



The Next Stop – Guest Episode (Part 1)

Shownotes

- **[Introduction]:**
- An important part of our project is connecting you, our listeners to the world's foremost leaders in electric mobility. Today's very special episode is split into three parts, with three very special guests talking to us about their ground-breaking work. You can find the links to the other episode on our website at www.bsr-electric.eu and also in the show notes of this episode.
- In this part of the guest episode, we will be talking to Esther Kreutz from the Union of Baltic Cities in Turku, Finland.
- This is Arjun Jamil and you're listening of "The Next Stop", the BSR electric Podcast.
- **[Interview]**

Arjun: Hello Esther, welcome to the Next Stop. If you wouldn't mind, please introduce yourself to our listeners.

Esther: Okay. Yeah. Hello everybody. My name is Esther Kreutz. I work as a project coordinator at the Union of the Baltic Cities' sustainable cities commission. I work with a variety of different mobility projects right now, dealing with the different aspects of sustainable urban mobility

Arjun: That sounds great. you mentioned you worked at the UBC, the Union of Baltic Cities. Could you tell us more about them and what they work with?

Esther: Yes, of course. Our organization is a city network in the Baltic Sea Region, as the name tells. We have around 80 member cities and municipalities from all the States around the Baltic Sea. We work in different thematic commissions on a wide variety of topics. I work in the commission for sustainable cities. That means that we mainly plan, implement and coordinate projects concerning different sustainability topics. They're about water management, climate, energy, mobility, and we conduct those projects together with our Cities.

We also have a lot of network activities. We facilitate exchange between our member cities so that they work together, can learn from each other, exchange their experiences and then expertise, and provide them with the different kind of communication, as well. But apart from our member cities we are also very frequently cooperating with the other city networks and other actors all around Europe in different projects.

Arjun: That's great. Do you also work with the EU in mobility projects or e-mobility projects?

Esther: Yes. Actually, most of our mobility projects right now are European-wide projects. We do have an Interreg Baltic sea region project called Cities multimodal, where we mainly cooperate with our member cities and actors here in the region. But the bigger mobility projects are on European

level where we work with other city networks and other mobility organizations that work with sustainable mobility. With cities all over Europe, actually.

Arjun: Great. As we know each other from before, and I know that you've been in this field for a long time, but I'm pretty sure that our listeners won't. So, could you tell us a little bit more about your background in sustainable mobility?

Esther: My background is not specifically in mobility, but I've been working in mobility projects for six years now. Our task at UBC in those projects is mainly being the partner who is responsible for capacity development, developing trainings, facilitation like conceptualizing different kinds of learning activities for cities, communication, dissemination. These kinds of activities are what we coordinate right now. We coordinate whole projects as well, but especially capacity development and developing training modules for cities on sustainable urban mobility planning. That's something I've been doing now for most of the time I've been in that topic.

Arjun: Right. And speaking of projects, would you have any examples of projects that you're currently working on?

Esther: Yes. We just ended a big project that's been running for three and a half years called SUMP-Up, which is a European-wide project where we work together with the other networks like ICLEI, EUROCITIES, Polis and also a number of European cities on mainstreaming the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan concept and the planning practices, and where we wanted to mainstream the concept and to increase the take up of SUMPs, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans in certain parts of Europe where this uptake has been low. To facilitate this uptake, we have developed a quite comprehensive learning program where cities all over Europe could apply for, and that program was conducted five times in the last three years. It was a very intensive learning program where a group of 20 to 25 cities were going through different kinds of e-courses and webinars and also some physical meetings, and learned about sustainable urban mobility planning. We had some courses that started really in the beginning to learn about the concept, and then we also had learning programs for more advanced cities. These materials are now also available for practically anybody working with this topic, for what we call mobility practitioners.

Arjun: Right. Since mobility practitioners are a key audience for this podcast, I'm sure that everyone would already know what SUMPs are, but for people who don't, could you explain a little bit about what SUMPs are and where they came from? What has been their implementation status until now?

Esther: Yes, Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans or SUMPs, as we say in short, are a concept that has been developed by different actors on European level. I think it was in 2013 or 2014 when they published the first guidelines, and it's practically a strategic way how to plan for sustainable urban mobility. The big difference between a SUMP and a traditional transport plan is that SUMPs have citizens at the core. So we say, it's mobility for the people. It's not mobility for the cars or for a certain kind of vehicle. The main idea of SUMP is to have the perspective from the citizens at the core. And based on that plan for a sustainable way, it's an integrated planning tool to take into account different strategies in the city to integrate climate strategies as well as urban planning strategies to not create a single new plan or a strategy, but to integrate it into the cities' processes.

