



Brussels, 4.10.2023
COM(2023) 566 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling

1. Introduction and rationale

Putting the well-being of people and the competitiveness of European industry at the centre of the green transition are key priorities for the European Commission. Cycling, as one of the most sustainable and healthy forms of transport and as a rapidly developing industry, is well placed to support this important process.

Increasing the share of cycling helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions, air and noise pollution as well as congestion. Moreover, cycling can improve physical and mental well-being, and social inclusion. It is a key enabler of sustainable tourism and also brings tangible benefits to the local economy through quality green jobs, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Commission therefore proposes establishing a set of principles to help unleash the full potential of cycling in the EU.

These principles would be part of the **European Declaration on Cycling** (hereinafter ‘the Declaration’), intended to serve as a strategic compass for relevant EU and national policies in future.

The Declaration included in the Annex to this Communication is put forward by the Commission, to be signed by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission as a joint declaration.

It is expected to help achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy and the Zero Pollution Action Plan. Furthermore, it aligns with the principle 20 of the European Pillar of Social Right, that everyone has the right to access essential services of good quality, including for transport.

The current proposal responds to the calls from the European Parliament, in particular its resolution on developing an EU cycling strategy¹, and from the majority of Member States². The Declaration is in line with the New EU Urban Mobility Framework³.

2. Ongoing efforts

As stated in the New EU Urban Mobility Framework, to contribute to the EU’s increasingly ambitious climate, environmental, digital, health and societal objectives, the EU needs to take more decisive action on urban mobility in order to shift from the current approach based on traffic flows to an approach based on the more sustainable mobility of people and goods⁴.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0058_EN.html

² <https://www.benelux.int/fr/publication/european-cycling-declaration/>

³ COM(2021) 811.

⁴ This means a stronger collective/public transport backbone, better active mobility (e.g. walking, cycling) options, efficient zero emission urban logistics and last mile deliveries, and improving accessibility. While such multimodality should be our guiding principle for urban mobility, zero emission and connected, automated and shared mobility will be a key component of the transition to a climate-neutral urban future that also enables suburban and rural areas to connect sustainably with cities. Better management of transport and mobility using multimodal hubs and digital solutions is needed to increase system-wide efficiency.

However, despite the numerous benefits of cycling, still too few people cycle in the EU⁵, with huge differences in the level of cycling across Member States, regions and cities. This is in particular due to inadequate infrastructure and resulting safety concerns, as well as differences in cultural attitudes towards cycling and a lack of awareness.

The EU in general and the Commission in particular have already taken several steps to address these issues and promote cycling, such as:

- revising EU transport policies: the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy⁶ and the EU Urban Mobility Framework⁷ call for increasing the uptake of cycling and other sustainable forms of transport;
- encouraging the use of cycling in the EU concept of sustainable urban mobility planning, part of Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/550⁸ on National Support Programmes for Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning;
- setting requirements to better integrate active transport modes in multimodal passenger hubs in urban nodes, and to maintain the continuity and accessibility of cycle paths in order to promote the active modes of transport included in the proposal for the revised Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation⁹;
- setting requirements for collecting and submitting urban mobility data in urban nodes to the Commission, included in the proposal for the revised TEN-T Regulation;
- setting requirements for a minimum number of bike parking spaces in the proposal for a revised Energy Performance of Building Directive¹⁰;
- incentivising the use of bicycles by introducing a new emissions trading system (ETS2)¹¹ that will put a carbon price on the fuels used in buildings, road transport and other sectors, and make available significant auction revenues for Member States to support the green transition, including in the transport sector;
- creating the Social Climate Fund¹², with dedicated funding targeted at vulnerable groups particularly affected by ETS2, to accelerate the decarbonisation of buildings and incentivise the uptake of zero and low emission mobility and transport, including support for buying and using bicycles;

⁵ According to the 2019 Eurobarometer survey, about 9% of EU citizens use (e-)bikes or scooters as their primary means of transportation. Source: <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2226>.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0789>

⁷ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ad816b47-8451-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-250877856>

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32023H0550>

⁹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0812>

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52021PC0802>

¹¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023L0959&qid=1688743056255>

¹² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32023R0955&qid=1688742687499>

The Social Climate Fund, sourced from the revenues of the current ETS and mainly from the new ETS for buildings, road transport and small industry (ETS2), is expected to mobilise from 2026 to 2032 EUR 86.7 billion of support for vulnerable households, vulnerable transport users and vulnerable microenterprises for a fair transition.

