

PRESS RELEASE

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EuroTest study on Park & Ride: European hotchpotch or hotspots?

The concept is simple: drive to the outskirts of a city, leave your car in a car park and transfer to public transportation into the city centre. Park & Ride (P+R) is a proven practical solution for car drivers. Not only do they save time and money, Park & Ride schemes also help reduce congestion and pollution in city centres. Yet like everything else in Europe, Park & Ride schemes vary considerably with regard to their name, signposting and pricing, and in a number of major cities it is not even offered or there is no common understanding as to the design of P+R facilities. This is what a new EuroTest reveals in a study across 22 major European cities.

Under the leadership of the German automobile club ADAC, 18 European automobile clubs, all members of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), surveyed Park & Ride facilities covering two areas: availability, size and characteristics of (P+R) systems, and connectivity to local transport. Focus was placed on the capacity of P+R facilities, the nation-wide designation, signposting and pricing for integrated transport. P+R extension plans and facility requirements were also factors taken into consideration.

The assessment reveals that Copenhagen, Brussels, Madrid, Lisbon and Zagreb have no P+R systems or the answers were inconsistent. Brussels city and region, for instance, lack the political commitment to install this type of parking system, whereas in Madrid and Lisbon there is no common understanding as to the design of Park and Ride facilities.

In the remaining cities considerable variation was found in the capacity of P+R sites. While Ljubljana currently only operates one site offering 217 parking spaces, motorists in Rome can select one of about 13 000 parking spaces at 31 sites. Paris plus region ranks first in Europe with Île-de-France offering a total of 547 sites with over 100 000 parking spaces. Regarding the available number of parking spaces in relation to the number of city inhabitants, Luxembourg leads the way with nearly 50 parking spaces per 1 000 inhabitants, followed by Geneva with 26 parking spaces. All other cities range at a much lower level providing between one and six parking spaces per 1 000 inhabitants. However no less than 80 percent of the surveyed cities want to extend their parking space capacity, with more than 70 percent planning to construct new sites.

Pricing policy also varies substantially. While P+R sites in Luxembourg and in Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne are generally free of charge, P+R parking in Geneva, Prague, Stockholm and Vienna is

subject to payment. In addition to this all-or-none policy, there are a number of cities adopting a mixed approach: Helsinki, Budapest and Oslo offer more than 75 percent of their parking free of charge, while in Munich and Rome it is exactly the reverse with motorists being required to pay at over 80 percent of the P+R sites.

Geneva has the highest P+R charges in Europe. In the most expensive facility, the Parc Relais Étoile, 24 hours parking come at a cost equivalent to about €37, plus €2 per person for the ride into the city centre. Ljubljana is the exception where you pay €1 a day for parking including return bus ticket for the trip into the city centre.

The study revealed a relation between the pricing policy and type of operator. While privately operated sites are generally charged, public facilities provide either free or low-cost parking. Often, though not always, parking gets more expensive the closer the facility is located to the city centre. This is not the case in Prague and Amsterdam where parking fees are identical all over the city.

Signposting policies were found rather inconsistent. 35 percent of the surveyed cities indicate that they install P+R signs on the main arterial roads at best, and 20 percent in the immediate vicinity of a P+R site only. Curiously Rome which offers the highest number of P+R parking spaces (13 000) in the city area is one of the cities with an aversion to signposting.

National names for P+R sites in Europe also vary: in Finland P+R is called “Liityntäpysäköinti”, while in Sweden and Norway P+R is universally called “Infartsparkering” or “Innfartsparkering”. In France and Switzerland, you have to look for “Parc Relais”, “Parking Relais” or “Parking d’échange”, while in southern Italy you should watch out for “parcheggio di scambio” signs. In the Netherlands, the established name for P+R is “Transferium”. All other surveyed cities, i.e. more than 50%, use “Park and Ride” or the shorter “P+R” on most signs. This at least is where the need for European harmonisation is evident.

“The findings reveal the need to implement more Park & Ride schemes across Europe and also to define clear minimum standards” said Wil Botman, FIA European Bureau. “Park & Ride schemes are proven, practical alternatives for drivers who would in the past drive their vehicles into the city centres. With increasing calls to reduce congestion and pollution in our cities, it is imperative that city administrators, public transport operators and P+R operators work together in the implementation of such schemes.”

EuroTest partners call for improvements in the areas of:

- **P+R capacity and management:** not only build more sites but also define European minimum criteria as opposed to “normal” car parks: At least 40 parking spaces, maximum 300

metres to a public transport stop. Harmonise naming and signposting to ensure recognition by non-natives. Define opening hours and maximum parking duration to deter abusive parking.

- **Public transport connectivity:** Increase local public transport frequency and ensure visible display of local public transport network and tariff plans as well as car park pricing and usage regulations in the national language plus English.
- **Charging regime:** Provide low cost or free P+R facilities to the users of local public transport only, however cheaper than normal parking spaces. Keep prices stable and define a pricing policy on the basis of “pay more the nearer you are to the city” to encourage travellers to switch public transport as far away from the city centre as possible. Offer reduced integrated tickets for parking and public transport round trip.
- **Administration and information:** Clearly define coordination strategies and competences for P+R operators, city administrations and local public transport operators and ensure controlled management. Offer more information about Park and Ride facilities in each city.

For more information about the EuroTest Park & Ride study visit:
<http://www.eurotestmobility.com/eurotest.php?itemno=290>

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Notes to editors

1. The Park & Ride study covered 22 major European cities: Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Budapest, Cologne, Copenhagen, Geneva, Hamburg, Helsinki, Lisbon, Ljubljana, Luxembourg, Madrid, Munich, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Rome, Sheffield, Stockholm, Vienna and Zagreb. Initially only the capital cities of the partner clubs’ countries were selected for the survey to the exception of the UK and Switzerland. In these two countries Sheffield and Geneva were the cities of choice. The city of London did not feature in the survey, since P+R schemes exist in the Greater London area only and not close to the London city centre. In Switzerland, Geneva was selected instead of Bern because it is the location of international organisations and destination of many commuters from France. In Germany, three cities were included in the survey in addition to the capital Berlin.
2. Through EuroTest, 18 automobile clubs in 17 countries, members of the FIA, have been putting the quality and safety of mobility in Europe to the test since 2000 for the benefit of their members and all mobile consumers in Europe. The EuroTest partners have constantly called for a Europe where the mobile consumer can circulate freely using quality infrastructure and in safety.
3. In addition to the 18 EuroTest partners, two additional automobile clubs took part in this study: UAMK (Czech Republic) and MAK (Hungary).

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