



## **HOTEL**

How to analyse life quality

An accompanying measure within the EU Fifth Framework Programme

Keyaction "Improving the Socio Economic Knowledge Base"

Contract No.: HPSE-2002-60057

# **Newsletter IV**

## ***"Workshop III"***

***Public newsletter of Work Package No. 5***

***September 2004***

### **HOTEL Partners**

*FACTUM • Ralf Risser, Karin Ausserer, Nicolas Bein • Austria*

*Lund University • Department Technology and Society • Agneta Ståhl • Sweden*

*Comenius University Bratislava • Department of Psychology • Jana Plichtová • Slovakia*

*Società Italiana di Psicologia della Sicurezza Viaria (SIPSiVi) • Gian Marco Sardi • Italy*

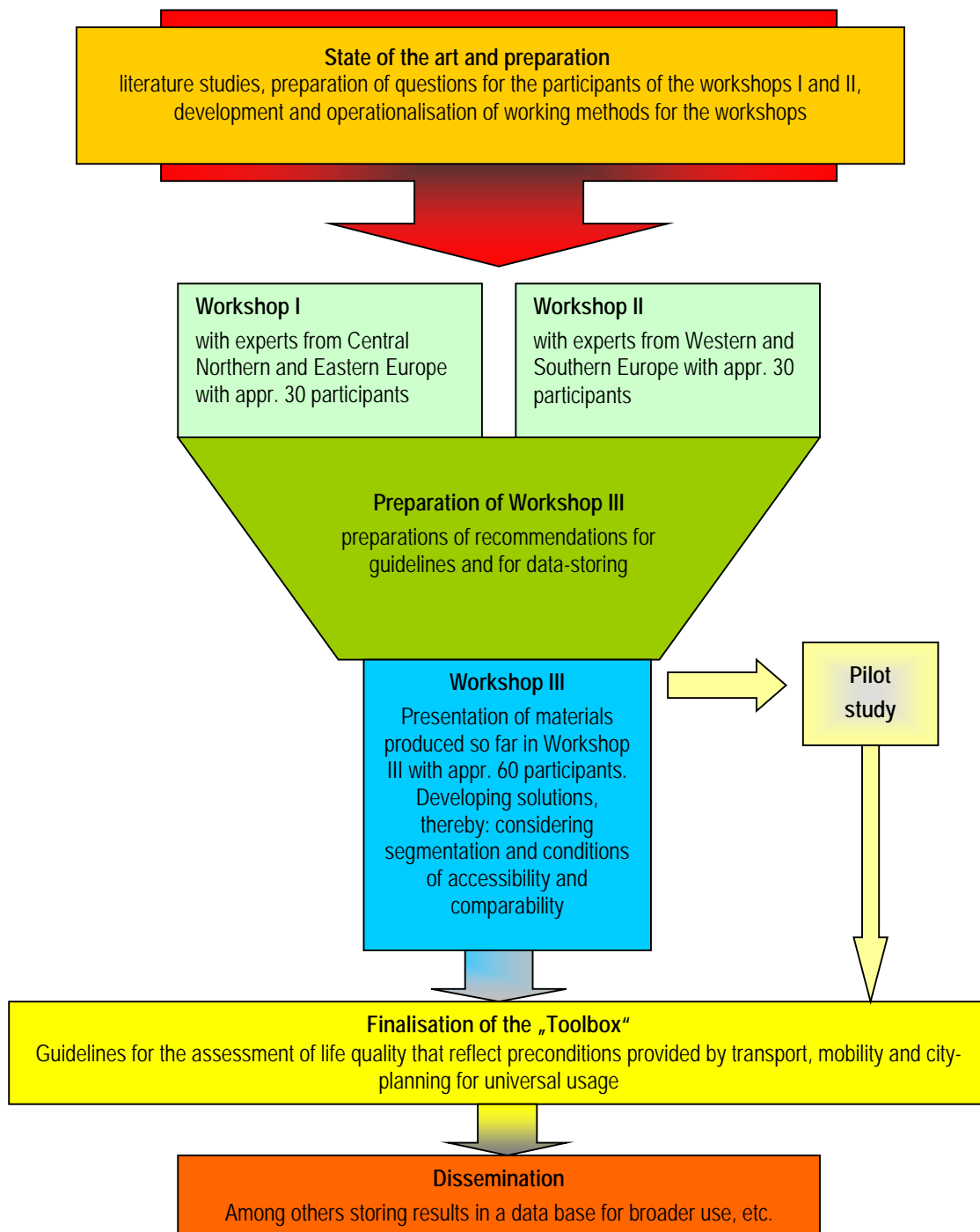
*Institut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité (INRETS) • Department d'évaluation et recherche en accidentologie • Stefan Petica • France*

## Preface

HOTEL – How to analyse life quality– is an accompanying measure in the key Action “Improving the socio-economic knowledge base” of the EC Fifth Framework Programme.