- proposing to recast the Energy Taxation Directive¹³ to help tackle the climate and environmental-related challenges of transport;
- providing funding for cycling-related projects through various programmes, such as the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Recovery and Resilience Facility¹⁴, InvestEU¹⁵ and the Horizon Europe programme;
- supporting research and innovation¹⁶ in cycling-related technologies and services, such as e-bikes, adapted or dedicated bikes and equipment for people with disabilities, bike sharing schemes, and smart cycling apps;
- promoting cycling as a sport, recreational activity and means of transport, which contributes to a healthy and active lifestyle in the context of the #BeActive campaign¹⁷, culminating in the European Week of Sport¹⁸ as well as through awareness-raising campaigns, such as European Mobility Week¹⁹ and the European Road Safety Charter²⁰;
- supporting peer learning between Member States on improving the safety of vulnerable road users, and particularly cyclists, through the EU Road Safety Exchange²¹;
- setting requirements for dedicated spaces for transporting bicycles on new and upgraded trains²².

¹³ Proposal for a Council Directive restructuring the Union framework for the taxation of energy products and electricity (recast) (COM/2021/563 final).

¹⁴ At present, the Commission estimates, based on the assessed and approved recovery and resilience plans that, in total, the recovery and resilience plans allocated EUR 1.7 billion to measures related to cycling infrastructure. These were proposed and are being implemented by Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia.

¹⁵ Some examples of InvestEU operations that support sustainable mobility, among other investments:

- InvestEU Framework for Sustainable Transition (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to invest in sub-projects on sustainable mobility and urban mobility.
- Framework Operation #14 for Sustainability Guarantee (European Investment Fund) to invest in low and zero emission mobility. This is the first pan-European guarantee product in support of the green transition of small businesses and individuals.
- Green Developer Financing Programme (European Investment Bank) to give framework loans to projects supporting the Paris Agreement objectives (including green mobility).
- Framework Operation #8 SMEW RIDW Joint Equity Product – Climate & Environmental Solutions Sub-Product (European Investment Fund) to support the research, development, demonstration, upscaling and commercialisation of technologies or solutions that contribute to the European Green Deal, including mobility and transport, and the urban built environment.
- Shift4Good Fund I (European Investment Fund), which is focused on smart and sustainable mobility and transport and circular economy and mainly targets B2B businesses. However, the fund is more focused on addressing the large transport medium from cars to air transportation and the maritime sectors.

¹⁶ Numerous relevant projects can be found in the EU Transport R&I project database TRIMIS

(<https://trimis.ec.europa.eu/>)

¹⁷ <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/news/facts-and-figures-about-the-beactive-2022-campaign>

¹⁸ <https://sport.ec.europa.eu/initiatives/european-week-of-sport>

¹⁹ <https://mobilityweek.eu>

²⁰ <https://road-safety-charter.ec.europa.eu/>

²¹ <https://etsc.eu/projects/eu-road-safety-exchange/>

²² Regulation (EU) 2021/782 on rail passengers' rights and obligations (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R0782&from=CS>); the above provisions apply as of 7 June 2025

3. The European Declaration on Cycling

In order to fulfil the potential of cycling so that it can effectively help achieve EU mobility, climate, environmental, health, industrial and social objectives, the use of cycling in the EU should increase substantially. This requires the authorities at local, regional, national and EU levels to further step up their efforts to promote cycling and make it a more attractive and safer option for people of all ages, different levels of fitness and those living with physical conditions.

Against this background, the Commission is proposing to establish a set of principles and related commitments. They will take the form of a draft Declaration by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The draft Declaration, as provided in the Annex, is meant as a proposal to be discussed with the European Parliament and the Council, with a view to being signed by all three institutions.

The proposed Declaration builds on previous initiatives from the Member States and the European Parliament, and benefits from contributions gathered from stakeholders²³.

Its **key principles** are centred around the issues of:

1. Developing and strengthening cycling policies;
2. Encouraging inclusive, affordable and healthy mobility;
3. Creating more and better cycling infrastructure;
4. Increasing investments and creating favourable conditions for cycling;
5. Improving road safety and security;
6. Supporting quality green jobs and the development of a world-class European cycling industry;
7. Supporting multimodality and cycling tourism;
8. Improving the collection of data on cycling.

4. Way forward

This draft Declaration sees the Commission put forward both a reference framework and guidelines to boost cycling levels in the EU and support related quality jobs and industry.

