Forum Cities in an active process of information exchange?

Graz, one of the first cities participating in the EU project CIVITAS has always made an effort to promote the exchange of experiences! Therefore, the first CIVITAS-Forum took place in the Culture Capital Graz in 2003. Since then the representatives of the City have aimed to actively exchange and disseminate the results achieved in the CIVITAS Framework within the CIVITAS Community by taking on leading and supporting roles as forum leaders, workshop leaders and speakers to present their experiences but also to receive suggestions. In addition, Graz is part of the political advisory committee that leads to an active exchange of knowledge with other CIVITAS Cities and CIVITAS Forum Cities.

However, Graz not only presents its experiences and knowledge within the CIVITAS Community. In 2007 lectures were given in the following cities: Maribor (Slovenia), Terrassa (Spain), Klaipeda (Lithuania) and London (UK).

Town and municipal councillors and city administrators of Graz had the chance for an intense exchange of experiences when travelling to Stockholm, Almada, Freiburg and Zurich between 2005 and 2007. Currently the City of Graz produces a video clip demonstrating traffic measures that have been implemented in Graz. These videos facilitate the dissemination the of the city's experiences, both on a national and international level.

Since 2007 Graz is also an „Ambassador City“, within the CIVITAS CATALIST project. Graz acts as a forerunner and well-experienced city in the fields of 1) New Forms of Vehicle Use, 2) Soft Measures, 3) Public Transport, 4) Pricing Strategies and Access Management and 5) Clean Fuels and Vehicles. By participating in the Graz works to capture interest, trigger reflection and to support an interactive process that will hopefully lead to potential joint implementations. Graz, as a theme ambassador city, will also provide facts. There is a specific knowledge of both technical measures and implementation procedures.

Because of that, Graz can be a "living example" providing a high potential to convince politicians, decision-makers and stakeholders in other cities.