

6 December 2021

## MORE CYCLING IN EUROPE

### *Recommendations for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Jan-June 2022)*

France has been making positive strides in the area of cycling. It is implementing a national cycling strategy with clear modal shift targets and has introduced fiscal and financial measures that encourage and enable more cycling. More French cities and towns are becoming cycling-friendly, and France aspires to become a world leading cycling tourism destination. Its bicycle sector comprises a growing number of industrial leaders. France's recent achievements on cycling speak for themselves: traffic figures on cycle routes have soared by almost 30% since 2020.<sup>i</sup> For all these reasons and more, France is uniquely well positioned to champion cycling throughout the European Union for the benefit of the climate, public health, more liveable cities and towns, green tourism, economic growth and jobs.

The upcoming six-month presidency of the Council of the EU offers a unique opportunity for France to further advance cycling and leave a legacy of lasting, positive change. It is a chance for the French government to undertake leadership on advancing EU legislation that promotes more cycling, and for France to show a good example to the rest of Europe to encourage more EU countries, regions and cities to increase cycling's modal share within their borders.

The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), the *Fédération française des usagers de la bicyclette* (FUB) and *Vélo & Territoires* (V&T) recommend to the French Government to undertake the following actions during its presidency of the Council of the EU:

- Ensure more funding for **high quality cycling infrastructure**.
- Support and promote a **stronger European bicycle industry**.
- Achieve progress for cycling on the European Commission's proposals for a **recast TEN-T Regulation and Energy Performance of Buildings Directive**, and advocate for active mobility to be prioritised in member states' implementation of the new Urban Mobility Framework Package.
- Contribute to **improved safety and bicycle theft protection for cyclists** by promoting the adoption of vehicle technologies such as blind spot detection and exploring the creation of a European bicycle identification system.

#### 1. Ensure more funding for high quality cycling infrastructure

Financing new cycling infrastructure for the present and near future must be a centrepiece of Europe's actions to reduce emissions from motorised transport and mitigate and adapt to climate change. More people cycle when there are safe places for them to ride that efficiently get them to and from their destinations.

EU Structural Funds are a crucial resource that must be tapped into. We believe that EU member states should spend €6 billion on cycling infrastructure from EU Structural Funds during the 2021-2027 financial period to achieve significant, Europe-wide, progress on shifting people away from motorised transport to cycling. This is what it will take to have more and better cycling in Europe.

In addition to national cycling infrastructure networks, there is a need to finance an increase in European bicycle networks. This can be achieved by:

- Integrating cycling infrastructure developments into future TEN-T projects to take advantage of a stronger basis for EU funding
- Integrating the EuroVelo cycling route network into the TEN-T, which can provide crucial financing for the maintenance and expansion of EuroVelo routes and foster a growth in cycling tourism

Finally, the European Commission's "Climate Neutral Cities Mission" is an important opportunity to channel policy and financial support to cities, regions and member states for developing cycling plans and cycling infrastructure. Cycling is a proven zero/low-emissions form of mobility, making its significant uptake crucial for any public authority that is aiming to cut carbon emissions in the transport sector.

## **2. Actively support the innovation, growth and industrial leadership of the European bicycle industry**

The European bicycle industry is a prominent contributor to Europe's economic wellbeing. The massive success of e-bike sales in Europe brings enormous opportunities for the industry in terms of research and innovation, and job creation. The production of bicycle industry companies in the Aveiro Valley in Portugal, for example, is a good example what is possible if production can be scaled up throughout Europe. In France alone, the potential for job creation is estimated at between 200,000 and 300,000 jobs by 2050. At the same time, one of the main challenges has been supply chain disruptions, and these need to be addressed to unlock the full potential of this industry. On this, we are keen to await the results of an ongoing French parliamentary mission investigating the potential of investing in France's cycling sector.

As a priority, we urge the French presidency to support the European cycling industry to being listed as a strategic European industry, on the basis of the [EU's Industrial Strategy](#). This would be a crucial step toward boosting the cycling industry and open the door for it to receive the support it needs to continue growing. We also encourage the French presidency to advocate for the European cycling industry to receive more support in research and innovation through Horizon Europe.

