

Five European Cities pioneer new citizen-oriented project aimed at improving local mobility with data

LEUVEN, 18 December 2019 - Seven high-level participants cooperate in the Citizens Observing Urban Transport project WeCount, which was established in the aim to empower citizens in five European cities to take a leading role in the production of the data, evidence and knowledge that is generated around mobility in their own communities.

Air quality and traffic congestion are among the main causes of poor urban living and have sparked rising concerns about the negative impact that transport has on people's health and wellbeing in urban areas. According to the European Environment Agency, air pollution caused 400,000 premature European deaths in 2016.

As several European cities in Europe embark on bold action to improve local transport and promote the use of alternative and clean modes of transport, citizens are now mobilising to have their voice heard and to actively participate in local transport policy development.

Five cities: Madrid, Ljubljana, Dublin, Cardiff and Leuven are coming together to mobilise 1,500 citizens throughout the coming year (2020) by following participatory citizen science methods to co-create road traffic counting sensors based on the popular Telraam experience in Flanders.

A number of low-cost, automated, road traffic counting sensors will be mounted on each participating household's window facing a road, which will allow authorities to quantify local road transport and the speed of cars, large vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Furthermore, it will generate scientific knowledge in the field of mobility and environmental pollution and encourage the development of co-designed, informed solutions to tackle a variety of road transport challenges.

WeCount intends to establish a multi-stakeholder engagement mechanism to gather data in these five pilot cities. Data will then be used to formulate informed solutions to tackle a variety of road transport challenges, thus improving quality of life at the neighborhood level.

Crowd-sourcing methods provide cost-effective data for local authorities at a far greater temporal and spatial scale than what would typically be possible in classic traffic counting campaigns and will therefore open up new opportunities for transportation policymaking and research.

"By putting citizens at the heart of the innovation process," said Kris Vanherle, Transport & Mobility Leuven, and project coordinator " WeCount aims to breaking down technological and societal silos, and holds the high hopes to inspire citizens to champion a new perspective on road transport."

This new Research & Innovation project was launched in the city of Leuven, Belgium, over the course of two days from 2-3 December 2019. The partnership is formed by seven knowledge partners involved in the WeCount project, a list which includes SMEs, academic institutions and non-profit organisations:

Transport & Mobility Leuven, Polis, Ideas for Change, University of the West of England, Bristol, University College Dublin, University of Ljubljana and Mobiel 21.

About WeCount

WeCount operates under the Research and Innovation Actions funding scheme, as facilitated by Horizon 2020 and the 'Science with and for Society' programme, both of which aim to increase society's appetite for innovation and encourage collaboration within the transport policy research community as it works to build better local transport systems together. WeCount will run until November 2021. This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under Grant Agreement No 872743.

Contact:

info@we-count.net

More information: <https://www.we-count.net/>

Twitter: @WecountH



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 872743

