



**BIKE
ROADMAP**

BENELUX + NORTH RHINE-WESTFALIA ROADMAP

‘BICYCLE STIMULATION’

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1. INTRODUCTION

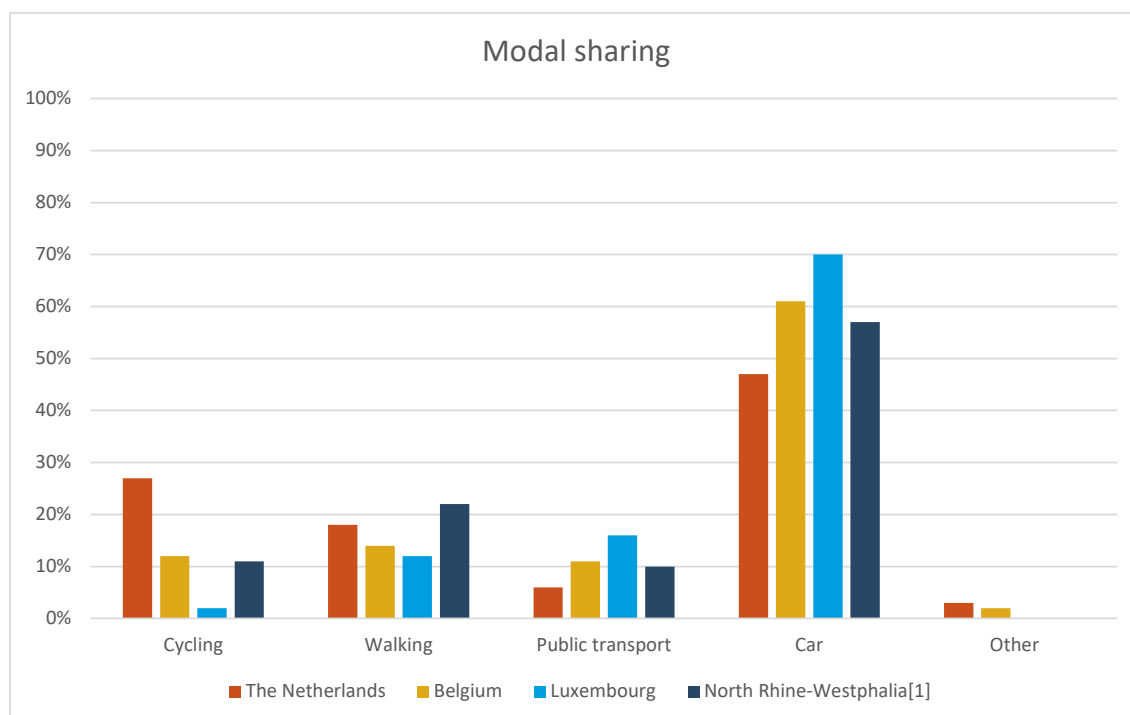
Within the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia, cycling is certainly not a new phenomenon. And even though there are many differences between the countries when it comes to the level of cycling, in all of these countries and regions a political and general commitment to give the bicycle a more prominent role has increased over the last years. Furthermore, during the COVID-19 pandemic, all countries saw a significant increase in cycling and consequently introduced (temporary) measures to facilitate this, such as pop-up bike lanes, free bicycle sharing and allowing people to take their bicycle for free in the train during the Summer period.

In order to promote this high new level of cycling, in July 2020, the Ministers of the Benelux countries signed the political declaration ‘beyond COVID-19: the urgent need for stimulating the bicycle use as a necessary, safe and healthy alternative in (urban) mobility’. With this declaration, the countries call upon the European Commission, local authorities and on fellow Member States, to take actions that would lead to an increase in cycling. The declaration laid down the ambition to come to a full Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia cycling roadmap with concrete actions the countries will take in the following years to stimulate cycling.

The goal of the roadmap that lies in front of you is twofold:

1. Stimulate cycling as a means of transport within the Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia by exchanging best practices and experiences and looking at ways to cooperate, for example by doing common projects or upscaling existing initiatives, so as to remain a cycling hotspot within Europe;
2. Act as a blueprint for the European Union by showing the added value and importance of providing the right conditions to increase cycling.