The Commission will promote communication and engagement activities with Member States and all relevant parties to ensure awareness and a shared commitment to the principles enshrined in this Declaration.

²³ Feedback received at a dedicated meeting of the active mobility subgroup of the Commission expert group on urban mobility on 3 July 2023 and during consultation on the New EU Urban Mobility Framework (https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12916-Sustainable-transport-new-urban-mobility-framework_en).



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ANNEX

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to the

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Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling

European Declaration on Cycling

The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission solemnly proclaim the following joint Declaration on Cycling

Preamble

Whereas:

- (1) Transport is key for social inclusion and economic development, and for creating jobs and promoting access to other essential services, such as employment, education, health and care. However, it is still a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, air, noise and water pollution. Congestion remains a serious challenge to the efficiency of transport systems and also reduces the liveability of affected areas, at a considerable cost to society and the economy.
- (2) Sustainable forms of transport are essential for achieving the EU's climate, zero pollution and energy efficiency objectives. Among these, cycling is one of the most sustainable, healthy and efficient, with considerable potential to support the decarbonisation of urban transport and help achieve the EU-wide target of reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to 1990 and climate neutrality by 2050 in line with the European Climate Law¹. It will also help us advance towards the zero pollution ambition², with numerous co-benefits in other areas. The importance of further developing cycling is in particular key for European towns and cities as part of our climate objectives.
- (3) Cycling comprises a broad and dynamic range of human-powered road vehicles, including bikes for various terrains, cargo bikes, bikes for transporting children, bikes for people with disabilities, trikes, recumbent bikes, velomobiles, tandems, e-bikes, speed pedelecs and bike trailers. They cater for a wide range of transport and mobility needs and require appropriate infrastructure. Cycling is playing an increasingly important role in the urban transport of goods, in particular parcel deliveries and shopping, thanks to cargo bikes and alike. In order to reach the full potential of cycling, cycling policies should reflect this diversity.
- (4) In order to reach its full potential, cycling needs to be properly addressed in urban mobility policies at all levels of governance and funding, transport planning, awareness raising, allocation of space, safety regulations and adequate infrastructure, including a special focus on persons with disabilities or reduced mobility. For example, the EU concept for sustainable urban mobility planning³ puts active mobility, including cycling, at the centre. Measures to support cycling need to be reported under the decarbonisation pillar of the National Energy and Climate Plans and be properly considered in the plans of the Horizon Europe mission on 100 Climate- Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030.

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations \(EC\) No 401/2009 and \(EU\) 2018/1999 \('European Climate Law'\)](#)

¹ COM(2020) 789.

² The 8th Environment Action Programme (Decision (EU) 2022/591) calls upon the Commission, Member States, regional and local authorities and stakeholders, as appropriate, to strengthen environmentally positive incentives and to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, in particular fossil subsidies, at Union, national, regional and local level.

³ Commission Recommendation (EU) 2023/550 of 8 March 2023 on National Support Programmes for Sustainable Urban Mobility Planning.

- (5) Cycling improves social inclusiveness, contributing to people's physical and mental health and well-being. It is a moderate physical activity that reduces health risks and premature deaths linked with sedentary lifestyles. Bicycles with electric assistance (e-bikes, speed pedelecs) are increasingly popular and allow people to cover longer distances, meet the mobility and transport needs of families, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and reach additional groups, such as older people and persons with disabilities or reduced mobility.
- (6) More and better safe cycling infrastructure across the EU is essential to attract more people to cycling, in and between urban and rural areas. Better cycling infrastructure will also benefit other means, such as micro-mobility solutions.
- (7) Funding dedicated to cycling – at local, national and European levels – is needed to match the ambition to get more people cycling. An appropriate level of investment is a prerequisite for significantly improving cycling conditions and maintaining infrastructure.
- (8) Safety is a prerequisite to encourage people to cycle, especially those groups that may still hesitate, including many women, children and older people. In addition to safer infrastructure such as separated cycle paths and secure parking, all elements of the Safe System approach need to be applied to both cycling and to motorised vehicles and drivers sharing the road with cyclists. This includes safe speeds, safe road use and safe vehicles, underpinned by the strong enforcement of road traffic rules. Developing standards for cycling lanes would increase design-embedded safety for new cycling infrastructure. Training and education, such as at schools, can help promote safe cycling.
- (9) The European cycling industry is a global innovator and leader as well as an important and growing sector of the economy. It currently represents over 1 000 SMEs⁴ and accounts for 1 million jobs, with potential for many more.
- (10) Cycling is also a key enabler of sustainable tourism and contributes to connectivity within and between rural and urban areas, especially in combination with trains, buses and other modes to create multimodal mobility services. It brings tangible benefits to the local economy, in particular to SMEs.
- (11) Cycling data is not collected consistently in the EU. This affects the optimal choice of transport investments and the evaluation of the effectiveness of measures already taken.
- (12) The principles included in this Declaration are expected to help deliver on the EU climate and environmental targets, including in particular the Zero Pollution Action Plan⁵ and the other objectives of the European Green Deal, the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy⁶, and the New EU Urban Mobility Framework⁷.
- (13) The European Parliament adopted a resolution on developing an EU cycling strategy in February 2023⁸. In 2022, six EU Member States prepared a European Cycling Declaration, which has so far been signed by the majority of Member States⁹.
- (14) The promotion and implementation of the principles included in this Declaration is a political commitment of the Union. The Union is responsible for implementing this

