

Getting into gear: Cycling for the 2020s

The ECF Manifesto for the 2019
European Parliament Elections



The Manifesto

The 2020s will be the decade that redefines mobility. The priorities of the last century are no longer applicable to today's Europe, and citizens and businesses are demanding greener, safer and healthier places to live and work than ever before. The 2019 European Parliament election represents a chance for the European Union and Member States to make a broad commitment to a paradigm shift in transport and mobility policies, prioritising walking, cycling, public transport and shared mobility services over individual car use.

Despite calls from national level transport and environment ministers, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the United Nations, and above all the citizens of Europe, the EU has not acted decisively on cycling so far. This election manifesto therefore sets out a vision of a more active, sustainable and safe Europe that puts active mobility – including cycling – at the top of the mobility pyramid and it proposes the most important steps which should happen on the European level to support the national, regional and local level efforts to achieve this objective ; proposing the most important steps necessary at the European level to support national, regional and local level efforts.

Why cycling?

CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

Limiting global warming to 1.5° Celsius will be the defining challenge of our time. Contrary to all other economic sectors, transport CO₂(e) emissions are still more than 20 % above 1990 levels.

Bicycles produce a relatively tiny amount of CO₂(e) emissions over their life cycle and represent the most environmentally friendly mode of transport after walking. At current levels we estimate that cycling saves 16 million tonnes of CO₂(e) per year, equivalent to the annual emissions of Croatia. Increases in cycling levels scale this benefit dramatically. By 2030 if the number of kilometres cycled doubled then an additional 7m tonnes of CO₂(e) would be saved

annually. Cycling can also help local authorities to comply with EU air quality standards. Citizens still breathe filthy air in hundreds of European towns and cities; as a consequence, every year, 400,000 people die prematurely on the continent.ⁱ



JOBS

In total, cycling provides 650,000 jobs in the EU, mainly in the tourism sector and often clustered in the less economically developed parts of the EU.



Of these jobs, 90,000 are directly involved with the production of bicycles, including some 800 SMEs, and in total producing 13 million of the 21 million bicycles and Electrically Power Assisted Cycles (EPACs) sold every year in the EUⁱⁱ. Cycling also contributes to the productivity of other EU industries, as the physical and mental health benefits of cycling to work produce 4.5bn in benefits to productivity.ⁱⁱⁱ

HEALTH

Because of the benefits of increased physical activity to health, cycling is currently estimated to save 18,109 premature deaths a year, quantified at €52bn per year. In addition, people who cycle have a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers, with estimated benefits in the EU worth some €21 bn per year.^{iv} Conversely, in the EU physical inactivity is estimated to have economic costs of

€80bn per year, predicted to rise to €125bn by 2030^v. If Europeans cycled just a little bit more, it would make a dramatic contribution to public health.



ECONOMY

Investment in cycling has been continuously found to have a very high cost to benefit ratio. In 2014 The UK found that for every £1 spent on cycling £5.50 in



social benefit was created.^{vi} Similar studies in Brussels and Helsinki, looking at cycling investment from 2002 to 2012, found that investments in cycling yielded between 5 and 9 times their original cost.^{vii} In a comparative sense, Dutch research found that the annual cost of infrastructure per bicycle user was just €33, whereas for a car user the cost is €342, over 10 times larger.^{viii}



4 policy goals for the EU by 2030

ECF calls upon the European Union to set some ambitious goals, to be achieved by 2030. Meeting these achievable targets would go a long way towards putting Europe's mobility system on a more sustainable path.

1

Cycling must be an equal partner in the mobility system, with users paying for the full external costs of their mobility choices, and the wider societal benefits of active mobility being fully internalized.

2

Cycle use in the EU will increase by 50% by 2030, with cycling's share of the transport modal split being at least 12%.^{ix}

3

The rate of fatalities and serious injuries among cyclists should be halved by 2030.

4

There should be €3bn invested in cycling projects in the EU's 2021-2027 budget and €6bn invested in the next.

10

Recommendations

Develop an EU wide cycling strategy

1

The European Commission should adopt a European wide strategy for the promotion of cycling.

Why? If the EU adopted such a document it would improve the political visibility of cyclists, and integrate cycling into all relevant policies (transport, fiscal/financial, regional policy etc). ECF and partner organisations demonstrated this when we published the European Union Cycling Strategy (EUCS), resulting from a systematic review of all policy areas covered by EU competency.



2

Commit to modal shift, to increase the level of cycling

The EU should explicitly commit to modal shift policies, both for passenger and freight transport, and introduce an EU-wide transport modal split objective that achieves a modal share for cycling of at least 12%, averaging 0.48 trips per person per day.

Why? Policy makers should be aiming to increase the number and proportion of people cycling, as across a wide range of indicators cycling achieves the most beneficial results for citizens of all transport modes. Opposite to this, if we want to cut congestion, and create healthier and less polluted places to live and work, we need to encourage people to stop using their cars. Modal shift therefore, from car use to bicycle use, achieves both these objectives. It is time for the EU to come out and support modal shift directly.

