



UITP Busworld International Conference

Electric bus played important role in integrated public transport



During various workshops, the Union Internationale des Transport Publics (UITP) and Busworld highlighted the transition to integrated public transport in which electric buses play a prominent role. Far-reaching automation and meticulous data analysis definitely contribute to a successful operation, in which the role of the driver cannot be underestimated.

Busworld president Redgy Deschacht was delighted at the first joint congress organized by UITP and Busworld. UITP president Pere Calvet Tordera stated in his opening speech that buses worldwide account for 80% of the public transport commutes. In Europe, the bus accounts for 60% of the commutes. In the major cities, half of public transport rides happen by bus, in smaller cities and rural areas public transport is often exclusively by bus.



Alok Jain

whether public transportation should be regarded as a public necessity or as a form of social responsibility, while taking into account the quality of life in cities and so on.

He also criticised the often far-reaching subsidization of public transport and he advocated self-sustaining and even profitable operation thereof. By going fully for automation and data analysis of customer behaviour, operation and maintenance, this is perfectly possible, as pointed out by Alok Jain, referring to Hong Kong. Network optimization has led to 7% less kilometres on a yearly basis but also to 5% more passengers. Reliability, vehicle deployability and a more customer-friendly approach lead to higher customer satisfaction. Bus trans-

port is assessed too easily on the basis of the number of passenger kilometres and rides. That must stop. Passengers have a face, rides do not", said Alok Jain who advised to focus more on the customer. "Even when switching to autonomous transportation, the role of the operator should not be underestimated. The bus driver is in that case also much more than someone who is just driving the bus. He helps his customers, informs them and provides first aid if necessary. Older customers, an ever-growing group, require those forms of assistance and consider it a part of public transport comfort. In the interests of a better customer experience, we should not underestimate the human approach and the role of the driver".

"Stop talking about passenger kilometres and rides; passengers have a face, a bus does not"

European consultation platforms

In the name of European transport commissioner Violeta Bulc, Nikolaus von Peter spoke about the initiatives taken by the European Union to support sustainable public transport. For example, new emission standards will be introduced by 2025 and 2030, various financing and investment projects will be set up and consultation platforms will be established to exchange knowledge and experiences. All this fits in the aim to have one in three buses run on green energy by 2025.

"Any means of transport has its place and buses – thanks to their flexibility, environmental friendliness, safety and low operating costs – make an important contribution to mobility. However, for travellers, transport alone is not going to cut it. They want additional services and integrated transport. Electric buses respond to that need as they are modern and attractive to the traveller. On these grounds, UITP also signs the charter for environmentally friendly and sustainable public transport drawn up by the European Commission".

At the same time, cities are guided in the preparation of transition plans for the transition to sustainable public transport. "We now have a unique opportunity to make public transport safer, greener and more attractive. Wherever possible, we must look for synergies with other transport modes and technologies. Buses definitely have their place in cities that profile themselves as mobility-conscious", said Nikolaus von Peter, who further stated that the European Commission will be focussing on multimodal transport next year.

Self-sustaining and profitable operation Transport consultant Alok Jain (Trans-Consult) made several comments on the future of public transport in cities that have been covered by car traffic over the past few decades. He raised the image issue, for example, and wondered



Amiens goes for Irizar tram bus

Yesterday, Irizar and the French city of Amiens sealed the purchase of 42 electric tram buses of the ie-tram type with a visit to the tram bus in question at Busworld. Amiens wants to run exclusively on electrically powered buses by 2019.

To that end, the city must modernize the local network and build a completely new depot. The entire operation costs 122 million euros. That investment is necessary in view of the changing nature of Amiens as it accommodates a growing student population. The choice for the buses has already been made, but the batteries and the colour have not been



Representatives of the city of Amiens and Irizar proudly have their picture taken in front of the new tram bus.

decided yet. The buses will run from 4 am to midnight with an average frequency of 8 minutes. Charging will take place at the

beginning and end of the line. To operate the entire 48-km network, more than 100 buses are required.

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VDL brings MidCity Electric

During the Busworld press conference by VDL Bus & Coach, the Dutch bus manufacturer announced that the Futura coach range now comes with three years of full warranty. Furthermore, it was mentioned that VDL will focus mainly on electric when it comes to public transport, even though diesel is not out of mind.

With its large-scale projects in the Dutch city of Eindhoven, where VDL delivered 43 electric articulated Citeas including the charging infrastructure and soon with 100 of the same Citeas in Amsterdam, VDL boasts the VDL MidCity Electric, which is premiering at Busworld. A mini-bus that meets the need for small-scale public transport. It is eight meters long and has a low floor that ensures easy access for wheelchair passengers. The longer wheelbase offers the MidCity



The VDL Bus & Coach management during the press conference at Busworld with the MidCity Electric on the right.

Electric a flexible concept for all kinds of layouts. An 87-kWh battery is supposed

to give it an action radius of about 220 kilometres. VDL Bus & Coach expects to take this MidCity Electric in production somewhere next year.

VDL Bus & Coach says that the transition to zero-emission public transport is all about turnkey public transport systems and sees itself as a transition partner. As a reward for this attitude, VDL received the Sustainable Urban Bus 2018 Award for the Citea SLFA-181 Electric at the Busworld Awards Night.

