

Title: WALKABILITY IN THE CZECH URBAN AREAS AND POSITION OF PEDESTRIANS

Presenting Author: Karel Schmeidler

Authors: K. Schmeidler 1;

Affiliation

1. Urban and Transport Sociology Dept., Transport Research Centre Brno, Vinohrady 10, Czech Republic,

Abstract:

Context, aim methodology:

Right from the beginning of car transport development pedestrians have been paid little attention; with the growing number of vehicles and roads for these vehicles their position is becoming even worse. Unequal position of pedestrians is also emphasized by their significantly greater vulnerability in the road traffic as compared to other road users. These circumstances have been highlighted more frequently only in recent years, when suitable solutions have been searched on the worldwide scale particularly with regard to making especially the roads in towns safer and friendlier to pedestrians.

Project objectives are:

The objective of this study is to map legal bases for searching optimum outputs within the limits of the Czech legal order. We also consider our obligation to mitigate a special legal regime of walking away from roads, i.e. pedestrian rules for the movement in protected natural areas and in the countryside.

Results and conclusions:

Particularly recently it has become obvious in the whole society that each road user is starting to understand in a better way the importance of enhanced safety of pedestrians. This was mainly helped to by relatively new legal regulations encompassing some essential elements of pedestrian protection, such as the introduction of an absolute right of way of pedestrians, decreased speed limits of vehicles in towns, and also reduced tolerance to drinking and driving. This work has introduced a certain legal framework, which defines a mutually relatively well-balanced system of rights and obligations of road users increasingly focused on the protection of pedestrians as relatively most vulnerable road users. Nevertheless, any legal arrangement only provides a certain degree of formal protection, and to achieve the highest possible safety of pedestrians a strong appeal to each individual is necessary.

Regulating the status of pedestrians by means of various legal acts from decrees of municipal authorities to legislation amendments will obviously create only a certain legal framework, a mere specification of basic rules which all participants in road traffic, not just pedestrians, should follow. A much more important pre-requisite for achieving the prime (as we believe) objective of reducing the number of road accidents involving pedestrians, generally speaking, increasing the safety of people most vulnerable and most easily affected by road traffic, i.e. the objective set, amongst others, by society on a supranational level, is without doubt the primary change in the way of thinking and behaving of all road traffic participants. Any changes to the legal framework would remain ineffective should there be now willingness to comply with the rules. Another significant coherent aspect is of course the practical enforceability of such provisions.

Any potential proposals for legislation amendments de lege ferenda leading to a greater safety of pedestrians must therefore be regarded from the point of view of individual categories mentioned above.