The project HOTEL takes a starting point in a heuristic approach that focuses on different disciplines' practice in connection with the assessment and consideration of Quality of Life (QoL) and underlying mobility and transport preconditions. The core concept is to find out how aspects of QoL are taken care of in practice in the field of transport, mobility and city planning. With "practice" all kinds of activities are meant that set the scene for the living conditions of citizens. The responsible actors for these activities are politicians and decision makers, planners, implementers and administrators.

*Fig 1: Graphical presentation of the project components*



## The Workshop – methodological aspects

Workshops are the central elements of the HOTEL project. The concept of a workshop implies to make various disciplines and professional groups related to the covered subject work together. Here, in the case of the concept of QoL, the participants are architects, town planners, engineers, social psychologists, public decision makers, territorial authorities, companies of transport etc., on all the levels of governance. In general a workshop is a heuristic approach appropriate for analysing a relatively unstructured universe of activities that are neither strictly theory-steered nor systematically knowledge- or rule based: Much work is unreflected routine, intuitive, steered by hidden agendas, following "private" hypotheses, done in the frame of certain schemes of distribution of power on the working place, etc.. The internal logic of such a system can be made better transparent with the help of heuristic methods.

In the context, the goal was thus to enhance the generation of new ideas and the clarification of habits and practices not structured consciously, by being confronted with unusual questions and by making use of working methods or practices that do not belong to everyday routine. For that reason the workshop was structured in such a way that multiple feedback and interaction between participants, but also between the participants and the organisers was possible. Small-group work in combination with plenary sessions seemed suitable for the achievement of our objectives, as it is an interactive method which is very motivating for the participants and allows efficient work. Besides, topics can be dealt with in detail.

## The Workshop in Ferrara – HOTEL workshop No. 3

This document presents in a synthetic way the setting, the structure and the unfolding of Workshop III (WS III), within the framework of work package 5 (WP 5) of the HOTEL Project. The workshop was organised by SIPSiVi (WP-leader of WP 5) in Ferrara, March 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 2004. The organisation and the realisation of workshop III has been different from the previous ones in many respects:

- 1) it was based on the experience derived from the previous workshops (in Lund and Paris)
- 2) the number of participating experts was doubled
- 3) the provenience of the experts was from all parts of Europe
- 4) both kind of experts, practitioners and scientists, are invited and asked to work together in order to finalise the former workshop results

The particular structure summarised above of WS III in Ferrara is justified by the main objective of the workshop: to identify the main indicators of QoL taken into consideration in the conceptual thinking and decision making in the field of traffic, mobility and city planning. Moreover the strategy of merging the experience of practitioners and scientists was intentionally chosen in order to reduce the distance between theory and practice, between citizens and decision makers in this particular and promising field. The selection of participating experts was a fundamental step in the process and it has been conducted according the criteria of country, professional function, their type of experience (the areas of traffic, mobility, city planning and research) and the level of governance (local, regional, national or European level).

The methodology used to optimise the experience of the invited experts was the work in small-groups, followed by the presentation of the production in a plenary session, by a speaker chosen among the experts in the small-group. In total we had 6 small-groups, for a total of 49 experts invited, working on three main tasks provided by the organisers.

The *guidelines* of the tasks have been worked out on the basis of the State of the Art Report and of the Summary Report from Lund and Paris.

Additionally we asked the participants to fill in two *questionnaires*, one concerning feedback about the general satisfaction with the organisation of the whole workshop and the used procedures; and one concerning the principal objectives, principles and indicators of QoL used in their everyday practice in the field of transport, mobility and city planning.

## Results

The workshop III in Ferrara provided two different kinds of results: on the one hand those deriving from the *three main tasks* that the experts developed in small groups and presented in plenary sessions, and on the other hand those deriving from the elaboration of the *Quality of Life Questionnaire* that the experts filled out during the three days of the workshop.

Below the results from tasks 1-3 and from the elaboration of the QoL Questionnaire are briefly summarised.

