

Cycling in Member States' Draft National Energy and Climate Plans: An Assessment

European Cyclists' Federation

Fabian Küster | ECF, Senior Policy Officer f.kuester@ecf.com

Alexis Veuillot | ECF, Policy Intern policy@ecf.com

21 June 2019



ECF gratefully acknowledges financial support from the European Commission. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

1. Introduction

Achieving a net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emission economy by 2050 was the objective the European Commission put forward in late 2018. At the time of writing it is clear that more and more Member States are getting behind this objective.

ECF fully supports the need to decarbonize the European economy, and views growing bicycle use as a necessary part of the solution. However, looking at past GHG emission trends in the EU, there is not much cause for optimism. In particular the transport sector has so far failed to contribute: in 2016, CO₂e emissions were 26 % higher than in 1990, and road transport accounted for 72% of total GHG emissions of the transport sector.

In order to achieve a net-zero GHG emission economy by 2050, the European Commission has introduced a new policy tool, the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs). Member States are required to define long-term strategies at how they plan to eliminate GHG emissions for each economic sector, including transport.

Cycling is by far the most energy-efficient of all transport modes, if the right support was provided, a significant contribution to decarbonize the transport sector could be made. For example, if greater investments for building safe and convenient cycle route networks were made, many short-and medium distance car and van trips, both passenger and freight, could be shifted to cycling.

As part of the 2018 Graz Declaration, Member States acknowledged cycling to be on equal footing with motorized transport and called for modal shift policies. Against this background, ECF analysed all 28 draft NECPs with a view to assessing the extent to which they include cycling measures in their carbon reduction strategies. 13 different indicators were identified for each country, ranking Member States from excellent to insufficient.



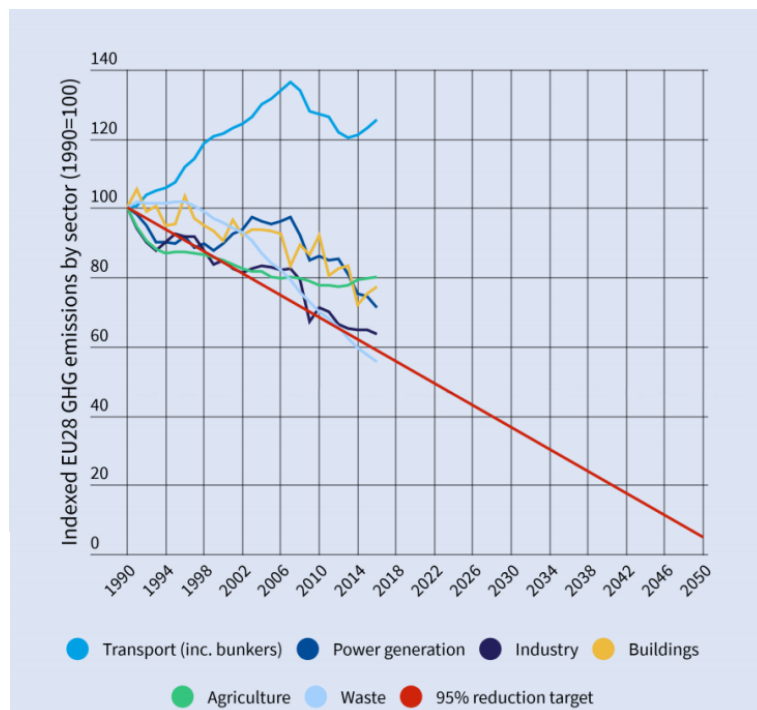
2. National Energy and Climate Plans

National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs) are the EU's chief method to meet its climate change goals. Simply put, the EU and Member States have agreed that all countries should, every 10 years, develop a 10-year plan setting out how they will meet their climate change commitments (2030 Climate and Energy Targets, and the Paris Agreement). The first national plans should cover the period from 2021 to 2030, including a perspective until 2050, to ensure long term consistency in policy objectives.

The first drafts were due 31 December 2018 and must be confirmed by the European Commission by the same date a year later. It is clear to ECF that cycling could play a prominent role in member states plans, given the negative track record of the transport sector since 1990.

3. Greenhouse gas emissions per sector

Whereas overall GHG emission in the EU fell by 22 % in 2017 compared to 1990, emissions in the transport sector saw a spike of 26 %. Since 2013, GHG emissions within the transport sector have risen by 7.44 %. The transport sector is Europe's largest climate challenge!



Source: Transport & Environment, 2018



4. Assessing the National Energy and Climate Plans

We have assessed the 28 draft NECPs 2021 – 2030 according to the role cycling plays in each of them. In this regard, we have selected a set of 13 indicators amounting to a total of 10 points. In particular we paid attention to these four major elements:

- i. a reference to cycling and a modal shift goal (towards cycling) (1 - 3);
- ii. a commitment of making public investments in favor of cycling (4, 5);
- iii. a clear reference to national cycling strategies, (active) mobility laws and Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning (6 - 8);
- iv. a reference to targeted pro-cycling measures (9 – 13).