France would benefit greatly from assuming European leadership in this area, given the importance for cycling industry job creation in France. A boosted bicycle industry with improved cooperation between countries could play a crucial role in Europe's efforts to combat climate change in an effective and socially just manner.

## **3. Achieve progress for cycling on the European Commission proposals for a recast TEN-T Regulation and a recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive**

### *Recast TEN-T Regulation*

A significant increase in the number of trips made by bicycle is crucial for achieving the EU's emissions reductions targets in the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package. Cycling must therefore play a central role in Europe's transportation network and, by extension, the EU's flagship transport policy, the Trans-European Transport Network, or TEN-T.

Therefore, ECF, FUB and V&T urge the French government to achieve progress on the Commission's proposal for a recast TEN-T Regulation by advocating for:

- The integration of EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, into TEN-T

EuroVelo should be included as a fully-fledged TEN-T network alongside the networks for other transport modes. As EuroVelo is already a well-established cycle route network, its integration into TEN-T could be easily achieved and entail tremendous benefits for the entire policy. Cycling tourism brings in €44 billion per to the European economy each year,<sup>ii</sup> and €4,2 billion in France alone,<sup>iii</sup> making it a formidable means of economic growth.

- The integration of cycling infrastructure into all relevant TEN-T infrastructure projects  
This would be a powerful measure for incorporating all kinds of cycling infrastructure into TEN-T, providing a crucial method of financing that can create cycling infrastructure that can be used safely, enjoyably and efficient for people who go to and from their destinations by bicycle. The potential for cycling traffic covered by TEN-T projects should be evaluated and the necessary elements of cycling infrastructure should be integrated into project planning, design and construction. This should include the following measures:
  - a) Cycle routes along TEN-T corridors
  - b) Safe and comfortable cycle crossings across TEN-T corridors
  - c) Upgrading other roads affected by TEN-T projects to safe cycling standards
  - d) Cycling connections in TEN-T urban nodes

The proposal for a recast TEN-T Regulation represents an opportunity to level the playing field for transport modes. A new regulation update can correct the limitations of the current approach and foster an unprecedented growth in cycling infrastructure across the EU.

#### *The recast Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD)*

The vast majority of passenger and freight trips start or end at some type of building. The original EPBD therefore rightly introduced the link between the building and mobility sectors. Yet while it set mandatory minimum requirements for charging infrastructure for electric (motor) vehicles, it limited itself to non-binding recommendations on electric bicycles (recital 28) and other forms of “soft and green mobility” (art. 8.8). As a result, most member states did not take up the EPBD’s recommendations on active mobility when transposing it into national law.

These shortcomings must now be addressed in the Commission’s forthcoming proposal for a recast EPBD. Research shows that a lack of bicycle parking severely discourages cycling. Access to safe and secure parking facilities is therefore a necessary measure to get more people to replace car trips with bicycle trips. In addition, the significant increase in e-bike sales and the potential for e-bikes to increase and sustain the numbers of people who cycle means that new buildings will also require secure charging points for e-bikes.

ECF, FUB and V&T recommend to the French Presidency to ensure the recast EPBD contains:

- Minimum requirements for bicycle parking  
This entails introducing a legal minimum requirement of at least 1.5 bicycle parking spaces per residential unit in new and renovated apartment buildings. This is based on the Bulgarian national standard where cycle use is around four times below the EU average.<sup>iv</sup> In non-residential buildings, adequate bicycle parking provisions should be provided to at least 15 % of the workforce. The number of bike parking must not depend on the number of car parking spaces as a growing number of sustainable new urban building developments aim to have fewer car parking spaces. In urban areas, the mobility demands of building inhabitants must be met through walking, cycling, public transport and shared mobility systems.

- **Introduce minimum requirements for e-bike charging infrastructure**  
This consists of introducing a legal minimum requirement of at least 10% of bicycle parking spots in new and renovated buildings to be equipped with charging infrastructure. Nearly five million e-bikes were sold in the EU and UK in 2020, and the market is predicted to grow to as many as 17 million units annually by 2030. Even if most e-bike batteries can be removed from bicycle frames and charged in apartment and office spaces, a wide range of choice will increase the attractiveness and user experience of e-bikes among various target groups. The 'right to plug', a concept applicable to electric vehicles, must also extend to e-bikes.