⁴ In particular cycling service and repair, retailers etc.

⁵ Communication of the Commission Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil', <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0400&qid=1623311742827>

⁶ COM(2020) 789.

⁷ COM(2021) 811.

⁸ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0058_EN.html

⁹ <https://www.benelux.int/fr/publication/european-cycling-declaration/>

Declaration in cooperation with its Member States, in accordance with their respective competences and in full compliance with Union law.

Declaration on Cycling

We aim to unleash the full potential of cycling in the EU. This Declaration recognises cycling as one of the most sustainable, accessible and inclusive, low-cost and healthy forms of transport and recreation, and its key importance for European society and the economy. The Declaration should serve as a strategic compass for existing and future policies and initiatives related to cycling.

We therefore declare that:

Chapter I: Developing and strengthening cycling policies

The EU and its Member States, together with regional and local authorities, all have a key role to play in supporting the further uptake of cycling.

We commit to:

1. developing, adopting and strengthening cycling policies and strategies at all relevant levels of governance;
2. taking necessary measures to implement these cycling policies and strategies as swiftly as possible;
3. prioritising cycling measures in sustainable urban mobility planning including the wider commuting area beyond municipal borders;
4. encouraging companies, organisations and institutions to promote cycling through mobility management schemes such as cycle to work incentives, the provision of company (e-)bikes, adequate cycle parking and facilities, and the use of bike-based delivery services;
5. promoting cycling as a healthy way of transport or recreation, through awareness raising, advocacy campaigns, capacity building and the training of active mobility professionals, including at in relevant international fora.

Chapter II: Encouraging inclusive, affordable and healthy mobility

Everyone, including people with disabilities or those with reduced mobility and irrespective of age and gender should have access to mobility, and cycling can make a major contribution to enable this. Cycling should also be affordable irrespective of income level and promoted as beneficial to mental and physical health.

We commit to:

6. increasing the use of cycling to promote social inclusion by paying particular attention to the needs of women, children, older people and vulnerable and marginalised groups;
7. taking measures to enable better access to cycling for people with disabilities or those with reduced mobility;
8. taking measures to boost active mobility of older people and thereby contributing to active ageing;
9. providing targeted cycling training in particular for children and vulnerable and marginalised groups;

10. taking note of the possibility for Member States to apply reduced VAT rates for the supply, rental and repair of bikes and e-bikes as introduced by Council Directive (EU) 2022/542¹⁰ in order to increase affordability.

Chapter III: Creating more and better cycling infrastructure

Improving the quality, quantity, continuity and attractiveness of cycling infrastructure is essential to promote greater cycling use.

We commit to:

11. significantly increasing safe and coherent cycling infrastructure across Europe;
12. developing and using EU guidance on standards for quality requirements regarding vulnerable road users, including cyclists, under Directive (EU) 2019/1936 on road infrastructure safety management¹¹;
13. giving sufficient space to cyclists and other vulnerable road users to increase safety levels, in particular through the physical separation of cycle paths from motorised traffic wherever feasible;
14. working towards creating a coherent cycling network in cities and improving connectivity between suburban and rural areas and city centres, including cycle highways;
15. ensuring the provision of safe and secure bike parking spaces in urban and rural areas, including at railway and bus stations and mobility hubs;
16. supporting the deployment of charging points for e-bikes in urban planning and in bike parking spaces inside and outside buildings.

