

## **Project promotes green transport in rural areas**

[June 2014] Public transport isn't the first ride of choice in the countryside, but it could become a more popular one under a new EU project. The SmartMove project encourages a shift from car to public transport through personalised marketing campaigns focussing on the needs of travellers.

The project builds on successful campaigns carried out in Waldviertel, a rural region northwest of Vienna. These experiences showed that individualized door-to-door information campaigns can boost public transport use up to 30 percent. Local results depend on the level of public transport service, car-ownership rates and each settlement's spatial structure.

SmartMove adapts personalised marketing campaigns to active mobility consultancies (AMCs). The project will carry out eight simultaneous campaigns in eight rural regions in Austria, Germany, Greece, Poland, Spain and Portugal. In each region, hundreds of households will be contacted.

Each of the target regions has a different set of challenges and characteristics. The idea behind this approach is: if the campaigns succeed in these different regions, they can easily be transferred to scores of other regions throughout Europe.

AMC sets the usual public transport marketing techniques on their head. Instead of asking travellers to inform themselves, transport providers (e.g. public transport companies, travel agencies or local authorities) take their message to travellers. The target residents are provided with tailor-made travel information and asked how public transport can work for them. Problems and difficulties in using public transport are identified in order to improve the system.

AMC campaigns are supported by the promotion of so-called "public transport feeder systems", which enable people to connect to their nearest public transport routes. This helps bridge a common obstacle in rural areas – the perception that public transport stops are too far away. Feeder systems may involve taxi-buses, car pools or cycling networks, for example.

SmartMove, funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme, is carried out by eight partners and will run for 30 months. By getting people to switch to more sustainable, climate-friendly transport, Europe can make a big step toward targets for reducing pollution and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Details are available at the project website, [www.smartmove-project.eu](http://www.smartmove-project.eu).