### **Results of tasks 1-3**

#### ➤ **The way of carrying out assessment**

The communication process between experts and the citizens plays a key role. Achieved results should be published through mass media, events, etc.. This brings one part of the feedback from the general public, the second part results from the every-day experiences with change by "users" – the people directly concerned. Different forms of feedback or, in other words, the satisfaction degree could be assessed by questionnaires, household interviews (face to face dialogue), observation in situation, complaint registration and the echo in the media where of course a limited reliability has to be taken in consideration as well as a lack of trust in politicians. Nevertheless mass media is one of the most effective means of communication with the general population.

Positive evaluation from the general public means that the needs of the population were respected, that there was good communication and the public identified itself with the common vision. From the evaluation results the actual course of action can be corrected if needed.

#### ➤ **What can be defined as short and long term objectives?**

The experts agreed upon the following aspects: It is important to distinguish between

- short term steps  
to solve actual problems immediately (e. g. increased frequency of a bus line).
- medium-range planning  
to reach effective goals (e. g. a certain change in modal split in a certain time).
- long term visions, ideals or general directions  
which can be defined as the final result one wants to achieve (e. g. sustainable society).

All three kinds of objectives must together form a logical construct. Politicians are usually concerned about the short-term objectives, because they always keep re-elections at the back of their minds. The realisation of the short-term objectives could take 4-5 years, but after one year the first evaluation of achieved changes is needed. They are or should be connected to the practical action plan. The medium-range objectives can take 5-20 years. We need them to have an operationalisation of the general vision of targets. Long-term objectives can change slowly over time as the situation, sociological structure, employment situation, etc. change. Especially the short-term objectives should be defined very clearly and realistic. They should be easily measurable in order to evaluate their success.

Finally, objectives arise from the common vision. It is important to name them and to check their viability in terms of time, available economic resources and the political will. These three aspects make the objective realistic.

➤ **How should the general public be addressed?**

Among those who are in power (including experts) there is a pervasive tendency to see citizens as those who are passive, defensive and creating problems, e.g. by resisting beneficial changes. The experts did not discuss the reasons for this situation explicitly. However, from socio-psychological literature it is a well known fact that passivity is conditioned by the sense of lack of control, of information, of respect to his/ her views, limited resources (inc. time and money), etc. This knowledge could be used as the basis for taking measures to increase activity.

For informing and engaging the general public, the target groups (all the concerned) should be identified, their participation in the public discussion ensured by an emotional involvement, and they themselves empowered if necessary. This can be achieved by information campaigns, expert debates in mass media and presentation of proposals at different public events and places. The public, all the target groups including elderly, children, disabled, minorities, should not only be informed in their different kinds of languages, but their opinion on the whole subject should be asked for directly. A truly democratic process is one in which citizens, experts, politicians, administrators and other actors (e.g. representatives of big companies) have an equal position. The ultimate goal is to change simple communication into a fruitful and honest dialogue based on mutual respect and driven by the common vision for the future.

➤ **How can success and failure be measured ?**

Many experts suggested an experimental approach with a trial period in order to help to show success and failures in advance and achieve feedback and public judgement. There should exist continuous monitoring, evaluation and correction of short-term goals. The implementers have to carry out a continuous monitoring of the new changing state of things in connection with the performed quality, the timing, the budget, the intended and also the unexpected consequences of the activity (like for example unemployment rate, criminality rate, etc.). They also have to measure quantifiable aspects as indexes related to the sustainable environment, number of private cars, number of accidents, etc. To this comes the evaluation by experts (also in the mass media), in an ideal case also by some independent institution. One option of evaluation is also through comparison, for example from the historical perspective – the past, the present and the assessed future situation or comparing development in different cities having similar problems.

***Results of the QoL Questionnaire***

The findings coming from the elaboration of the QoL questionnaire suggest that there is a network of concepts and practices available which support the idea of the importance of a permanent, mutual communication among developers, city planners, politicians and citizens (in their roles of residents, parents, travellers and drivers).

A comparison across countries confirmed the expectation that to start and maintain productive communication in the accessing European countries could be a little problematic because willingness of people to organise themselves spontaneously does not seem to have developed, yet, according to the experts point of view. Such practices did not survive the era of socialism and now people have to learn them from the beginning. Social psychologists described cases where positive identification with the place of living was destroyed by violent replacements, rapid urbanisation, etc.

Our experts are aware that the basic element of productive communication that enhances QoL is respect for others' points of view. Whereas, the level of satisfaction with available facilities and services is given astonishingly little importance.

## **Summary**

The analysis of experts' discussions during the workshop in Ferrara has revealed that the concept of quality of life is used in a broad context, especially in relation to sustainable development, to the quality of urban space, to its aesthetics, its social value, to individual freedom of choice and to safety. Citizens' participation was found to be an important precondition and consequence of QoL.

