

FEATURES



Mix and Move, Europe goes Multimodal

European Mobility Week
Multimodality
Maas

Mix and Move is the theme of the European Mobility Week 2018, which is the funky term for 'multimodality', but why, what, and how is multimodality actually?

The European Commission wants to phase out conventionally fueled cars in cities by 2050; and move towards zero emission city logistics in major urban centres by 2030. To obtain this goal the EC focusses on innovation, digitalization, decarbonization and people; and here is where multimodality comes in.

Mixing modes, maximizing benefits

Multimodality is the use and combination of different modes of transport for urban trips, which has to result in maximizing the benefits for passengers and for society. Which can go from motorized traffic, over electric traffic, via active modes such as walking and cycling; and all these modes can be individual, shared or public used.

The EU project FLOW, for example, aims to put walking and cycling on an equal footing with motorized modes. 'The only way to relieve traffic congestion is by bringing down the traffic,' says researcher Sven Maerivoet of Transport&Mobility Leuven (TML), with a PhD degree in Traffic Engineering, 'Additionally, where there is less space for motorized vehicles [when it is taken by other transport modes], people will have to look for alternatives. If there are attractive alternatives available, they will make the change and do the modal shift.'

How to go multimodal?

Multimodality depends on individual choices, nevertheless, the existence of certain infrastructure and services can influence the choice and push people towards other mobility modes. 'First of all, people have to know the entire available transport offer,' begins Maerivoet, 'both the physical offer (bus, tram, train, bike, ...) and temporal (like bus schedules); further on, accessibility is key as well; knowing the traffic flows and mobility needs can be translated in adapting public transport at a certain timing or routing, until offering and stimulating of alternative transport modes.'

Another incentive to go multimodal is economic, explains Maerivoet: 'People are prepared to pay for public transit if it has a high quality, especially in terms of punctuality. And last of all, it has to be convenient, and here is where Mobility as a Service (MaaS) comes in, he explains.

MaaS – the culminating point

MaaS has the potential to develop multimodal transport in cities, since it integrates all modes in a single mobility offer, offering both an integrated and optimized travel and payment method. Such as Vienna's MaaS platform WienMobil that is willing to be copied by municipalities from all over Austria.

Does this mean that the game of the car is out? No. Even with MaaS and Multimodality, Maerivoet still sees a role for the car; a zero emission one of course. 'Eventually, we will go to comodality, meaning that a smart choice of various transport modes results in a better travel experience.'

Authored by: **Fien Van den steen**

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