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Carsharing expands rapidly into new towns and communities - more than 25 percent new carsharing locations compared to the previous year.

The Bundesverband CarSharing e.V. (bcs), Germany's national carsharing association, released its 2014 annual review on March 16th. The review shows a continued rapid adoption of the concept "using not owning." More than one million driving license holders now use carsharing services. Carsharing is available in 490 German cities - 110 more than in 2013.

As of January 1st 2015, 1,040,000 customers were registered with the 150 German carsharing providers. This is a 37.4 percent increase compared to the previous year. 1.5 percent of all people aged 18 and older were customers of a carsharing service in 2014. This ratio indicates that carsharing developed well in 2014, and that there is still a great potential for further growth.

Free-floating services attracted the most new customers. Their number increased from 437,000 to 600,000. This shows that growth rates slightly decreased compared to 2013. But with a plus of 51 percent, growth is still dynamic. Stationbased services increased their customers base by 18.8 percent, to a total of 380,000. With growth rates around 20 percent each year, stationbased carsharing growth is less dynamic than the free-floating services, but is also an ongoing success story - especially when considering some providers' 20 or more years of establishment in the market.

In terms of geographic distribution, stationbased services are growing rapidly. While free-floating systems are limited to only a few big cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, stationbased carsharing system distribute their service much wider. The number of carsharing stations rose from 3,900 to 4,600 in 2014. This is an increase of 17.9 percent. Carsharing is now available to customers in 490 German cities and communities – 110 more than in the year before.

→ - 2 -

Willi Loose, CEO of bcs, notes: “Carsharing is most attractive if it is available directly in peoples neighborhoods. Figures show that we moved a good deal closer to this aim. Stationbased carsharing as an alternative to private car ownership is now offered to 36 million people in Germany.”

15,400 cars were available for carsharing customers in 2014. This is a 10.4 percent increase compared to the previous year. As before, there are notable differences between stationbased and free-floating systems. While stationbased services purchased 1,300 additional cars (a 16.9 percent increase), free-floating services added only 150 cars to their fleets. Thus one stationbased car was shared by 42 customers. In comparison, the number of customers per car in free-floating systems increased from 70 in 2013 to 103 in 2014. These figures indicate that usage patterns in both systems vary significantly.

Loose comments: “Customers of the car manufacturers' free-floating services tend to use these cars for short inner-city trips. Customers of stationbased services, on the other hand, tend to drive further and take longer trips. This signifies that both systems respond to different customer needs. Some providers of stationbased carsharing have therefor added free-floating cars to their service. This might be a trend-setting way to combine customer benefit and eco-friendly car use in one integrated system.”

Dr. Kay Lindemann, CEO of the Verband der Automobilindustrie, Germany's car-manufacturers association, was invited by bcs to provide his view on the development of carsharing in Germany. He notes: “The latest figures show the unabated dynamics of carsharing. Car-manufacturers with their services have contributed significantly to the carsharing boom in Germany. Together with many other providers they have strongly professionalized the service. Carsharing “Made in Germany” is now a business model with excellent export possibilities. The mobility services developed in Germany shall be as successful on the world market as German car-manufacturing already is. With the figures given, we should nevertheless keep in mind that carsharing today and in the future will only complement private car ownership, not replace it”.

In the future, no form of mobility alone will be able to fulfill all of peoples mobility-needs. This is especially true for condensed inner-city regions. To still provide a large number of people with the option of private car use, existing cars have to be used more efficiently and mobility services have to be intelligently combined. Carsharing plays an important role in meeting this goal.

Note:

For its annual survey, bcs collects data from all known carsharing providers. Since some customers are registered with two or more providers, double counts may occur.

This applies especially to customers of free-floating systems in big cities of more than 500.000 inhabitants if several free-floating providers operate there. Since customer data from different providers are not cross-referenced, these double counts are inevitable.

Further Information:

As of January 1st, 2015, a data sheet for the 2014 carsharing annual review, diagrams on carsharing development for past years, licence-free photos and further information can be found on the press website of Bundesverband CarSharing e. V.: <http://www.carsharing.de/presse>

Short info:

Bundesverband CarSharing e. V. (bcs) represents the political interests of German carsharing service providers on the regional and national level. About 115 carsharing providers are members of bcs.

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