It's a strategic tool that you can use. It's a cycle, most of the of the listeners perhaps also know it. It's in that sense not rocket science, it's not a new thing, but the concept guides cities through a comprehensive integrated planning cycle. I think it has proven to be very useful so that different aspects are not forgotten. And one of the really big focuses on how to make this integrated plan is also to really involve citizens, to involve stakeholders from the very beginning and to not forget this kind of crucial part of planning.

Arjun: Right. Do you have any updates on how the take-up of the SUMP's is going in the cities?

Esther: Well, it's hard to say in general terms because in fact, the take-up of SUMP's is varying a lot across Europe. There are some countries where there is national support and also like a national legislation and very strong support from the national level for the cities and an urge that they have to develop a plan. And of course, there the uptake seems to be a lot higher, but of course you can discuss the quality of those plans if they are a prerequisite, for example, to receive funding. And then, there are other countries where cities are perhaps more cautious when they have the feeling that they have to make something new, and they perhaps already have plans that would qualify to be a SUMP, but they have difficulties to call for this. So that's why it's a bit difficult to say. But all in all, I think the tendency is that planning for sustainable mobility or sustainable city development is increasing. With all the goals on different levels to decrease emissions, to become carbon neutral and all these kinds of goals that cities have, it's of course crucial to also include the transport sector and mobility. And that's why it's a very used tool.

Arjun: Right. Speaking of tools, I think a very good point that you raised is that SUMP's are tools to raise funding for transport initiatives, one of the key aspects of BSR electric, for example, our pilot projects in e-mobility. We have different cities doing different, very unique small-scale pilot projects that they could report on to their superiors and then get a funding allocated to their initiatives. If I'm not mistaken, you also have a project similar in a structure to this. Would you mind telling us a little bit more about that?

Esther: Well, at UBC, I'm also working as a work package leader and the project CIVITAS ECCENTRIC, and as some of you might know, projects that are funded under the CIVITAS initiatives are quite large-scale projects. ECCENTRIC is one of the innovation action projects. That means in five cities all around Europe - one of the cities is the city of Turku in Finland where our office is based - the cities are piloting different kinds of sustainable mobility measures. ECCENTRIC is focusing on suburban areas in cities to increase sustainable mobility there in contrary to city centres. A lot of projects are working in city centres, but in ECCENTRIC, we work on suburban areas and we have a living lab approach. Every city has defined a living lab area where they then pilot and test different kinds of measures.

Arjun: All right. Would there be any e-mobility pilots in these member cities that you'd like to talk about?

Esther: Yes. In all the five cities that are part of ECCENTRIC, they are doing pilots on e-mobility, and they're varying a lot. In Munich, for example, they test different kinds of e-mobility stations where you can then go and borrow different kinds of e-vehicles. E-bikes, e-scooters, and I think also electric cars. They also test electric lightweight vehicles for deliveries in Munich. In Turku, here where I am, they have been testing different kinds of e-vehicles in the city administration. Right now, we are carrying out a testing period for electric cars to borrow from the administration employees, and electric public transport has been tested. In Stockholm, they have had a really a successful measure on night-time deliveries with clean and silent vehicles. It's this kind of pilots that the cities are testing and piloting. And now, of course, we are evaluating and hopefully those measures will stay.

Arjun: Right. Speaking of implementing these measures, perhaps in a context that is broader than e-mobility, let's say sustainable, urban mobility. Did you have decision makers coming up to you and talking about difficulties and challenges that they had implementing these SUMP's?

Esther: When we talk about the connection between SUMP's and e-mobility - e-mobility is one of the perspectives that you can integrate into SUMP's, of course. Integrating e-mobility in a SUMP doesn't mean that you just simply replace diesel or petrol vehicles with electric vehicles. But it really has to

be planned for e-mobility in cities, as you know of course. There's also concerns like charging infrastructure, et cetera. So, when talking about e-mobility and mobility planning, you need to bring this up and look at the mobility ecosystem when you plan for mobility, and also the energy ecosystem where you kind of plan for the infrastructure, and you have to work with the energy companies, et cetera together.