1.1. Current status in the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia



2017 – ECF

1 http://www.mobilitaet-in-deutschland.de/pdf/infas_Mobilitaet_in_Deutschland_2017_Kurzreport.pdf

	The Netherlands	Belgium	Luxembourg	Germany ^[2]
Total	1.011.000	510.000	33.000	5.040.000
Sales per 1.000 inhabitants	58.5	44.5	53.8	60,6
Electric bicycles (all types)	424.000	251.000	3.500	1.950.000
Speed pedelecs 45 km/h	3.700	12.700 (of which 96 % in Flanders)	n/a	n/a
Share e-bikes	42%	49%	13%	n/a

2019-ECF

Belgium

In Belgium, cycling has strongly increased over the years due to active policy to increase the use of bicycle at all level of competent authorities (local, regional and federal level) and the COVID-19 crisis. As a result, bicycle use increased from 8 % in 2010 to 12 % in more recent years³.

Amongst the Belgian regions, cycling is most popular in Flanders (18%) followed by Brussels (4%) and Wallonia (2%). Although cycling as a sport has been popular in Flanders for decades already, the last years also saw a strong increase in cycling used for work-home travel. The amount of cyclists in the Brussels region nearly doubled since the COVID-19 crisis. Interesting to mention is the popularity of the speed pedelecs (45 km/h) in Flanders, with around 12.000 speed pedelecs registered in 2019, the highest number in the Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia region. At the national level beginning 2022, the total number of speed pedelecs registered in Belgium was 53.000 unit.

Competences for cycling policy are divided between the federal level, the Flemish region, the Walloon region and Brussels region. The federal government is competent for fiscal measures for buying and using the bicycle for home-work travel, for the highway code (wegcode/code de la route), the combination cycle and train, and the concertation between the different partner. The regions are competent for the other aspects related to cycling, such as defining mobility policy and everything related to infrastructure (local governments are competent for local infrastructure).

The most important document describing the cycle plans and objectives of the regional and federal authorities are:

- Be cyclist plan⁴ – The federal action plan to promote bike
- The Walloon cycling plan 2030⁵
- Bicycle DNA – Figures about cycling in Flanders
- Goodmove – Brussels regional mobility plan 2020-2030⁶

² https://www.ziv-zweirad.de/fileadmin/redakteure/Downloads/Marktdaten/PM_2021_10.03._Fahrrad-_und_E-Bike_Markt_2020.pdf

³ https://mobilit.belgium.be/sites/default/files/partie_mobilite_novembre_2019_final.pdf

⁴ https://mobilit.belgium.be/fr/mobilite/transport_des_personnes/velo

⁵ <http://mobilite.wallonie.be/home/politiques-de-mobilite/wallonie-cyclable/le-plan-wallonie-cyclable-2030---gouvernance.html>

⁶ https://mobilite-mobiliteit.brussels/sites/default/files/2021-04/goodmove_FR_20210420.pdf

The Netherlands

Cycling is one of the most common modes of transport in the Netherlands and the country counts roughly 22.8 million bicycles in total. Furthermore, around 1 million bicycles are sold per year (1.1 million in 2020). It therefore does not come as a surprise that the modal share of 27% is not only the highest within the Benelux region, but also the highest figure for any country in the world. Cycling increased during the covid-crisis, 25% of the Dutch expect to continue to cycle (and walk) more. Another notable number is the growth of e-bike sales during the pandemic, which increased with 38% in 2020.

Although these numbers showcase the Dutch cycling success, there is still a lot more that can be achieved and ambitions remain high. The Netherlands is faced with a large number of social tasks in the field of economy, urbanization, accessibility, health, safety, climate and livability. Growing bicycle use contributes to solving these urgent social tasks. However, the combination of growing bicycle use and increasing speed differences on the bicycle path means that the capacity and/or layout of the current bicycle network is no longer sufficient in many places⁷.

From the realization that more and safer bicycle use does not come about automatically, a large number of parties have entered into the 'Tour de Force' partnership. In the Tour de Force program, governments (national/local), market parties, social organisations, knowledge institutes and platforms are jointly committed to a stronger bicycle policy in the Netherlands. This partnership has helped to take a more long-term perspective on what is needed to make cycling a more natural alternative for a larger group of people. This includes an ambitious objective: 20% more bicycle kilometers in 2027 compared to 2017. Different themes are selected to realise this objective, including a high-quality bicycle network and sufficient parking facilities, stimulating bicycle use and increasing support for and knowledge about the bicycle.

Luxembourg

Traditionally seen, Luxembourg has always been characterized by a high modal share for care use (70 % in 2017). In recent years, the government has however put a strong focus on increasing sustainable transport, including cycling and walking. In 2020, Luxembourg became the first country to introduce universal fare-free public transport (FFPT) for all modes at a national level.

