How to prevent conflicts arising from lack of civil involvement in large-scale infrastructural projects in Central and Eastern Europe

dr Marcin Wolek
Department of Transportation Market
University of Gdansk
Gdynia City Council

Achieving the goals of the White Paper on Transport:
How civil society can help with delivery

European Economic and Social Committee
Structure of presentation

• Case study approach;
• Tricity Metropolitan Area;
• Pomeranian Metropolitan Railway – the project;
• Avoiding social conflicts on the example of PMR;
• Summary.
Why case study approach?

- Individual context of analysed case;
- Flexible methodology enabling description of different cases;
- The output readable for business for further applications;
- Introductive research method for further development of the study;
- Participation of examined cases, possibility to see it from the perspective of those involved;
- Holistic approach;
- Research focused on facts.

„research strategy, an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context […]” [wikipedia]
Tricity Metropolitan Area

- Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot + other municipalities;
- Around 1 mio. inhabitants;
- Strong economic and spatial growth accelerated by EU accession;
- One of the most competitive regions in Poland;
- Economic transition led to spatial conflicts;
- Growth of individual motorization;
- Road system affected by traffic servicing two harbours (incl. 3 container terminals).
Pomeranian Metropolitan Railway

- Revitalisation, upgrading and construction of railway line to link important part of railway system with core of metropolitan area and to create rail link to airport of Gdansk;
- Mixed passenger flows (regional, urban, airport);
- Increased railway infrastructure capacity;
- High scale of intervention;
- Additional investments to shift modal split towards public transport.
How to deal with sophisticated, conflicting, difficult and costly project?

• Clear vision;
• Identification of key institutional stakeholders (local selfgovernments, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Regional Development, Polish State Railways, Polish Railway Lines – infra manager, Railway Transport Authority, Gdansk Airport, strong media support…);
• Creation of special purpose vehicle – a dedicated company to prepare a project and to manage investment process (100% of stocks owned by regional government) – PKM S.A.;
• Strong political commitment of marshall of Pomeranian voivodeship;
• Competition for citizens for the names of stops – 50000 participants.
How to avoid conflicts and delays in completion of the project?

• Social consultations required by Polish law;
• Growing social awareness strengthened by dynamic development of NGOs and technology (social media);
• Few protests may turn into political actions;
• A risk of losing media support;
• Environmental aspects - important element of assessment of the project.
First step of social consultations: anticipating potential conflicts

- 14 meetings
- 300 proposals
- More than 1000 participants
Summary

• Anticipating formal social consultations enabled for wide engagement of citizens;
• Effective way of discussions, decreasing of risks and to involve people at a very early stage of the project preparation;
• It resulted in high social support and in a very low number of protests at next stages of project preparation process.

Chairman of European Parliament prof. Jerzy Buzek during one of conference presenting Pomeranian Metropolitan Railway in Gdynia, 09.2011