The majority of experts are aware of the interdisciplinary, complex, dynamic and contextual nature of this concept. It makes its definition and measurement a difficult task. For the purpose of operationalisation and measurement it is convenient to divide it according to its different aspects (e.g. quality of transport, of dwelling, of leisure facilities, of environment, of neighbourhood, of community life, etc). However, the measurement of each component of life quality in a city separately brings a high risk that its holistic and complex character could be lost.

In each project to be implemented, objectives should be set up with strategies and tactics to achieve them as well as the methods of result assessment and evaluation. This all should happen in the frame of a long-term plan. The starting point of the whole planning process is creating common vision based on an analysis of the present situation in the city. This ensures that the planned solutions won't be in favour of only one segment of the population or one interest group, but systemic, democratic and supporting a sense of community and mutuality.

Planning consists of the following stages:

1. analysing main problems of a particular city,
2. creating common vision,
3. defining long-term, mid-term and short-term objectives,
4. establishing information flow among experts, politicians and the general public.

This is a linear explanation of the planning process used to simplify the subject. However in reality it is a network of overlapping activities and also not so strictly divided in time sequences. It is also important to actively establish a network of different actors. This is a job for sociologists, social psychologists and democratic local authorities.

## **Conclusion**

At this stage of the process, after the literature study (State of the Art) and the realisation of three workshops on the topic of analysing QoL related to mobility, land use and city planning, we can conclude that the results of workshop I and II are confirmed from the result of workshop III held in Ferrara.

It is clear that the social practice in the field of the operationalisation of QoL remains quite particular and heterogeneous; and all the difficulties on trying to measure this kind of topic, emerged from the work carried out so far, make the HOTEL project even a more engaging challenge: basically all the experts, from all three workshops, pointed out that there are no validated standards, nor structured methodologies not even clear definitions to which one can refer to. This is undoubtedly partly inherent to the studied field and to the concept itself, because the factors that the concept should take into consideration are numerous (policies, economic, social...), and it is certainly a difficult task to develop adequate models to formalise them in a holistic way, and comprehensively, at the same time.

In fact the work carried out so far, the state of the art study, the results of the three workshops, along with all the suggestions, doubts, expertise and criticism coming from the experts will give a fundamental contribution to the planning and development of the tool box and the field study during the realisation of WP6.

### Consortium of the EU-Project HOTEL

Name/Position	Organisation	Address/Phone/E-mail
<b>Ms. Karin Ausserer</b> <b>Mr. Nicolas Bein</b>  <i>Researchers</i>	FACTUM Chaloupka & Risser OHG Traffic- and Social Analysis	Danhausergasse 6/4, A-1040 WIEN Tel: 0043 1 504 15 46/12 Fax: 0043 1 504 15 48 E-mail: karin.ausserer@factum.at E-mail: nicolas.bein@factum.at
<b>Mr. Stefan Petica</b>  <i>Researcher</i>	INRETS Insitut National de Recherche sur les Transports et leur Sécurité	2, Avenue du Général Malleret- Loinville F-94114 Arcueil-Cedex Tel: 0033 1 47 407 056 Fax: 0033 1 45 475 606 E-mail: petica@inrets.fr
<b>Mrs. Jana Plichtová</b>  <i>Researcher</i>	Comenius University Brati- slava Dep. of Psychology	PO-Box 1 Gondova 2, SK-611 02 Bratislava Tel: 00421 2 593 393 16 Fax: 00421 2 529 621 29 E-mail: jana.plichtova@fphil.uniba.sk
<b>Mr. Ralf Risser</b>  <i>Owner of FACTUM            HOTEL Co-ordinator            Researcher</i>	FACTUM Chaloupka & Risser OHG Traffic- and Social Analysis	Danhausergasse 6/4, A-1040 WIEN Tel: 0043 1 504 15 46/14 Fax: 0043 1 504 15 48 E-mail: ralf.risser@factum.at
<b>Mr. Gian Marco Sardi</b>  <i>Researcher</i>	SIPSIVI Società Italiana di psicologia della Sicurezza Viaria	PO Box 211 I-12100 Cuneo Tel: 0039 0171 74 093 Fax: 0039 0171 72 024 E-mail: gmsardi@sipsivi.org
<b>Mrs. Agneta Ståhl</b>  <i>Researcher</i>	Lund University Dep. Technology and Society	PO Box 118 John Ericssons vaeg 1; S-22100 Lund Tel: 004646 222 91 32 Fax: 004646 123 272 E-mail: agneta.stahl@tft.lth.se