### *Urban Mobility Framework Package*

Urban mobility must change – substantively, and fast. The most recent IPCC report and new air quality guidelines from the World Health Organization underline the threats posed by the climate crisis for our environment and the air we breathe. The dominance of motorised transport in Europe's cities contributes severely to the climate crisis. Moreover, the costs of congestion and road accidents add up to almost €900 billion annually within the EU, according to the European Commission. Motor traffic congestion is worsening across European cities and negatively affecting all metrics of well-being and mobility.

Clean mobility must be a priority for towns and cities if Europe is to achieve its climate targets and improve the quality of urban life. Affordable and attractive active mobility options such as cycling, together with improved public transport, must be central to the European Commission's new Urban Mobility Framework Package and how EU member states implement it in their countries and cities.

Therefore, we urge the French Presidency to prioritise cycling as a key aspect of how EU member states implement the European Commission's Urban Mobility Framework Package by:

- Urging the Commission and EU member states to set benchmarks for cycling's modal share, the kilometres and type of cycling infrastructure built, and improved benchmarks to measure road safety for cyclists
- Advocating for cities of 100,000 and more inhabitants to create and implement Sustainable Mobility Plans that contain objectives to increase cycling's modal share
- Promoting the construction of high-quality cycling infrastructure in cities to encourage more people to cycle and to replace car trips with more bike trips, thereby reducing transport emissions

## **4. Contribute to improved safety and bicycle theft protection for cyclists**

### *Safety*

A perceived lack of safety is a major reason why many people are reluctant to cycle. Collisions with motor vehicles are very often serious or even fatal for pedestrians and cyclists, especially collisions that occur in a motor vehicle's blind spot. In France, 10% of pedestrian fatalities and 8% of cyclist fatalities occur in a car or truck's blind spot. Collisions in the blind spot are especially with large trucks: in France, it is estimated that 44% of fatal cyclist accidents at intersections involve a heavy goods vehicle.

In recent years, European authorities have introduced several measures that are a step in the right direction. European regulations have made blind spot detection and warning systems mandatory for all new trucks by 2024. Direct vision systems will also be mandatory by 2026 for new types of trucks and

2029 for all new trucks. However, work is still ongoing in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on the definition of the amount of vision required, the type of trucks that will be featured, and exceptions for some types of special use trucks.

We call on France to be extremely circumspect in allowing exceptions to the legislation and to only allow exceptions to the legislation in the very exceptional of circumstances, and to then require any exemptions to supplemented vision with active safety systems that will bring the same level of safety. Active systems should only be allowed in this regulation with this extreme situation, truck drivers must be given every opportunity to stop crashes from happening and to keep their vehicles out of situations where active systems would be needed; this should be primarily a Direct Vision regulation.

We urge France to take a strong position on this issue and make the fight against road insecurity and the calming of public spaces a priority in its presidency.

### Theft

Bicycle theft is another major reason why many people are reluctant to cycle in the first place. Thus, in 2004 at the request of the French government, FUB created a bicycle marking technology that is now widely used in France for all new and used bicycles. This measure now has a legal basis in the *Loi d'Orientation des Mobilités*, which was enacted in 2019. It has made France a pioneer in the fight against bicycle theft and given it the ability to advocate for similar solutions on the European stage.

A European policy to combat bicycle theft makes sense. A European approach is needed because theft networks are largely integrated on a continental scale, and it would be beneficial for local enforcement authorities to be able to precisely trace these networks to dismantle them. Furthermore, taking action to decrease bicycle theft is a clear way to encourage more people to cycle confidently and for the longer term.

For these reasons, FUB, V&T and ECF recommend to the French Presidency to initiate an exploratory dialogue with EU institutions, member states and civil society on what would constitute a European-wide bicycle marking system that protects cyclists from theft and forms an effective response to criminal networks that profit from bicycle theft.

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<sup>i</sup> According to Vélo & Territoires

<sup>ii</sup> According to a 2008 report by the European Parliament's DG for Internal Policies, "[The European Cycle Route Network EuroVelo: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism](#)".

<sup>iii</sup> According to a 2020 report by Ademe, "[Impact économique et potentiel de développement des usages de vélo en France en 2020.](#)"

<sup>iv</sup> Based on [Special Eurobarometer 495](#) (2019).