Although the cycling modal share in Luxembourg is the lowest in the Benelux region, cycling has strongly increased during the COVID-19 crisis. Across all regions and in all age groups up to the age of 60 (37% among those older than 60), a majority of residents – 58% overall – cycled in 2020. Two-thirds of households own at least one bicycle (two on average). 94% of children aged 6-12 and 77% of adolescents aged 13-17 cycled in 2020. Polls furthermore indicated that people that switched to cycling and walking during the crisis would like continue making use of this way of travelling after the crisis. An interesting initiative born during the pandemic was the "Vëlosummer" where certain roads were closed off for car traffic during August. 40.000 cyclists joined this event, which was repeated in 2021 and 2022⁸. Due to the success and the positive feedback another edition will be also repeated in 2023.

The government is responding to this increased demand by investing in more and better cycling infrastructure. The National Mobility Plan 2035 (PNM 2035), published in 2022, initiated a general paradigm change for mobility in Luxembourg. Concerning the cycling infrastructure, the main target for 2035 is making cycling a fully fledged individual mode of transport, allowing safe and comfortable access to any place in the Grand Duchy, while being at least as efficient as the car for journeys in metropolitan areas. Turning cycling into a fully fledged individual mode of transport means integrating it systematically into every state road, municipal road and building project, as it has been done for the car for the past 60 years..

North Rhine-Westphalia

⁷ <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2021/03/08/bijlage-nationaal-toekomstbeeld-fiets-op-hoofdlijnen>

⁸ <https://pedestrianspace.org/luxembourg-transforming-a-culture-of-mobility-interview-with-minister-francois-bausch/>

In North Rhine-Westphalia there have been many (recent) developments when it comes to cycling (policy). The government of North Rhine-Westphalia continuously funds and supports the expansion of the infrastructure for cycling and walking financially and ideally to make mobility better and safer. Well-developed and safe cycle tracks and footpaths mean more quality of life and amenity in the municipalities. Together with the federal government, the state is funding projects in cities and municipalities to improve bicycle and pedestrian traffic. Record amounts of budget are available. North Rhine-Westphalia will provide at least as much funding for the new construction and expansion of cycle paths as for the new construction and expansion of state roads.

The Bicycle and Short-Range Mobility Law of North Rhine-Westphalia took effect on January 1st, 2022. The first law on bicycles and short-range mobility (bicycles, pedestrians and other muscle powered mobility) provides the basis for improving bicycle traffic, but also pedestrian traffic. The aim is to provide cyclists and pedestrians with a safe infrastructure and to improve cycling and other forms of short-range mobility and to contribute to an overall sustainable mobility. The aim is to increase the attractiveness of cycling throughout the federal state, so that more people choose to cycle for means of transportation on a day-to-day basis. A bicycle traffic share of 25% should be achieved in the modal split of the routes. The bicycle is to be strengthened both as an independent, environmentally and climate-friendly means of transport and as an essential component of intermodal mobility chains, particularly in connection with local public transport. For the first time, bicycle and pedestrian traffic will be treated equally with the motorized individual traffic. The law is supplemented by an action plan of the state government, which is on the one hand a voluntary commitment of the state and on the other hand an implementation aid for the municipalities.

Already before the pandemic there were many cities in North Rhine-Westphalia with a high percentage of bicycle traffic. This percentage increased during the pandemic. The cycling modal share of North Rhine-Westphalia was 11% in 2017⁹. In certain cities this percentage is considerably higher: Bicycle traffic in Münster has a modal share of almost 40 percent¹⁰. Looking at cycling, there was a very strong increase in certain cities in North Rhine-Westphalia during the pandemic, such as in Cologne: around 14 million bicycle movements were measured at 12 counting stations, around 11 percent more than the year before¹¹.

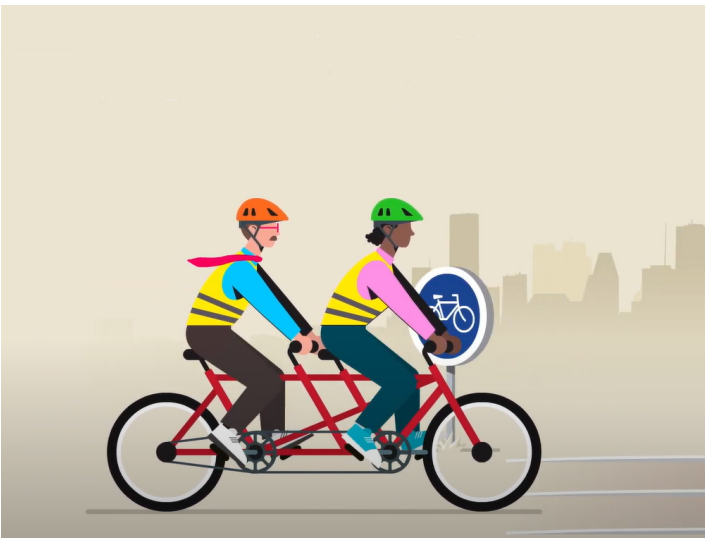
⁹ http://www.mobilitaet-in-deutschland.de/pdf/MiD2017_Analyse_zum_Rad_und_Fussverkehr.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.veloregion.de/hintergrund/verkehrsplanung/fahrradstrassen-2.0-in-muenster/>

