Active mobility for senior citizens

Background

The European population is ageing. According to the EC’s statistical office, Eurostat, the proportion of citizens over 65 years of age is expected to increase from 17 percent in 2010 to 28 percent in 2040. This trend is often more marked in sparsely populated areas: young people tend to migrate to nearby cities in order to find jobs, cut travel times, and enjoy an urban lifestyle.

Ageing has major implications for mobility that extend far beyond the issue of accessibility. Timetables, travel routes and customer services are among the many areas where adjustments may be needed. Since the EU declared 2012 as European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations, much research has been carried out in the field of sustainable mobility for older people as part of European projects (see under Links on the website of the AENEAS project, www.aeneas-project.eu).

Demographic changes

Ageing is a major issue in many of the SmartMove implementing regions. In Kreis Euskirchen (Germany), for example, the proportion of older people is expected to grow by almost 50 percent between 2010 and 2030. In the municipality of Langadas (Greece), the proportion of people over 70 years of age is 18.3 percent, higher than in the region of Central Macedonia as a whole (14.9 percent). In Burgos (Spain), almost a quarter of the population are over 65 years of age. Similar trends are apparent in the vicinity of Wittenberg (Germany), where the average age rose from 41 in 1990 to 48 in 2010. By 2025, the number of people older than 65 is expected to increase by a third, and the number of people younger than 20 will be reduced by half.
**SmartMove for the older generation**

A number of SmartMove implementing regions are organising activities to promote active mobility among older people. In Kreis Euskirchen, the AMC campaign is aimed primarily at older people. Besides obtaining feedback from existing passengers, the campaign aims to make bus and train use more appealing to older people who are still using the car as their main mode of mobility.

Older people are also a priority target group in the AMC campaign in Langadas, as part of which large-print brochures, timetables and maps are being distributed alongside the electronic tools (QR codes, social networks, e-ticketing) likely to appeal more to the younger generation.

In Burgos, information is being targeted at older passengers and training sessions are provided to improve their safety when travelling by bus or bicycle. Guided walks are also organised near selected bus lines.

Older people are also targeted in the SmartMove implementing area of Görlitz-Bernstadt-Herrnhut (in the region of Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien, Germany) and the southeastern area of Wittenberg.

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