

A transport pioneer in South East Europe

Burgas, Bulgaria **Mayor Dimitar Nikolov**

Lying on the banks of the Black Sea, Burgas, Bulgaria's fourth largest city with 230,000 inhabitants, is striving to make an urban mobility shift. To build an integrated transport system that is attractive and sustainable for the citizens and the many tourists is part of the city's vision of sustainable urban development. In February 2013, Burgas replaced its entire bus fleet with clean vehicles. Likewise, a public bike sharing scheme will be launched in the summer 2013 and a bus rapid transit (BRT) line is expected in 2014.

Burgas is the first city in Bulgaria to entirely transform and modernize the look of its public transport system. With the new integrated urban transport system the city will save 1,500 CO₂ emissions tonnes annually contributing to reaching the Covenant of Mayors objectives. The new transport services will provide the citizens with more attractive, affordable and safer mobility options. Dimitar Nikolov, Mayor of Burgas



Sustainable mobility is on Burgas' agenda since 2009, when the city launched an impressive €65 million investment to develop an integrated public transport system. Supported by a team of consultants, the city designed a comprehensive mobility plan which includes:



- The creation of a bus rapid transit (BRT)
- The replacement of the outdated bus fleet by 67 modern and environmentally friendly vehicles
- The development of 20km of cycling lanes and facilities
- The construction of new bus stops with real-time passenger information system
- The introduction of new paying parking zones in the city center
- The launch of a public bike rental system.

The BRT is the backbone of Burgas new integrated transport system. The line that should be fully operational in 2014 is expected to serve up to 60% of the city's population by creating a North-South corridor. The BRT key features include segregated bus lanes, rapid boarding, electronic ticketing and bus priority at crossings. These assets should make the BRT the most attractive, affordable and fastest transport option in the city. On top of serving the local population, the BRT line will largely improve the transport connection between the city center and the airport where an average of one million tourists land annually.

In addition, Burgas is also enlarging the current network of bicycle lanes by 20km with the objective of creating an entire cycling network connecting the suburbs with the city center. Since the use of bicycles is very limited in the region, which does not have a cycling culture, Burgas is working on promoting the use of bicycles not only as a recreational purpose but also for commuting. A public bike sharing system will be introduced as an extra measure to promote soft mobility in the city during the summer 2013.

Burgas – Key facts

- 83, 000 persons use public transport daily in Burgas
- From 2013, 33.6 million public transport journeys are expected every year
- In 2009 CO₂ emissions from the transport sector amounted to 55,126 tonnes
- Total investment cost in integrated transport system amounts to 67,071,840 € (EU funding 71%; national contribution 12.5 %; city of Burgas 16.5 %)
- Almost 1, 000 direct jobs created, primarily during the initial development for construction and development works
- Burgas is on the 74th position in the ranking of most visited cities in the world in 2011 having attracted 1. 86 million tourists.

As a signatory to the Covenant of Mayors the city of Burgas commits to reducing its CO₂ emissions by 25% by 2020

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