

The importance of an efficient communication campaign for the success of the BrennerLEC project

Every traffic management measure taken by road operators has an impact on users' travel and right for this reason it is difficult for road managers to efficiently communicate what happens along its infrastructure. This is true under normal management conditions, but it becomes particularly challenging when road operators implement extraordinary measures, to which users are not used to.

Considering that communication is not seen a priority among the activities that road operators carry out in everyday routine, approaching this issue has been quite difficult for Autostrada del Brennero when it had to face it within the framework of the *Brenner Lower Emissions Corridor - BrennerLEC* project, co-funded by the European Commission.

The goal of the project is to implement and validate traffic management measures aiming at providing clear environmental benefits in terms of air quality. Among the measures tested within the project, speed limits reduction applied to passenger cars to evaluate their emissions rate has been surely the most critical one, as users obliged to decrease speed when no disturbances occur along the motorway hardly accept the situation.

For this reason, the great challenge of the BrennerLEC partners has been since beginning of the project (2016) to work hard on users' acceptance by improving their communication strategy.

Displaying information on variable message signs as first measure to communicate with users proved not to be enough. The project partners realized that it was necessary to explain in an efficient manner to users (but also to the local population) the reason why the BrennerLEC project was carried out and what the benefits of its deployment would have been. To this extent, a special working group on communication was set up to study activities devoted to users' acceptance that needed to be carried out. An important role has been also played by project's stakeholders like municipalities, trade associations, environmental associations involved in the project to help reaching users and the population. They have been helping organizing meetings to spread information on the project. But the communication approach that should contribute most to change users' behaviour is the creation of an app to inform users in real time and with audio notifications that they are "entering" the test area, explaining the reasons for its creation and the driving behaviour they should acquire. The app is under development and will introduce a gamification element with the aim to induce users to better observe speed limits.

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