



Partecipa.net in the City Authority of Modena.

Unox1 and the Forum on City timetables and opening hours.

Experimentation with Participa.net in Modena goes by the name of Unox1. The name was chosen because of an existing project at the time the Participa.net kit was developed.

In March 2002 the City Authority of Modena created a week of communications with citizens providing them with information on 4 general topics: free time, professional life, admin and policy, and the world of associations.

Any citizen can register with Unox1 and receive a newsletter on topics of interest. The number of registered users and newsletters continuously increased, together with the range of topics and editorials.

As of February 2007 there are 43,400 registered users and 4,200 newsletters are sent out. Seventy-seven different topics have been featured.

The Participa.net project was based on Unox1 and extended to provide further services. Specifically, today, Unox1 enables users not only to receive information and take part in opinion polls but to answer questions on-line and activate virtual forums.

Starting in March 2007 a forum will be on-line dealing with the timetables and opening times in the historic city centre - a virtual discussion area to which citizens, administrators and shopkeepers can contribute, in relation to transport timetables, opening hours for shops and public services. Research, including a survey carried out by the City Authority in 2003 (Citizen satisfaction in relation to the local community) indicates that people in work - men and women - tend to see improved quality of life not in terms of money or benefits of various kinds but in terms of free time, as if they considered work necessary for a good life but too much work incompatible with it.

The Modena City Authority therefore wishes to change timetables and opening hours in the city. It is necessary to extend the range of choice in relation to the management of free time, both for individuals and for companies. Greater compatibility should be sought for free time activities in relation to work and both public and private decision-makers should be made aware of the impact of their decisions in "disposable time". The field of application is broad, including not only logistics and organization but also town planning and upgrading. For example keeping bars, shops and meeting places open in the evening has an immediate impact on upgrading services.

Strong support for this initiative was recently provided by new national legislation (L.53/00 "Dispositions on the co-ordination of timetables in cities") and regional bylaws (L.R. 21/94 "Regulations for drafting and implementing timetables") focusing their attention on the organization of free time.

These regulations oblige city authorities to draw up a Timetable Plan as a "tool for objectives and policy, expressed in individual projects, including experimental projects, relating to the various timetables of city services and their gradual harmonization and co-ordination."

Specifically Law 53 of 2000 states that Mayors must draw up guidelines for the Timetable Plan through "forms of consultation with local authorities, both sides of industry and associations, as specified by article 6 of Law 142 of 8 June 1990, and subsequent amendments and family associations".

Given that local government decisions can impact strongly on the management of free time for service users, the Department responsible for Timetables and Opening Hours needs to make the decision-making process as open as possible where decisions have direct or indirect impacts on the activities of citizens, by means of the analysis of their needs, the identification of suitable responses and the joint management and co-ordination of activities.

The final aim is to improve access to services, mobility, participation in local government decision-making and, in general, the life of the community.

A series of initiatives are currently ongoing to recruit skills and enhance sensitivity in the areas of city services. The forum focuses on 4 main topics: **1. Public transport.** What are the problems?

Do buses arrive on time? are there enough buses? Should buses be more frequent? Is a night-time bus service required? What time? Do taxis replace buses properly? **2. Access to the city centre.** Are there enough car parks? Do shuttle buses from car parks to the city centre work? Are Limited Traffic Areas working? Should there be more or fewer, should they be bigger/smaller? Are permits easy to obtain? Why not? **3. Entertainment and free time.** Does the city centre offer entertainment or do you need to go out to the suburbs? Is the city full of life In the evening? Are the bars and pubs open? What are their opening times? What do young people want In terms of entertainment? What do residents want In terms of peace and quiet at the weekend? What do residents want In terms of night life? **4. Shops and services.** Should the covered market open in the afternoons, not just the mornings? Do I have time to go shopping after work? Do I want shops to be open in the evenings? Should they open some Sundays when there are things on in the city centre? Should private and public services have different timetables? When? The forum will last one month starting on 26 February 2007. It will be launched by a promotional campaign with flyers and a video on the topics covered. The portal of the Modena City Authority will also promote the forum, as well as the Unox1 newsletter. The proposals of the forum will be submitted to the City Authority. The project promoter is the Department for Timetables and Opening Hours, in conjunction with the City Network "Mo-Net" and the Participated Balance Sheet Dept.

¹ <http://www.comune.modena.it/unox1> ² <http://www.comune.modena.it/bilanciopartecipativo>