

The Corona-pandemic and its effects on the local transport in the Leipzig region

By Jochen Reitstätter

Almost from 100 to 0 public life came to a standstill during the months of the Corona-pandemic. Former fully occupied trains in the rush hours were now running practically without passengers. The effect was that the roads got more and more crowded only relieved down because of the strict use of methods like home-office or the usage of bicycles.

„During the first look-down period last year the traffic companies in the Mitteldeutscher Verkehrsverbund (mdv or Central German Transport Authority in the Halle/Leipzig-region) operated almost the same number of trains as in normal times before. This was important especially for the commuters who were dependent on a reliable transport system to get to work and back“, reported Juliane Vettermann, speaker of the mdv in the Leipzig region. The protection of the passengers was always the first priority, she underlined. „And this protection against the virus was achieved by strictly applied mask regulations and an obligatory opening of all the doors at every stop.“

The effectiveness of these and other well-known measures was hereby proven by an independent research study of the Charité Research Organisation, which brought out that the likelihood of an infection in the trains and trams was lower than the average.

But the pandemic also showed some clear requirements for change. The well-known situation of overfilled cars in the trams and trains in the rush hours of the day has to be altered quickly – or as quickly as possible, since the prerequisites for a change are a limiting factor, like the rolling stock or the number of time slots for trains on a train relation.

PIC of a crowded train car: The modal-split changes to more bikes and public transport, so train capacities for these groups have to be increased.

Pic. DBV

„We need more trains, better coordinated connections and one unified tariff system instead of dozens“, declared Ferdinand Fischer from the Deutscher Bahnkunden-Verband in Central Germany (comprised of the three Länder Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia). These are the conclusions we have to draw from the pandemic, if not we didn't really learn from this exceptional situation.

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