The 13 indicators are the following:

1. Reference to cycling, or at least to “soft, active mobility” (0.5 pt.)
2. General commitment to modal shift with increased cycle use (1 pt.)
3. Measurable target to grow cycling by 2030 (or another year) (1 pt.)
4. General commitment to invest in cycling (1 pt.)
5. Defined budget for cycling (1 pt.)
6. Reference to a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) (1 pt.)
7. Reference to a National Cycling Strategy (1 pt.)
8. Reference to a (Active) Mobility Law (1 pt.)
9. Building, developing cycling infrastructures (0.5 pt.)
10. Enhancing inter-modality (0.5 pt.)
11. Improving road safety for cyclists (0.5 pt.)
12. Awareness-raising and promotion of cycling (0.5 pt.)
13. Introducing fiscal incentives (0.5 pt.)

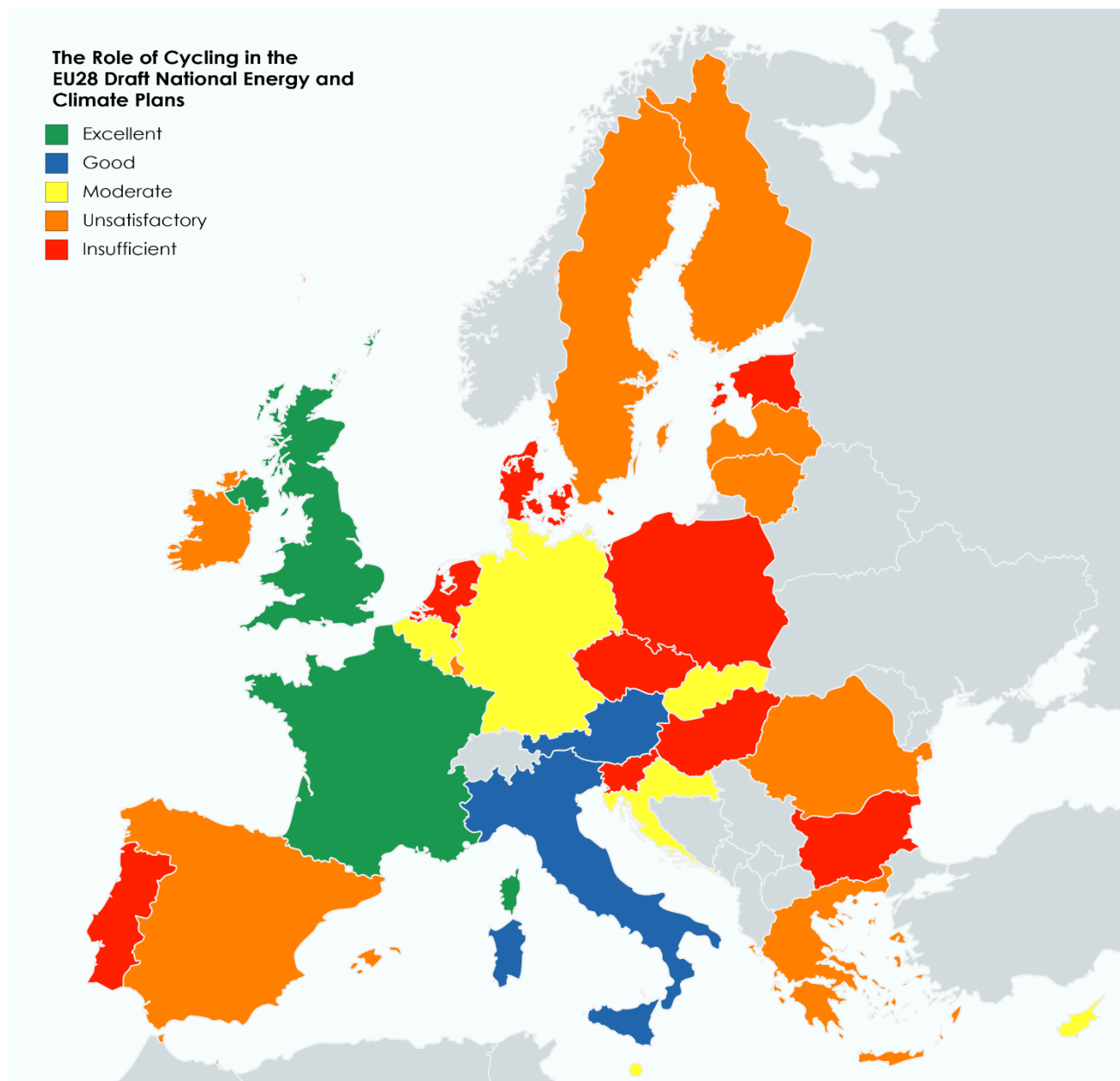
This assessment has allowed us to cluster the NECPs into five categories, according to their score:

- an excellent role for cycling (from 8 to 10 points);
- a good role (from 6 to 7.5 points);
- a moderate role (from 4 to 5.5 points);
- an unsatisfactory role (from 2 to 3.5 points);
- an insufficient – or inexistent – role (from 0 to 1.5 points).

