



Thriving STREETS



Designing mobility for attractive cities

Mobility is at the crossroads of various urban policy: Thriving Streets is connecting mobility with economic prosperity, accessibility, inclusion, participation and health to encourage a change towards more resilient and attractive cities. As an URBACT Action Planning Network, this project aims to improve sustainable local policies through integrated action planning and an organised process of exchange and learning among cities across Europe. It is a network of ten cities working together to improve sustainable mobility in urban areas from an economic and social perspective.



IGOUMENITSA PUBLIC SPACE TO ENSURE SOCIAL INCLUSION

City context

- With a population of 12 500, Igoumenitsa is the capital of the Region of Thesprotia at the Northwest coast of Greece on the Ionian Sea.
- Situated on the cove of the bay of Thesprotia it is located just across the island of Corfu, while also the closest port to Italy with direct connections to Brindisi, Bari and Ancona.
- Overall, the city is a strategic point for tourism and commerce in Northern Greece.
- It is the 2nd biggest port in Greece that connects the national inland area with Ionian islands and the rest of Europe, and it intends to become a top cruise destination in the coming years.



Challenge

Igoumenitsa – while is a relatively small town – is still very much car-oriented: nearly 90% of households owns at least one car, and 68% of trips are carried out by private cars – even for distances that would be easily covered walking. The urban space has been designed to serve cars and not pedestrians.

- Poor pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure: sidewalks are narrow, often of poor quality, sometimes completely lack; intersections and pedestrian crossings are not designed to protect pedestrians; cycling network is very limited and fragmented; for people with disabilities, it is challenging to safely move around in the city.
- Cars “rule” city roads – there is limited space and safety for other users. Speeding is a problem, traffic calming facilities are painfully lacking in most streets. Parking is also a major challenge, parked cars occupy valuable public spaces.
- The environment does not encourage walking, either: there are many vacant and underused public spaces, just like many abandoned private lots, thus walking is not a pleasant experience in many places.



Ambition

Our vision is a city centre vibrant with a wide range of economic activities and cultural attractions, where safe pedestrian infrastructure, wide sidewalks, continuous bicycle network encourage people to leave their cars behind and enjoy the public space.



Intervention

SSA Implemented

Safe roads

Grffiti

Open Cinema

Direction Signs

Bike and pedestrian paths to connect points of interest

Improvement of green area

Utilization of public building

Parklet

Improvement of sport facilities

- Neighborhoods quality of life
- Boost of local economy
- Connectivity - SUMP

↓

Keep
and
Bring

Small scale actions

During the European Mobility Week 2020 the municipality installed a parklet in front of the entrance of the elementary school in the intervention area, occupying a couple of parking places. The temporary installation sparked a conversation about the use of public space.

Action plan

The aim of our IAP is to make public spaces and the entire intervention area more attractive for residents, tourists, as well as creative businesses by significantly upgrading the quality and character of public space and making it a better and safer place for pedestrians. Examples of planned actions:

- Increasing green areas in the city centre and around
- Creating new protected bike path
- Improving existing sidewalks, creating new sidewalks
- Installing ramps to help people with disabilities to move around in the city without obstacles
- Organizing regular sports, cultural and artistic events to attract residents and tourists to the area

Lessons learnt

- Pedestrians have to populate and reclaim the public space from cars.
- A strong and clear vision is crucial – but it is worth nothing without the will and commitment of decision-makers to make the change happen.
- Transformation of public space does not happen overnight – it takes time. Also, change always generates conflicts and involves decisions that are unpopular. Nevertheless, the example of many cities prove that it is possible to change places, as well as the behaviour and attitude of people.
- Streets are shared between different types of users – cars, cyclists, e-scooter users, pedestrians. The No1 rule to ensure safety? Stronger street-users (typically cars) should respect and protect the weaker ones.

The City of **Igoumenitsa**
is a partner of the
Thriving Streets network