Chapter IV: Increasing investments and creating favourable conditions for cycling

More investments are needed to unlock the potential for cycling.

We commit to:

17. providing technical support, funding and financing to help develop and implement cycling strategies and cycling-related investments; this includes using the available EU instruments, in particular the Social Climate Fund, European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, Technical Support Instrument¹², and the Recovery and Resilience Facility to support cycling measures;
18. reflecting cycling in investments at all levels of governance¹³;

¹⁰ Council Directive (EU) 2022/542 of 5 April 2022 amending Directives 2006/112/EC and (EU) 2020/285 as regards rates of value added tax, OJ L 107, 6.4.2022, pp. 1–12.

¹¹ Directive (EU) 2019/1936 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management, OJ L 305, 26.11.2019, pp. 1–16.

¹² Regulation (EU) 2021/240 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument - [EUR-Lex - 32021R0240 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹³ Incl. for National Energy and Climate Plans (introduced by Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the governance of the energy union and climate action)

Chapter V: Improving road safety and security

Everyone should be able to cycle in a safe and secure manner.

We commit to:

19. working towards making Vision Zero¹⁴ (no road deaths by 2050) a reality, including for vulnerable road users, while reaching an interim target of a 50% reduction in fatalities and serious injuries by 2030 in line with the Valletta Declaration¹⁵;
20. enforcing road safety rules and legislation to ensure the coexistence of different means of transport, with a focus on protecting cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
21. ensuring that the rules on the safety requirements applicable to e-bikes are substantial, and promote their deployment;
22. improving security at public bike parking spaces (including bike sharing and multimodal hubs), and increasing efforts to tackle the issue of bike theft;
23. strengthening cycle training – including teaching children and young people how to cycle – and awareness raising campaigns on road safety, in particular on the biggest risks to cyclists, and supporting the safe use of bikes and e-bikes, as well as addressing the awareness of the safety of vulnerable road users during driver training.

Chapter VI: Supporting quality green jobs and the development of a world-class European cycling industry

Greater uptake of cycling means more high-quality, local jobs and is beneficial to the EU economy and cycling industry, and also contributes to the objectives of the EU industrial strategy.

We commit to:

24. creating conditions to increase the European production of a broad range of bicycles (including e-bikes, speed pedelecs, and bikes for people with disabilities) and their components, including access to materials, equipment and maintenance of a global level-playing field through existing EU trade defence instruments;
25. supporting the bicycle service sector, including social economy entities and the circular use of bicycles (reuse, repair and rental);
26. creating favourable conditions to stimulate high-quality jobs and cycling clusters, including in cycling tourism, in order to significantly increase the number of cycling-related quality jobs, support SMEs and boost relevant skills and vocational training;
27. making the sector more attractive and enabling important job-to-job transitions from other relevant industries;
28. recognising the European cycling industry as a partner in the mobility system in order to strengthen resilience, sustainability, circularity and digitalisation in the cycling sector;
29. supporting cycling service industries, such as bike sharing and cycle logistics, especially in cities, including by strengthening the integration of cycle logistics into the logistics system.

¹⁴ https://road-safety.transport.ec.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁵ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9994-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

Chapter VII: Supporting multimodality and cycling tourism

Cycling should play a key role in improving multimodal connectivity and tourism, especially in combination with trains, buses and other modes, both in urban and rural areas.

We commit to:

30. promoting and implementing multimodal solutions in urban, suburban and rural areas, as well as for long-distance trips, by creating more synergies between cycling and other modes of transport, such as enabling the transport of more bicycles on buses and trains, and providing safer and secure parking areas for bikes at stations and mobility hubs;
31. supporting bike sharing schemes as a solution to first and last mile access to public transport services;
32. creating favourable conditions to support cycling as a sustainable means of recreation and tourism.

Chapter VIII: Improving the collection of data on cycling

Cycling data needs to be collected in the same way across the EU to ensure effective monitoring of progress on implementation of the principles and commitments included in this Declaration.

We commit to:

33. monitoring the implementation of our commitments;
34. enabling the continuous measurement of progress on the use of cycling in the EU by establishing an EU-wide baseline, including the length, network density, quality and accessibility of cycling infrastructure and services for several user types, the share of cycling in total transport and mobility activity, and the number of serious injuries and fatalities among cyclists;
35. developing harmonised indicators related to cycling for urban nodes of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T);
36. developing statistics on cycling and its infrastructure at local, national and EU levels, including cooperation between Member States and Eurostat to collect cycling data.