¹¹ <https://nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/en/notices/news/cycling-cologne-increased-significantly-2020>

2. INTRODUCING THE ROADMAP CHAPTERS

The chapters that follow cover the most important aspects of cycling (policy), such as infrastructure, stimulation measures, cycling data, etc. Within these chapters, specific actions and project descriptions are included that the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia intend to undertake in the upcoming years to stimulate cycling within the Benelux region and at the same time act as a front-runner within the wider European Union. Actions can have a regulatory impact, but will often also consist of sharing best practices and information, perform further research and undertake common campaigns and/or projects.



Chapter 3 looks at cycling **data**

Chapter 4 on ‘**stimulating bicycle use**’ zooms in on measures taken by the different governments and the sector in the Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia to promote the uptake of cycling. It includes actions to upscale interesting exciting cycling initiatives, exchange expertise and provide recommendations on speed pedelecs, set-up common campaigns, etc.

Chapter 5 is about **safe and inviting infrastructure** and includes measures such as the setting up of a knowledge center, ensuring well-connected cross-border cycling networks.

Chapter 6 of the roadmap deals with cycling **regulation**.

Chapter 7 focuses on **EU projects and regulation**.

3. CYCLING DATA

Many cities in the Benelux/NRW region have only recently started to consider and use cycling data for bicycle and mobility policies. The main methods of data collection on cycling often remain human or mechanical counts and labor-intensive surveys. More cycling data is needed to know the state of cycling in cities and countries, to improve and implement new cycling policies and infrastructure and to position cycling within the multimodal transport system. Luckily, there is also a lot of innovation and new technologies that open up a digital future for cycling.

Within the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia, there are several innovative projects and initiatives on cycling data that encourage bicycle use through data-driven policy and services. An interesting example is the BITS project, which uses the power of Intelligence Transport Systems. Furthermore, The Netherlands is working on a national policy plan on cycling data.

Also at EU level, new initiatives are undertaken to improve the limited availability of cycling data. For example, the European Commission is working on an Urban Mobility Scoreboard with a harmonized set of indicators for car use, public transport, walking and cycling.

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will share best practices and technical expertise. They will also look into possibilities to stimulate cooperation in the field of cycling data, at Benelux/NRW and European level.

3.1. Proposed actions

Exchange with stakeholders (public/private) on cycling data initiatives

Organization of an exchange on interesting cycling data initiatives that are taking place in the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia (e.g. the BITS project). The exchange will give insights into what is already being done but will most importantly focus on the existing barriers to accessing this type of data. It will furthermore look at what the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia can do together to stimulate cooperation in the field of cycling data.

Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia cost-benefit analysis on cycling

Most cost-benefit data or predictions regarding cycling only exist at national or local/regional level. Bringing this data together at Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia-level would give a clear overview of the current situation and would provide for a solid basis for the policy and project proposals that will be included in the roadmap.



Issues that will be examined in this analysis range from direct to indirect and external effects, such as the health gains per km, travel time saved when using a car compared to a bicycle, the construction and maintenance costs of car versus cycling infrastructure, road safety, emissions, labour productivity etc. The analysis could furthermore look at cross-border effects and possible scenarios for the future such as cross-border cycling highway connections, and other measures related to infrastructure and legislation.

Cooperation in the field of standardization

Benelux countries take the lead in e.g. standardization of travel data (floating bike data). This will equally be stimulated by, where possible, looking into more data from individual cyclists and harmonizing these travel surveys in the region.

4. STIMULATING BICYCLE USE

Within the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia, several (legislative and non-legislative) measures, campaigns and programs have been introduced to promote the uptake of cycling. These measures often have a national or even local focus. Rather than reinventing the wheel, there might be good potential and interest for common approaches in the future or for upscaling certain existing initiatives and measures. Within the Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia, experts have over the last years carefully examined and exchanged experiences on how cycling is promoted in the different countries and regions and in what ways they can learn from each other. In this chapter, concrete actions are included that the countries will undertake together in the next years in order to promote cycling.

4.1 Proposed actions

Capacity building

The potential of cycling and all that comes with it, often still remains underdeveloped, on a decision making level, but equally in sectors that could play a positive role in stimulating bike use, such as architects or spatial planners. Building more capacity for bike minded policies and actions can be done in different ways.

For starters the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will ask educational institutes to set up a brainstorm session to look at educational programs that already include the bike or to what extent bicycles can be included with an added value, possibly developing a common education module on bikes.

This ranges from more theoretical education – e.g. on climate, special planning, technical studies – to more practical education, related to finding ways to promote becoming a bike mechanic, to be able to deal with the increasing demand for repairs.

The policy of these educational institutes towards cycling by their employees and students alike will equally be discussed to see which improvements could be made.

Equally the governments could follow this example by looking into engaging specific employees as mobility managers who will not only remind their colleagues in different policy fields to have attention for the bike but also promote the use of the bike within the government itself. This should become an attractive job title with the potential to develop and grow within the government.

Cycling Ambassador's programme

The Netherlands has introduced a “Cycling Ambassadors” program as part of their ‘Choose the bike’ mission, consisting of 17 companies (cycling ambassadors) that have committed themselves to stimulating cycling not only for their own employees, but for their whole sector. The goal of this mission is to get an increase of 10% of employees riding a bike to work. These 17 companies are all frontrunners in different industries, for example the national police, Enexis, Schiphol airport, a hospital, a theme park etc. The bicycle ambassadors actively encourage cycling among their employees, so that they not only inspire their employees, but also their sector, region or customers. Examples of the targeted measures taken by the ambassadors are kilometer allowances, making use of tax benefits when purchasing a bicycle, charging stations for e-bikes, bicycles on loan, bicycle sheds, showers and bicycle repair shops in the office. The cycling ambassadors meet with each other and the Dutch State Secretary once a year to exchange experiences in order to learn from each other.

The Netherlands can share their experiences on how to best set up such a program, thereby supporting the roll out of similar national/regional programs in the Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia. Periodical exchanges at Benelux level can strengthen the development of the ambassadors programs and broaden the network of involved companies.

For example, a yearly meeting/event between the countries and involved companies can be set up, to exchange best practices (e.g. gamification approaches used by employers) and to raise awareness of the program.

A format for Cycling Ambassadors programme targeted at schools/educational institutes will be developed, also as part of the capacity building – see below.

Campaigns

Several large cycling events are organized within the Benelux countries/North Rhine-Westphalia, such as the world championship cycling, regional races, etc. Often large amounts of money are spent to organize these events, that are often only focused on the sports element. These events are however a great opportunity to bring the daily cyclist in the spotlight as well.

The Benelux/North Rhine-Westphalia countries will commit to ensuring that daily cyclists will get a prominent role when large cycling events, such as the Benelux Tour, are organized within the region. For this action, the countries will also coordinate with the cycling sector, for example when it comes to organizing side-events.

Cycling events and public relations work by a municipality can be funded under certain conditions in North Rhine-Westphalia. This is a case-by-case decision.

Permanent cycling promotion

A permanent campaign of communication and promotion of cycling helps create a community, while better informing citizens of the advances of cycling policy. An example is the award-winning “Bike for Brussels” campaign that has been running for 4 years, creating a “brand” that’s instantly recognizable by cyclists and given exposure to different initiatives on cycling in the Belgian capital.

Ecotourism

In particular during the COVID-19 crisis, people were advised to book a holiday in their own or a neighbouring country. This period also saw a significant increase in cycling holidays. Maintaining this high level by promoting ecotourism within the region forms an important part of this chapter on stimulating cycling use. In order to facilitate this, cycling node networks in the different countries should be visible (e.g. via applications) but also well-connected to each other.

Furthermore, allowing for more space for the bicycle in the train would make it easier and more interesting for citizens to explore the entire Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia region by bike.

✓ Increased space for the bike in the train

The revised Regulation No 1371/2007 on “rail passengers’ rights and obligations” approved by the European Parliament on 29 April 2021, obliges Member States to enable passengers to bring bicycles on to the train. More specifically, it will entail that railway undertakings, when buying new rolling stock or refurbishing existing ones, are obliged to install a minimum of four dedicated bicycle spaces. The adequate number of bicycle spaces for a train composition should be determined taking into consideration the train composition size, the type of service and the demand for transport of bicycles. For example the Belgian government has adopted a pre-agreement on a future Belgian law that makes it mandatory to have at least 8 places on every train.

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will commit to this Regulation by actively encouraging sufficient and better transport of bicycles even before 2025, the year the EU Regulation comes into effect. This does not only affect regional and national trains, but also and specifically cross-border connections in the Benelux / NRW region. In this light, the Member States would like to explore the possibility of organizing an open dialogue with the railway undertakings and service providers of the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia, as a start towards developing a joint plan on combining train and bike travel.

✓ Rollout of a connected cycling node network

Node cycling networks are becoming increasingly more widespread. In a node system, the route from each node to the neighbouring nodes is indicated by their number, allowing for 'cycling by numbers'. A cycle route is therefore made up of a sequence of junctions along the route.

Also in the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia different node networks exist, that are however not always necessarily well-connected across borders. Furthermore, different criteria might apply to these node networks, for example regarding the quality of the infrastructure and the road signs. In addition, there are several EuroVelo routes going through the Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia region.

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will exchange information on this topic with the relevant government services (e.g. tourism) and look at missing links, coordinate cross-border connections (and, where necessary, expand them) and improving communication around for example the EuroVelo network.

Definition of the Statewide Cycle Priority

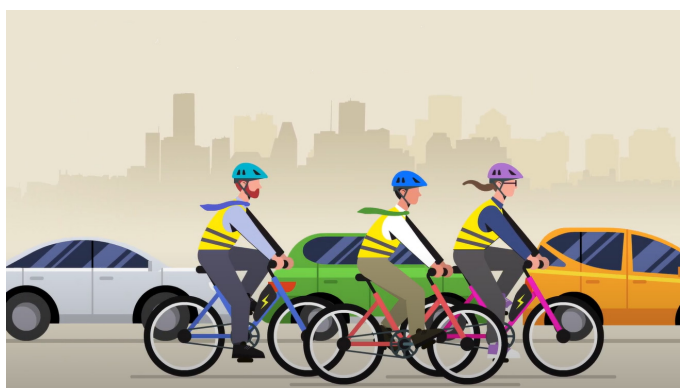
By the end of 2024, North Rhine-Westphalia will define the statewide priority cycling network, which will include particularly important supra-regional connections for cycling. Existing supra-regional cycling networks or those currently being developed can be partially integrated into the future statewide, supra-regional cycling priority network and must be adapted for this purpose if necessary. This also applies in principle to the regional cycle route network in the Metropole Ruhr. The definition of the statewide priority cycling network is carried out with the participation of the Landesbetrieb Straßenbau Nordrhein-Westfalen, the district governments and the municipal planning authorities.

In preparation for the definition of the priority cycling network, North Rhine-Westphalia is currently having a statewide potential analysis of cycling carried out on the basis of the multimodal state transport model. The aim of the potential analysis is to systematically determine the corridors in which cycle paths should be created or expanded. The loads predicted in this process provide indications of the forms of guidance and design elements to be aimed for in the respective corridors. In this way, North Rhine-Westphalia relieves the project sponsors of high-speed cycle connections and priority cycle routes of the need for a project-related potential analysis.

Evaluation of the impact of space reallocation to bicycles within cities

In particular due to the Corona-crisis but also in the years before, there has been a large increase in cycling within the Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia region. (Local) governments have encouraged this uptake by for example by increasing the number of cycling highways and local routes, by improving infrastructure, but also by looking at new ways of allowing more space for the bicycle on existing infrastructure. Examples are widened pavements, 'slow streets' and pop-up bike lanes, all of which have seen an increase in some cities/regions during the pandemic. The current situation thus offers opportunities to think about how to adapt urban mobility to create more strategic, sustainable and livable cities, with walking and cycling at its core.

As part of the roadmap, an evaluation will be done on the impact of reallocating space to cyclists in cities in terms of overall mobility, improved health, etc. Several cities within the Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia region will be compared to each other and both positive and negative examples will be highlighted. The outcomes of the evaluation could also justify several other (regulatory) actions taken in this roadmap.



Organization of an opportunity session on cargo bikes

Cargo bikes could be a game changer when it comes to urban transportation, reducing the number of cars in urban environment. Cargo bikes can have many different shapes and forms, and have the potential to bring about a modal shift in commuter traffic for work and school. Apart from this, cargo bikes can be used for the transportation of goods or services and can, hence, be an opportunity for entrepreneurs. Yet, cargo bikes take up a lot of space on bicycle lanes, and require more parking space than conventional bikes. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss potential (policy) measures for cargo bikes, such as increasing space on bicycle lanes, larger bike parking space, potential subsidies for purchasing cargo bikes for private use, or invest in rental possibilities. Equally the safety aspect has to be taken into consideration. Inspiration could be drawn from the cargo bike roadshow that North Rhine Westphalia organised in 2022, showcasing cargo bikes to underline their potential and inform on subsidy schemes.

For this session, the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will bring experts from sector and (local) government together to exchange experiences and draft recommendations.

Organisation of a roundtable on speed pedelecs

Speed pedelecs could play an important role when it comes to reducing congestion and CO2 emissions. They have furthermore proven to be a good substitute for cars for commuting to work. There are however still many remaining questions about the role of speed pedelecs within traffic and whether they should be actively promoted. For example: what status should speed pedelecs have (should they be allowed on a cycle path or not); what is needed to give them a safe place between cars on the road; which adjustments in traffic rules and infrastructure are needed; how do they interact with pedestrians, other types of bicycles and micro mobility; which category create/technical rules must be applied (regulation 168/2013 or Machine directory or other)?

For this roundtable, the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will bring experts from sector and (local) government together to exchange experiences and draft recommendations.

North Rhine-Westphalia will participate in the exchange of experiences and recommendations. But most of the laws and regulations relating to road traffic are made by the Federal Government of Germany.

Financial stimulation measures

Financial measures such as bicycle leasing, bicycle allowance, reduced VAT rates and subsidies are gaining importance in the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia. In the next years during an informal exchange for which also other competent representatives will be invited, the financial stimuli will be looked at, including their general context, the measures to implement them and statistics on their use, with a focus on those that can be taken on a local/regional level. This exchange can then result in an overview of the possibilities for financial stimuli on the different governmental levels. Furthermore, important EU developments on this topic will be monitored.

North Rhine-Westphalia does not have the appropriate competence to implement all of the proposed measures.

5. SAFE AND INVITING INFRASTRUCTURE

The quality and quantity of cycling infrastructure has a significant impact on the number of people choosing to use their bicycle. Within the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia, large cycling networks are being set-up consisting of cycling highways, middle-length routes as well as the more local routes in and around cities and villages. While planning and implementing infrastructure and providing sufficient financing measures are important, other factors are equally important in determining the success of cycling infrastructure, such as the overall (cross-border) network connectivity, the promotion and publicity of networks and the quality and safeness of the infrastructure.

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia are devoting considerable resources to expanding and improving cycling infrastructure, that often still has a local or national approach. Sharing best practices and technical expertise as well as also ensuring good cross-border cycling network connections are important to take the rollout of (cross-border) safe and inviting infrastructure to a next level. Thereby they will also strive for more standardization of bike infrastructure that would lead to more coherence in cross-border networks.

5.1 Proposed actions

Preparation of a Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia map that brings the whole cycling network of the region together

Mapping out the cross-border Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia cycling network, focusing on border areas and differentiating between existing, planned and potential routes as well as between different cycling routes (long versus short distance, tourist versus functional routes). Crucial cycling connections should be highlighted, such as for example between Liege - Aachen - Maastricht. Also the existing EuroVelo routes will be included.

Based on the crucial cycling connections, agreements can be made regarding the quality of the infrastructure based on its (expected) use.

Setting-up a coordination point between the local and the Benelux-level

Most existing or potential (EU) cycling infrastructural projects are managed by local partners that in some cases still face difficulties in setting up contacts with other local stakeholders at the other side of the border. In order to ensure a good exchange of best practices, bringing existing initiatives and crucial partners together, the Benelux and North Rhine-Westphalia will act as facilitators by setting up a coordination point.

Financing of cycling infrastructure

The financing of cycling infrastructure differs strongly between the Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia. In the next years, the countries will continue to exchange information on this point and will also look at possible EU finance options such as European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and aim to increase the visibility of these funds.

Setting up of Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia cycling community / knowledge center

Setting up a community where experts can exchange (technical) information and start relevant discussions. The community could be based or build forth on existing communities or knowledge exchanges. A virtual knowledge exchange will be combined with physical work visits so that one can also experience the infrastructure;

6. REGULATION

Regulation on cycling strongly differs between countries due to national differences and limited EU competences. Furthermore, cyclists have historically not been considered as important as other modes of transport. In recent years, however, there have been developments in the countries and a stronger urge to give the cyclists and cycling a more prominent role in traffic regulations.

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will look at possibilities to better coordinate/streamline regulatory aspects regarding bicycle use, for example for the cargo bike.

6.1 Proposed actions

Bicycle path markings

Compare differences in markings and examine where more coordination might be desirable. For example when it comes to giving priority to cyclists.

Roundtable on pilot projects in cities within the Benelux

Several cities are starting to look in a different way at the design of their centers, for example by giving more space to bicycles and other 'soft' transport modes. Topics such as (secure) parking facilities, zero emission zones, e-hubs, charging facilities, etc. are part of this process. Experiences can be shared within a roundtable and recommendations can be done as to what the role of central governments can be in this respect, for example by offering an experimentation framework (regelluw kader) to cities to experiment with new design methods.

