

MAINSTREAMING PODCARS FOR HOPENHAGEN

Per Janse, the KOMPASS network

Right after the Malmö Podcar City conference last month, seven Swedes went to Copenhagen where world attention was focused on Climate Change talks -- with hundreds of thousands of dignitaries, stakeholders and protesters. They went to internationalize the KOMPASS concept, armed with folders, posters, a Beamways model, and literature from Vectus, RUF and others (no vendor bias, please!). They chatted with all who were interested and presented an overview of advanced transit information in Copenhagen's Bella Center, served by the driverless metro and near Kastrup Airport.

This was an immense opportunity to disseminate advanced transit information. More than a thousand folders were distributed at meetings and on literature tables. The crowd was an extremely well informed, influential and dedicated one.

Responses from many "South" delegates was very positive. Their congested cities need new kinds of transportation approaches. Outside the Bella Center the city bubbled with activities. At the KLIMA forum, there were meetings about cities, transport and the like.

Kompass-in-Bella was the result of months of contacts with an interesting organization. ICLEI is an international council of local governments from around the world that are dedicated to sustainable development (a thousand + members and growing). The other 20 present formed a nice mix of interests -- infrastructure planners from Jakarta and Paris, US mayors from Arkansas and Iowa, and representatives from Switzerland and Norway.

Just outside the meeting space was a stream of national delegates and stakeholders, happily avoiding running over the Beamways model while catching glimpses of the event in the ICLEI Climate Lounge.

David Hood from Australia, a PRT veteran from the continent, was one of the most enthusiastic participants. He had long been looking for international experiences and had many Australian contacts.

A word must be said of the strategic importance of these efforts to enhance podcar/PRT contacts. Regardless of the difficulties of reaching results in Copenhagen, all agree that resource transfer from the rich North to the developing South is inevitable. Konrad-Otto

Zimmerman, the general secretary of ICLEI, based in Germany, sees a big window of opportunities. Much needs to be worked out, but the time has come to propose climate friendly transport technologies. A North-South podcar dialogue has started, helping to turn Copenhagen into Hopenhagen.

picture captions

The dedicated Swedish team: Per Janse, Yvonne Blombäck, (behind them) Christian Nützel, Hans Lindqvist, chairman of KOMPASS, Olle Sjögren, Britta Eskils and Arne Muñoz.