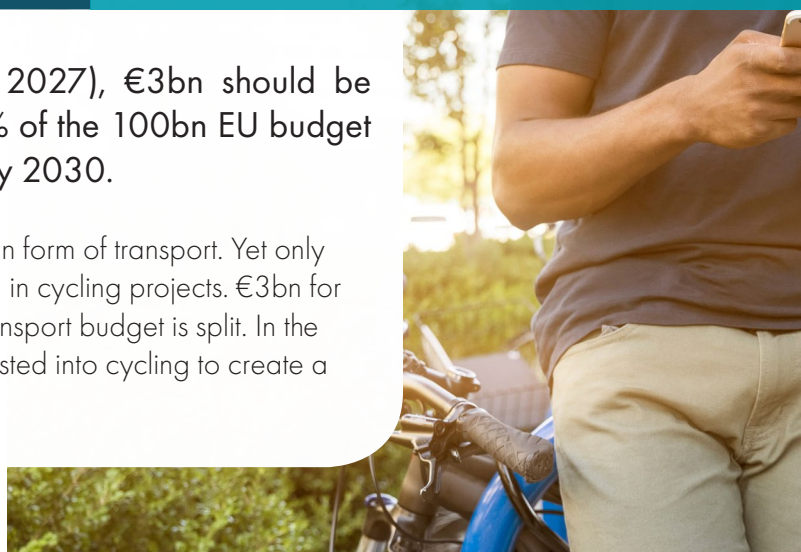


Invest €3bn from EU funds for cycling projects

3

During the next EU financial period (2021- 2027), €3bn should be invested in cycling. This would represent just 3% of the 100bn EU budget earmarked for transport, with a view to €6bn by 2030.

Why? 8% of people in the EU cycle as their most common form of transport. Yet only 1.5% of the current 100bn EU transport budget is invested in cycling projects. €3bn for cycling would start to address the uneven way that the transport budget is split. In the long-run, 10% of the EU's transport budget should be invested into cycling to create a level-playing field with other modes of transport.



4

Address climate change and air pollution through cycling

The EU should issue strong recommendations to national governments that they should develop and implement national level strategies for the promotion of cycling, e.g. in the context of their National Energy and Climate Plans or National Air Quality Strategies.

Why? Bicycles and other forms of active transport emit virtually no emissions of CO₂(e) or other pollutants harmful to human health. More cycling would also help improve air quality and go a long way towards tackling the 400,000 premature deaths every year that are caused by poor air quality.^x Higher levels of cycling would have similar impacts on climate change, as every person who chooses to cycle rather than drive is a one car less on the road. Doubling cycling in the EU would save some 7m tonnes of CO₂(e) per year.^{xi}



Apply zero or reduced VAT rates on bicycle sales

5

Member States should be allowed to charge a reduced or 0% VAT rate on both conventional bicycles and electrically power assisted cycles (EPACs).

Why? The European Commission is proposing that Member States will be able to charge a reduced or 0% VAT rate on electric cars and conventional bicycles, yet EPACs have not been included. There is no reason for this lack of parity, EPACs deliver much of the same benefits as conventional bikes, whilst making cycling more accessible, e.g. in hilly areas, for longer commuting distances, or for senior citizens.



6

Prevent motor insurance requirements for electrically assisted bicycles



Bicycles equipped with light electric engines (Pedelec 25s that provide 250 watt power support whilst pedalling, limited to 25km/h) should not have new mandatory insurance requirements placed on them.

Why? The European Commission has proposed that all Pedelec 25s should be required to have motor insurance. Currently, Member States treat them as conventional bicycles, as the level of hazard posed to road users is the same. Requiring Pedelec-25 bicycles to have insurance would have a large negative effect on the number of people cycling, as more than 90% of electric bicycles sold every year are Pedelec 25s.

Legislate for safer motor vehicles

7

All new vehicles should be required to have intervening Intelligent Speed Assistance technology installed (ISA).

Why? ISA is an inexpensive technology already installed in many cars to help drivers stay below the speed limit. Research estimates that this single measure could eventually reduce deaths on European roads by 20%, with over 1500 lives saved per year.^{xii} This is greater than reductions after laws mandating seatbelts were introduced.



8

Ensure cycling infrastructure quality



The European Commission should develop guidelines on the quality of cycling infrastructure.

Why? Unfortunately many infrastructure projects are built in the EU that create barriers to cycling, or are unsafe for use by cyclists. This is caused by some Member States not having adequate infrastructure regulations to keep cyclists safe. The EU is uniquely positioned to change this, and could set guidelines for infrastructure, improving the safety of vulnerable road users, and thus encouraging more people to cycle.

Integrate EuroVelo into the TEN-T network

9

Recognise EuroVelo, the European long-distance cycle route network, as part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

Why? EuroVelo is the European network of cycle routes, with cycling infrastructure located in every Member State. The network will total over 70,000km when complete yet remains unfinished. In order to complete the network it is important that the EU gets more fully behind the project.





On every new and refurbished train, there should be a dedicated space for at least 8 bicycles.

Why? Combining different means of transport is a good way of substituting car trips. To address this, the European Parliament voted in favour of requiring a designated space for 8 bicycles on all new and refurbished trains, but a final decision by the European institutions is still pending.

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April 2019

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About the European Cyclists' Federation

With over 80 members across 40 countries, the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) unites cyclists' associations from across the continent, giving them a voice on the European level. Our aim is to get more people cycling more often by influencing policy in favour of cycling.



ECF gratefully acknowledges financial support from the European commission. Nevertheless the sole responsibility of this publication lies with the author. The European Union is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein