

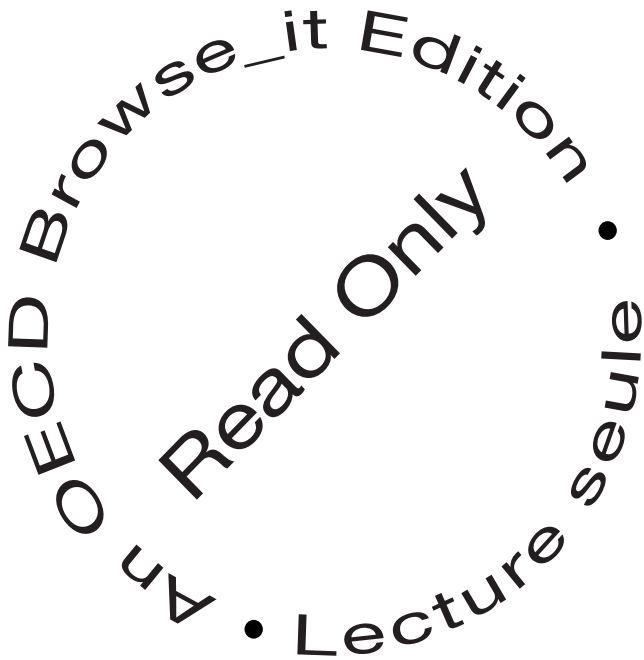
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT



**IMPLEMENTING
SUSTAINABLE
URBAN TRAVEL
POLICIES:
MOVING AHEAD**

National Policies to Promote Cycling





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FOREWORD

Cycling is increasingly recognised as a clean, sustainable mode of transport and an essential part of an inter-modal plan for sustainable urban travel.

While regional and local authorities bear the primary responsibility for detailed planning and implementation of cycling policies, national-level commitment is important in setting the right legal, regulatory and financial framework so that successful implementation of cycling initiatives can take place.

The study provides an overview of policies at the national level for promoting cycling. The report is based on information obtained from 21 ECMT Member and Associate Member countries in 2002 and 2003.

The report was presented to ECMT Ministers at their Ljubljana Council in 2004. It was the first time that ECMT Ministers were asked to consider a specific role for the national level in promoting cycling in urban areas.

At the Council, Ministers agreed a Declaration on National Cycling Policies (included in this report) that recognises the importance of cycling policy as an integral part of a national policy framework for sustainable travel in cities.

This report is part of the follow-up to ECMT's work on Implementing Sustainable Urban Travel Policies -- conducted from 1998 to 2001 -- the findings of which are summarized in the document *Key Messages to Governments on Implementing Sustainable Urban Travel Policies*, approved by Ministers at ECMT's Lisbon Council in 2001.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

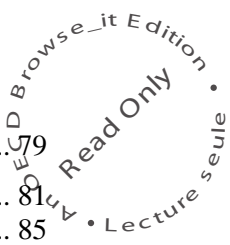
ECMT would like to sincerely thank the national governments of the 21 countries that provided information on their cycling policies for this study. These include: Belarus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The ECMT is additionally grateful to the seven municipal authorities that contributed their experience in promoting cycling for this report; they include: Basel, Berlin, Ferrara, Helsinki, Odense, Reading, and Zwolle.

Drafting of the report was carried out by Masatoshi Miyake and Mary Crass of ECMT under the supervision of the ECMT Sustainable Urban Travel Steering Group chaired by Mr. Wojciech Suchorzewski of Poland and Mr. Pat Mangan of Ireland.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The objective of this report is to provide an overview of policies at the national level for promoting cycling, which is increasingly recognised as a clean, sustainable mode of transport in urban areas. The report is based on information obtained from 21 ECMT Member and Associate Member countries in 2002 and 2003.

While the growing trend in car use continues, the level of bicycle use seems generally stable with only minor fluctuations. The modal share of cycling trips, though varying from country to country, is roughly 5 to 10% of all trips in Western Europe and approximately 1 to 5% in Central and Eastern European countries. Two countries stand out with much higher modal shares for cycling: the Netherlands (27%) and Denmark (18%). Japan's cycling modal share is also noteworthy at 14%. Cycling's share in North American cities, although growing in importance, remains fairly low.

Cycling can have many advantages as a short-distance means of travel in urban areas: it is environmentally friendly – without emissions and noise nuisance; provides cost-effective mobility, and offers an opportunity for health and physical fitness by regular exercise.

On the other hand, there are both real and perceived barriers to bicycle use that – with the exception of a few countries – keep cycling somewhat in the margins of urban travel. These barriers include vulnerability in accidents with motorised traffic, bicycle theft, increasing travel distances due to urban sprawl, perceived low social status, weather and topology.

The policy and institutional framework

Cycling policies and measures alone cannot bring about sustainable travel in cities. They are, however, an important element of a comprehensive package of policy tools designed to improve the sustainability of the whole transport network. Integration and coherence between cycling policies and other policies addressing land use, environment, physical health and finance are essential.

This requires co-ordination among various levels of government and sectors with input from cycling stakeholders – including national, regional and local governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, cycling associations and the bicycle manufacturing industry.

While regional and local authorities bear the primary responsibility for detailed planning and implementation of cycling policies, national-level commitment is important in setting the right legal, regulatory and financial framework so that successful implementation of cycling initiatives can take place.

National cycling policies and plans

An increasing number of countries are developing national cycling plans, strategies and policies. The approach to cycling on a national level varies from country to country: some countries have a separate, specific plan for cycling promotion at a national level, while others include cycling policies in national transport, environment or health plans. In many countries, cycling remains the exclusive responsibility of regional and local authorities with limited commitment at a national level.

Cycling policy objectives draw from various sectors including transport, land-use, safety, environment, and health. The cycling policy and planning process therefore involves input from the wide range of cycling stakeholders mentioned above -- governmental bodies at all levels, non-governmental organisations, cycling associations and the bicycle manufacturing industry. In a number of countries the Ministry of Transport has a leading role in co-operation and co-ordination with relevant bodies in the policy planning process.

Challenges to effective policy-making at a national level

Although a number of countries are making progress in promoting cycling travel, difficulties persist in the process of planning and implementing cycling promotion policies.

First, cycling remains somewhat marginal in transport policy discussions in many countries, and national budgetary allocation reflects this status. Second, as cycling policies draw from a wide range of objectives and involve many actors, lack of co-ordination, both horizontally and vertically, may cause biased policy planning and roadblocks to implementation. Third, safety fears arise from cyclists' vulnerability to motorised traffic. Fourth, technical understanding is not always adequate and, consequently, the design of transport infrastructure -