And that, of course, is something that is perhaps something that you often have to develop from scratch in the city, because there hasn't been this integration before. And here, we always stress that. That's why we think it's very crucial to have a lot of pilots and a lot of different measures before you start to actually create the basis through a proper plan. To plan for different opportunities and plan for different challenges as well. So that those pilots succeed. I mean, we don't want to only pilot. Piloting is nice and it's really good for cities to test, but of course, at the end, we want to have something that is actually staying.

Arjun: Right. And speaking of having these measures that actually persist after the project ends, I think a lot of us, your institution and our institution included, try to include capacity building measures into our project. I would say I know a little bit already about your capacity building measures, but for us who don't know that, could you please elaborate on these measures?

Esther: Yes. What I mentioned before, concerning the SUMP-UP project, is that we have developed this capacity development program or this learning program that is now available for everybody who's interested in SUMP-UPs. And this is not specifically on e-mobility, but it is on sustainable urban mobility planning, and it consists of e-courses and webinars, and there's lots of resources available. They're all available on our SUMP-UP website. It's a SUMP-UP.eu and there you can get access to the e-courses that guide you through the whole cycle, and it gives you an introduction to what you need to take into account when you start a SUMP or when you develop an already existing plan further.

Arjun: Right. I would also connect our capacity building measures. So, for example, this podcast is a part of the online learning module. And there, you have a lot of the same knowledge, but in a different context. I would say to our listeners, who are interested in implementing SUMP-UPs, it's a great online open access resource.

The SUMP-UP project, is it open-access and free?

Esther: Yes, It's free.

Arjun: Right. It would be great to have some of our listeners over to your platforms as well.

Esther: Yes. I think it's a very good compliment. I mean as I said, sustainable urban mobility planning is the basis in the end. I would like to add, apart from the capacity development program that we have launched, the complete guidelines to the sustainable urban mobility plans and planning has been updated in the end of last year and has been launched in the CIVITAS forum in Graz with all the new guidelines. There are a lot of topic guides available, like covering electromobility, covering a certain kind of metropolitan area, small and mid-sized cities, and different kinds of aspects of mobility. All these are available on our SUMP-UP website as well, but of course, also on Eltis, which is the place to go when you search for information about sustainable urban mobility plans.

Arjun: Right. Esther, I would like to invite our listeners to connect with you. How could they do that?

Esther: I guess the easiest is either on LinkedIn, for example, or through our website and email

Arjun: I will put the relevant links in the show notes, and also a link to our BSR electric LinkedIn networking group which you are also a part of, as well as many other decision makers and key

stakeholders in this field. Do you have any other words, Esther, to motivate our listeners and have them start their way into urban mobility?

Esther: There's this saying, it's originally in German, but I won't say it in German, but in English. It's "if you have it well planned, it's half the win"

I don't know if that exists in English as well, it's an old-fashioned saying, but there is something true to it. And we always see the big advantages of those cities that have planned their mobility well from the beginning that also pilots and persistent solutions will actually succeed. I can only recommend to look into this because I'm convinced that this helps many cities to go through a fruitful process.

Arjun: That's great. Very well spoken. Thank you very much.

Esther: Thank you for having me.

--Outro Music

This episode of The Next Stop was produced by me, Arjun Jamil. Co-produced by George Matthews and technical support and music by Jona Scholz. We're a part of the project BSR-Electric and are proudly funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Electric.

This is one part of a series of 3 episodes. To find more, please access the shownotes and their links at our website, www.bsr-electric.eu.

We're introducing an online learning course for decision makers, researchers and stakeholders invested in the electric mobility revolution, just like you. To find out more, check out our website at www.bsr-electric.eu.

We're also holding our project's final conference online as an Open access resource, meaning it's completely free of charge with interactive presentations, joint learning and networking opportunities. Come join us on the 16th till the 17th of June 2020- to register please follow the latest updates on our website!

Our working team is based out of the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences at the Research and Transfer Centre for Sustainability and Climate Change Management. Thank you for listening in and I hope you tune into our next episode, coming soon!

Here are the links mentioned in the podcast:

- BSR electric's LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13561920/>
- SUMP's-Up's Website: <https://sumps-up.eu/home/>
- Eltis' Website: <https://www.eltis.org/de>