



EURO
CITIES



Milan's congestion charge zone

'Area C' is Milan's congestion charge zone, covering 8.2km² of the city centre with 77,000 inhabitants. The zone aims to ease congestion, reduce pollution and promote sustainable mobility.

Citizens were directly involved in developing Area C. In June 2011, they were asked to vote in a public referendum on limiting traffic and increasing the uptake of low-emissions vehicles in the city centre. A majority of 79% voted in favour of such a measure.

Low-emission zone

Located in the centre of Milan and covering 8.2 km², Area C operates on weekdays from 7:30 to 19:30 except on Thursdays, when it ends at 18:00. The zone is accessible through 43 entry points that are constantly monitored by ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras. This smart system identifies the vehicle's number plate and, by comparing it to the official registry, it is able to match it with the right category and charge the correct fee.

The standard ticket costs €5, which includes two hours of parking in designated spaces. Different fees apply to residents' and service vehicles. Scooters, electric cars, vehicles transporting disabled people and 'clean' (low-polluting) vehicles are exempt from the charge. High-polluting vehicles up to category Euro 3 are not permitted to enter at all.

“When the project began, we were sceptical about it. But after a year it's clear that it has helped create a sense of community because citizens feel involved in the project. The city needs our help, it needs its citizens!”

Cristina Jucker, project user

cities in action

September 2013

where: Milan, Italy
what: mobility
when: 2011+

Drivers can buy entry passes through various means, including coupons from newsagents, pay and display machines, direct debit and online. The 'telepass' is also available, which allows the driver to enter the zone via a dedicated lane and the congestion charge is deducted directly from the user's bank account.

The short term objective of the measure is to decrease vehicle access to the area and thus reduce traffic congestion and pollution. By exempting clean vehicles from the charge, the city also hopes to encourage more sustainable means of transport.

Results and challenges

The measure was suspended in July 2012 following an appeal filed by a garage situated in the concerned area. After agreeing on a special charging system for garage owners in the area, the project recommenced in September 2012 and in 2013 it was renewed until the end of 2016.

Despite this obstacle, results for the congestion charge zone are already significant, improving the quality and the attractiveness of the urban centre. On average, traffic has been reduced by 31%, road accidents are down 26% and the city has recorded an improvement in public transport running speed, up 3.5% for buses and 4% for trams. The number of clean vehicles entering the area has also increased by 12%.

The levels of pollutants recorded have also decreased significantly compared to other areas outside Area C, for example carbon dioxide decreased by 35%.

Keeping citizens informed

The city keeps residents up to date on the latest results of the zone via its official website (www.areac.it). The website offers the latest statistics on traffic and pollution reduction as well as information on new sustainable mobility projects financed with Area C revenue.

The revenue coming from the congestion charge measure is reinvested in sustainable



mobility projects. In 2012, Area C revenue was estimated to be €20.3 million. Part of this amount was spent on the zone's operational costs, but the surplus was used to strengthen the public transport fleet in order to improve frequency and develop the second phase of Milan's bike sharing system.



Area C has achieved important positive benefits in terms of traffic and pollution. Public transport has been extended and the frequencies have been increased. But the city also needs to focus on changing the public attitude towards car use. Best practices in sustainable mobility can only be achieved if the city is ready to change.



Matteo Colleoni,
researcher project promoter

