

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort: 'Check against delivery'

Transport - Health - Environment Institutional Arrangements for Policy Integration

Workshop

in the framework of the UNECE / WHO THE PEP
programme

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Welcome

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Organizers and partners

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and

World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO)
secretariat to the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European
Programme (THE PEP)

Federal Environmental Agency, Germany

European Academy of the Urban Environment (EA.UE)

Technical University of Delft

Participants:

Representatives from transport, environment and health sectors at the central
and local governments of the UNECE and WHO/Europe member countries,
city networks, relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations
and the academic community

Ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you very warmly to Berlin for the workshop “Transport, Health, Environment – Institutional Arrangements for Policy Integration”, held in the framework of the THE PEP – the Transport, Health, Environment Pan-European Programme. I am pleased that this subject has generated so much interest. As experts on transport, health and environment, you have come here from ... countries to discuss solutions for how environment, transport and health integration can be implemented.

Allow me to begin with a question: Hasn't the need for environment, transport and health integration been obvious for a long time? After all, we all know that our cars congest the streets and pollute the air. What's more, most of the time we sit – at work, in our cars, in front of the TV – and we are becoming less fit. But what stops us from breaking this cycle and going to work by bike? We would not pollute the air we breathe, and we would be mobile and fit. All three sectors would profit.

We, the staff of the Federal Environmental Agency, have had to experience ourselves how difficult it is to carry through this resolution on the personal level. In May last year, our agency relocated from Berlin to Dessau, 130 km away from Berlin. But half of the 800 staff members still live in Berlin, for personal or family reasons. They commute daily or weekly. To go this distance by bike is something only the most sportive are likely to do, and the train ride is at least 90 minutes. By car the commute takes a good hour – if there is no congestion. So, we are now generating more traffic. The long commute to work adds to the stress staff members are under and subtracts from the time they have to exercise to keep fit.

What had happened? The decision to relocate the Federal Environmental Agency was taken at the beginning of the 1990s on political grounds. After German reunification, the new federal states were also to have federal authorities. The impacts of this relocation on the environment and health, on transport and the social situation of staff members and their families were not taken into account at the time the decision was taken.

Without calling this decision into question, our own example shows that being aware of the need for policy integration and integrated planning including examples of concrete solutions is not sufficient as long as administrations and

decision-makers work in isolation from one another and take decisions at sector level.

In order to work together, and not against one another, we not only need the willingness to cooperate and knowledge of integrated solutions. We also need suitable institutional structures in and between administrations and policy-makers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Even though I may have painted a somewhat dire picture, there are some promising initial approaches. In Germany, for example, we have the Environment and Health Action Programme, which was agreed between the German environment and health ministries. You will be presenting and discussing such examples.

Our challenge is to learn from these positive examples and to apply this knowledge broadly. Integrated planning and decision-making, now the exception, must become the rule. This sounds relatively simple but is quite difficult to do. Even though they have some basic elements in common, local structures in the different countries and municipalities are very specific, so that ultimately only specifically adapted solutions will be helpful. A direct transfer of western approaches is often not helpful – a problem which reunification made particularly relevant for Germany. We gained valuable experiences from this – both positive and negative – in our country.

The variety of frameworks and different responsibilities in the various countries make it more difficult to agree specific national measures on environment, transport and health integration at the international level. We need to take a different course. Our chance here and also in the future lies in discussing and exchanging ideas and learning from each other. This requires creativity in dealing with a wide variety of frameworks. Every one of you needs to contribute. The diversity of the participants harbours great potential which we should utilise. I am especially keen to hear about the experiences in the new EU Member States and candidate countries, the countries of southern, south-eastern and eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. In these countries, scarcer financial and human resources call for more creativity in finding solutions. I believe that also we Western Europeans can learn how to develop structures at considerably lower cost and yet effectively.

Everyone here is both a giver and a taker. I am expecting many constructive discussions. We should not, however, get lost in theory, but should instead aim to achieve concrete results which can be utilised by local decision-makers and administrations. But we should also think about how we may use the outcomes of this workshop as a starting point for a continuous exchange of experience. Only then will we succeed in making headway in transport, environment and health integration. Integration provides the chance to achieve sustainable development objectives in all three sectors even in the face of limited financial and human resources. Let's find ways to use it.