Introduction/stimulation of 30 km/h zones within city centers

Action that can be undertaken in cooperation with local authorities. Certain cities (e.g. Brussels region) have recently implemented 30 km/h zones. The local and national governments can jointly look at promoting and/or introducing these zones in the wider region.

North Rhine-Westphalia will participate in the exchange of experiences and recommendations. But most of the laws and regulations relating to road traffic are made by the Federal Government of Germany. The road traffic authority then orders the speed based on the circumstances.

Harmonising certain regulatory aspects that facilitate the rollout of cargo bikes

Starting with an exchange of experiences and recommendations, with the aim to explore possibilities to align/harmonize traffic rules with regard to the cargo bike at Benelux/ North Rhine-Westphalia level: location on the road, maximum width of cargo bike and trailer, etc. This could be realized via a (detailed) Benelux recommendation which invites the member states to bring their legislation in order.

North Rhine-Westphalia will participate in the exchange of experiences and recommendations. But most of the laws and regulations relating to road traffic are made by the Federal Government of Germany.

7. EU PROJECTS AND REGULATION

Cycling is key in many of the challenges that European cities face, and is especially important in relation to meeting the EU Green Deal targets.

“Due to the range of co-benefits that can be generated, cycling contributes to fulfilling objectives in a number of EU policy areas including transport and mobility; low carbon development; innovation and technology; air pollution; smart cities; industrial competitiveness and economic growth; environment and climate change; health; local development and cohesion.”

The EU is revising a number of pieces of legislation that are interesting to follow up and possibly develop a common statement/position:

- Revision of the TEN-T regulation
- Revision of the Urban Mobility Package
- Revision of the Directive on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)
- Revision of the technical regulation 168/2013
- Revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive
- Revision of the Social Climate Fund

7.1 Proposed actions

Common vision/rules on parking norms for electrical bicycles in light of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive

In addition to provisions on smart grid, insulation, heating and cooling, the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive also introduces requirements for e-mobility for the first time. For example, for all new non-residential buildings and buildings undergoing major renovation with more than 10 parking spaces, at least 1 charging point must be installed.

The European Commission now also recommends Member States, when transposing the Directive into national law, to incorporate:

- requirements related to dedicated parking infrastructure for electric bicycles, including (electric) cargo bikes, and for vehicles with reduced mobility

The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia will develop a common statement on bike related issues of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive, e.g. with their vision on parking norms for (electric) bicycles (including cargo bikes) taking into account existing measures/visions on parking.



TEN-T: common standpoint on revision

The Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) is the EU's flagship transport policy. It is a network of roads, railway lines, inland waterways, ports, maritime shipping routes, airports, and railroad terminals in Europe. The TEN-T policy objective is to close gaps, remove bottlenecks and technical barriers, as well as to strengthen social, economic and territorial cohesion. The EU Cycling infrastructure is currently not part of this network,.

The review of the TEN-T guidelines represents an opportunity to better integrate cycling infrastructure in TEN-T in order to ensure a sustainable, user friendly, cohesive and future-oriented European transport system. The Benelux countries and North Rhine-Westphalia can advocate this point together and call upon to European Commission to use the ongoing revision of the TEN-T regulation to optimize co-funding possibilities for the construction or improvement of bicycle infrastructure, allow eligibility of bicycle projects in urban nodes.

Urban Mobility Framework: ensuring EU follow-up of ambitions

To support the transition to cleaner, greener, and smarter mobility, in line with the objectives of the [European Green Deal](#), the European Commission released the new European Urban Mobility Framework (UMF) on 14 December 2021. This key policy document prioritizes cycling and other modes of active transport, and offers large opportunities for the shift towards more sustainable modes of transport in European cities. The coming years, the Commission will have to make this framework come alive in practice. The Benelux countries and North Rhine Westphalia can advocate the importance of UMF, and encourage that adequate action and support at EU and national level is taken to follow-up on the ambitions of this strategy.

Velo-City: side-meeting

Velo-City is a annual conference hosted by the European Cyclists' Federation that promotes cycling as a sustainable and healthy means of transport. The Velo-City conference aims to bring together all relevant cycling stakeholders to offer a platform for knowledge and policy exchange. This is the ideal setting to organise a side meeting between the Benelux countries, North Rhine Westphalia, and equally invite some other countries to exchange experiences or partner up with for specific initiatives.

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Ministerium für Verkehr
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