

TRAILBLAZING URBAN FREIGHT MANAGEMENT

Key information

- Location: **Gdynia (Poland)**
- Population: **247 000**
- Involved in URBACT network: **Freight TAILS**
- More information: <http://urbact.eu/freight-tails>



A local group helped improve delivery traffic measures in downtown Gdynia, contributing broader proposals to the city’s Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan – the first scheme of its kind in Poland. URBACT connected the municipality with experts and EU cities experienced in urban freight management.



Freight management in the city

Once a quiet Baltic fishing village, Gdynia now hosts Poland’s third-largest port. The nearby city bustles with shops, cafes, restaurants, service companies... and traffic. Facing problems like congestion, accidents, illegal parking and air pollution, the municipality was already developing a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan through CIVITAS when it joined the URBACT Freight TAILS network. This experience was groundbreaking: for the first time the city focused on urban freight, working with an URBACT Local Group of retailers, residents, police, and other stakeholders.

Because local freight regulations lacked clear definitions, such as delivery bay size, or signage, Gdynia decided to create some practical, easily enforceable, regulations.

By January 2018, the URBACT Local Group’s downtown pilot scheme, with 11 loading bays and a new road system, had been approved by the Mayor’s Political Advisory Committee. Road-painting and regulatory signage installation work began in May, after informing shopkeepers, delivery companies and inhabitants. When the first delivery bays started being used, interest soared.

This was particularly innovative for a 1920s-built Polish city. “Traffic law in Poland focuses mostly on cars...” says Alicja Pawłowska, who manages EU sustainable mobility projects for Gdynia. “The infrastructure therefore is still often being designed and built in a way that supports the use of cars and forces sustainable modes to fight for space.”

Transnational and local cooperation

“Gdynia made very good use of URBACT’s peer review process,” says Freight TAILS Lead Expert Philip Stein. For example, Gdynia invited its international city partners to visit and consider their problems, such as parked cars blocking deliveries, at first hand. Partner advice inspired Gdynia to start with a simple pilot project: planning delivery bays in three main streets. “This attracted politicians’ interest, and helped them understand the benefits of addressing this problem on a city scale,” adds Mr Stein.

Impacts were two-fold, says Daniel Kaszubowski, Gdańsk

University of Technology Professor, and Freight TAILS external expert: “First, decision-makers realised that urban freight is really an important issue for business and community. Secondly, we managed to prove that this issue can be addressed in a practical way, hopefully paving the way for further involvement.”

Gdynia continued learning from its partners throughout Freight TAILS – whether it was employing tips from Umeå (SE) and Brussels (BE) on collecting data and using resources efficiently, or applying advice from London (UK) on encouraging local participation.

This helped the city cooperate with stakeholders like never before, says Ms Pawłowska: “Thanks to URBACT we had the time and resources to go through the participatory process the way it should be done.”

Gdynia’s first detailed freight survey

“29% of city-centre deliveries required double parking, and 25% took place on the pavement.” This is the sort of information Gdynia collected in 2017. Observers recorded 423 deliveries, and the Road and Green Areas Mobility Management Unit staff with students interviewed 334 retailers, meeting many for the first time. “The data we collected was a huge step forward,” says Ms Pawłowska. “The survey gave a basis to assume that a certain type of business generates a certain number of deliveries.”

Gaining momentum

For Prof. Kaszubowski, Freight TAILS highlighted the knock-on effects of improving cities: “We focused on improving reliability of deliveries by providing adequate places to stop and unload. This was one aspect of a problem, but it also provided an opportunity to increase pedestrian safety by removing vans from the pavements.”



New delivery bays mean safer pavements

Encouraged by the pilot scheme, the mayor approved a second, larger and more complex URBACT Local Group proposal: to limit the weight of trucks entering the city centre. Road-sign research and talks with supermarkets are now underway, preparing for launch in February 2019.

Ms Pawłowska adds, “Long-term, there is already an impact as shops from different city areas apply to the city to designate a loading bay close to their location – it’s a growing process.”

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Alicja Pawłowska

Alicja Pawłowska highlights six URBACT Freight TAILS benefits:

- 1 Engagement of our Deputy Mayor and Deputy Head of City Council and their support in decision-making.
- 2 Surveying deliveries so we could support our measures with real data.
- 3 Getting shopkeepers onboard; holding constructive meetings.
- 4 Having an external expert to analyse data, advise and be very supportive. He was very engaged, flexible, and understood the city’s needs and constraints. He always included our suggestions on how to lead the process. He moderated meetings, and as PhD of a well-known University of Technology, helped attract support for our proposed measures.
- 5 Mayor’s request to analyse (and implement) the URBACT Local Group’s proposal for a weight restriction system, on top of a decision to implement our delivery bay plans.
- 6 Giving out leaflets in shops on how the new delivery bays function. Shop owners and managers were generally very positive: they saw this measure as something to help them function. We’d been worried people would say parking space was taken from them. But in the end we felt a great satisfaction with our work in the project.