During Busworld 2017, VDL shows various electric public transport systems. The award-winning VDL Citea SLFA Electric is an 18.1-meter electric articulated bus, also winner of the Red Dot Award 2017 in

VDL Bus & Coach strengthens position in Scandinavia

VDL Bus & Coach is going to further expand its leading position in Europe in the field of electric mobility. Busworld Kortrijk served as location for VDL Bus & Coach to reach an agreement on the acquisition of the shares of the Swedish company Björks & Byberg in VDL Bus & Coach Nordic. VDL's Buses division has had a minority interest in the Scandinavian bus sales organization for years. VDL Bus & Coach is now taking over the majority interest from Björks & Byberg.

The intention agreement stipulates that the transaction will be completed by the end of 2017. VDL Bus & Coach Nordic, with offices in Sweden, Finland and Norway, employs about sixty people. VDL's decision to take over the share

package is a logical continuation of the chosen strategy to be directly present with its Buses division in the bus markets that show potential. For example, VDL Bus & Coach announced last week, also at Busworld, that they will be opening their own branch in Spain this autumn. "In order to take a next step and offer complete customer solutions, including for our coach portfolio, as a transition partner to zero emission heavy duty mobility, it is crucial that VDL itself is located in the near vicinity of our customers", says Henk Coppens, CEO of VDL Bus & Coach.

the Product Design category. VDL Bus & Coach brought a special Citea SLFA-181 Electric to their Busworld stand. To show the versatility, a zero-emission public transport system is shown on the outside area: a VDL Citea LLE-99 Electric with rapid charging station.

Diesel

Nonetheless, VDL Bus & Coach has not forgotten about diesel. The company continues to develop in this field, especially in their spearhead which is making the vehicles lighter and therefore more

economical. Next to the lighter weight, the new start-stop function and an integrated regeneration system also contribute to a four to eight percent lower fuel consumption.

The stand also demonstrates the VDL Futura FDD2-141 double-decker, VDL Futura FHD2-106. A novelty is the luxury VDL Futura FHD2-135 which is being shown to the public for the first time and is clearly intended for the VIP segment. The VDL Bus & Coach stand can be found in hall 4, stand 404.

UNVI shows electric double-decker

The Spanish UNVI has supplied already over ninety double-deckers in mainly Asia, in cooperation with MAN. Recently, they presented such a double-decker, the Urbis DD with fully electric drive, that is now also shown at Busworld.

The Urbis DD Open Top Electric features 76 seats and is 12 m long. The battery is a NMC battery by BMZ, the drive shaft comes from Ziehl Abegg and the system technology is from SAV Studio. The action radius is said to be between 120 and 160 kilometres.

However, UNVI is mostly known for its minibuses of which they boast quite a wide range. The COMPA T is built on Iveco Daily and has a capacity of up to 33

seats at a maximum length of 8,508 mm. What's new is a version with a wheelbase of 4,750 mm. The Voyager has a unique design and is built on a Mercedes-Benz Atego chassis. UNVI can be found in hall 4, stand 402.



Unvi's electrically driven double-decker.

BMC introduces APRON bus

The market of the APRON buses, the super-wide buses that transport passengers from the airport terminal to the parked airplanes seems limited. Some traditional bus manufacturers have withdrawn from this niche market, giving a seemingly monopoly position to the famous Cobus.

BMC, encouraged by the finding that air travel steadily continues to increase, sees opportunities within this niche. Their

stand in hall 9 boasts a mature, beautifully finished prototype. 14 meters long, 3 meters wide, fully low floor and space for 96 passengers of which 12 seated. The powertrain of this model includes a 4.5-liter Cummins diesel engine coupled to an Allison transmission. For the future and in response to the market demand, an electric drive will be developed later. BMC is proud of this new APRON and says to be determined to bring about some competition for Cobus.



BMC takes its first steps on the airport bus market.

Alexander-Dennis aims to conquer the left-hand drive market

Alexander-Dennis is known worldwide as the largest builder of double-deckers. The iconic red double-deckers might as well be the business card of London, but in Hong Kong too, this manufacturer has traditionally been the undisputed number one.

Being located on an island, the British manufacturer can only tap into major new markets by also offering left-hand drive buses. Outside the United States (2006) and subsequently Canada and later Mexico (2016), Alexander-Dennis now definitively gained its foothold on the European mainland with the sale of 19 double-deckers to the Swiss PostAuto. Although double-deckers are slightly more expensive to purchase than their articulated counterparts, double-deckers do offer a number of benefits such as lower maintenance costs (no turntable), better manoeuvrability and a smaller ecological footprint. Two articulated buses cannot stop one after another at the same bus stop, two double-deckers can.

Everywhere in the world, the population leaves the countryside to settle in or near the cities. This makes the average travel time to the centre longer. Studies have shown that travellers are not willing to stand as soon as the travel time reaches 10 minutes. The top deck of a double-decker offers seats only, it is quieter, the outside view is phenomenal, engine sounds are barely perceived and if the



At Busworld, Alexander Dennis shows its double-decker for the Swiss PostAuto.

operator looks for a bit of decoration, you will find yourself in a coach. These positive experiences are very much needed if our government want to persuade more commuters to leave their car at home.

Opportunity

Cities like Berlin want to replace their entire double-decker fleet (400 pieces) by cleaner buses, quite an opportunity for Alexander-Dennis. Other European cities consider replacing articulated buses by double-deckers. With a century worth of double-decker knowhow, Alexander-Dennis is very well placed to profile itself in this market segment. We may expect more double-deckers on the continent in

the years to come. At least, that is what ADL promises us.