We want to explicitly stress that our approach is strictly limited to assessing the place of cycling within the draft NECPs and should not be understood as an evaluation of the EU countries' cycling policies as a whole. Thus, a country can be an excellent player towards pro-cycling policies and fall in the lowest category of our ranking; as is the case for the Netherlands, Denmark and Hungary.



5. The role of cycling in the draft NECPs: EU countries' ranking



Assessment	EU Member States
EXCELLENT: Strong reference to cycling in the draft NECP. Including a clear budget, commitment to modal shift and reference to a cycling or active mobility law.	France (8), United Kingdom (8.5)
GOOD: Cycling is clearly referenced in the draft NECP, thanks to numerous indications on the implementation of pro-cycling policies towards climate change mitigation.	Austria (6), Italy (6)
MODERATE: Cycling is clearly referenced in the draft NECP; the essential information regarding pro-cycling policies is provided.	Belgium (4), Croatia (4.5), Cyprus (4.5), Germany (4.5), Malta (5), Slovakia (5.5)
UNSATISFACTORY: Cycling is referenced in the draft NECP, and some pro-cycling measures are mentioned – mainly on developing cycling infrastructure.	Finland (3.5), Greece (2), Ireland (2), Latvia (2), Lithuania (2.5), Luxembourg (3), Romania (2), Spain (2), Sweden (2)
INSUFFICIENT: Very weak or complete absence of reference to cycling in the draft NECP.	Bulgaria (1), Czechia (1.5), Denmark (0), Estonia (1), Hungary (0), Netherlands (1), Poland (1), Portugal (0.5), Slovenia (1)

Good practice examples:

Of all EU 28, **United Kingdom** has made the most detailed reference to cycling in its draft NECP, clearly explaining the modalities of implementation of its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS), which has identified £1.2 billion available for active mobility to 2021. The draft mentions many concrete policies to reach the objective of doubling cycling to 1.6 billion trips in 2025.

France's draft NECP makes a strong reference to the country's cycling policy, through its National cycling strategy ("*Plan vélo et mobilités actives*") for which €350 million will be allocated, and through the recently adopted Mobility Law ("*Loi d'orientation des mobilités*"). Numerous concrete measures are evoked to quadruple the modal share by 2030.

Italy has given cycling a good role in its draft NECP, especially thanks to a reference to the 'Elements for a roadmap to sustainable mobility' document which plans "a cultural shift" towards cycling. Specifically, €372 million will be allocated for the development of cycling infrastructure between 2016 and 2024.

Austria mentions its aim to increase the cycling modal share from a current level of 7%, to 13% in 2025. Beside a reference to the Cycling Masterplan ("*Masterplan Radfahren*"), the draft NECP cites several pro-cycling measures, like the development of cycling infrastructure.



6. Overall ECF assessment

Cycling measures have only been given very limited attention in the 28 Member States' draft National Energy and Climate Plans.

Only four Member States, France, the UK, Austria and Italy, scored excellent or good against the 13 cycling indicators. Six countries achieved a moderate result. Disappointingly, 18 countries scored either an unsatisfactory (9) or an insufficient result (9). Two countries managed to mention cycling not even once: Denmark and Hungary!

The average score of the 28 draft NECPs is: 3/10

This is a clear result that cycling, despite being a zero-emission mode of transport, still has not been recognized as an important measure to decarbonize the transport sector and achieve zero-carbon emissions by 2050.

The good news is that it is not too late yet: **ECF calls upon all Member States and the European Commission to fully include cycling measures such as a defined budget for cycling investments in the formulation of the final NECPs** that have to be submitted by 31 December 2019!

For more information:

European Cyclists' Federation: Cycle more often 2 cool down the planet - Quantifying CO₂ savings of cycling, 2011.
https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/ECF_CO2_WEB.pdf

European Commission's website, draft National Energy and Climate Plans:
<https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/topics/energy-strategy-and-energy-union/governance-energy-union/national-energy-climate-plans>

Graz Declaration (2018) : <https://www.eu2018.at/latest-news/news/10-30-Graz-Declaration.html>

2030 EU GHG emissions targets and framework, [A policy framework for climate and energy in the period from 2020 to 2030.](#)

2050 EU Long Term Climate Strategy, [A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy](#)

2015 Paris Agreement, [The Paris Agreement.](#)



Table: The role of cycling in the draft NECPs through 13 indicators

[illegible]