



Public Consultation: Sustainable transport – new urban mobility framework

CONEBI, the Confederation of the European Bicycle Industry, welcomes the opportunity to provide its feedback on the “Sustainable transport – new urban mobility framework” roadmap. We strongly believe that cycling and e-cycling can make an important contribution to sustainable transport as it is the key to developing urban transport systems that are safe, accessible, inclusive, affordable, smart, resilient and emission-free. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen that cycling is an integral part of urban transport but that several barriers still need to be overcome to make cycling an equal mode of transport.

The biggest trend in the Bicycle Industry in recent years has been the development and increasing uptake of pedal assist e-bikes. They currently represent about 20% of EU bicycle sales, going up to 50% in some countries. E-bikes have a promising potential to substitute motor vehicle usage over short journeys, while having all the benefits of conventional bicycles which are further explained below. In addition, a recent study shows that e-bike users move even more than traditional cyclists, which is mainly due to longer distances travelled by e-bike users.

In 2019, e-bikes sales grew by 23% to 3.4 million units and are expected to reach about 4.5 million in 2020 while overall bicycle sales are about 20 million units. In some countries particular high increases of e-bike sales have been noticed over recent years due to the introduction of e-bike subsidies schemes. For example in France, e-bike sales have continuously been growing at a rate of about 30%. CONEBI expects this positive trend to continue over the next years, predicting e-bikes sales up to 8.5 million units in 2025 in the EU.

Both cycling and e-cycling offer a wide variety of economic, environmental and health benefits that directly address the objectives of this roadmap:

- **Economic:** The EU Bicycle Industry employs more than 130,000 workers in 900 SMEs all across Europe and its annual turnover surpassed 18€ billion in 2020. This is an industry that is a major contributor to the EU competitiveness, innovation, sustainable manufacturing, circular economy and the overall development of Industry 4.0. Concrete examples are the increasing use of secondary recycled alloys and recycled rubber for the production of bicycles as well as innovation in novel laser cutting technology for steel and alloy frame tubes, new generation of TIG welding robots with 3D camera-scanning capabilities and new fully automated and computer-controlled processes for bicycle component production. In addition, the retail sector in the EU is made up of 50.000 bicycle and e-bike dealers, with 150.000 retailing jobs.
- **Environmental:** Cycling is one of the most environmentally friendly means of transport creating zero pollution and noise emissions while also helping ease congestion in urban areas.

At the same time studies show that e-bikes increasingly replace cars, thereby further reducing the impact on the environment.

- **Health:** Cycling as an active mode of transport offers a wide variety of health benefits that are worth more than 191€ billion annually according to a study by ECF¹. This is derived from longer and healthier lives, improved mental health, reduced fatalities, reduced serious injuries and reduced light injuries. Employers also profit from reduced absenteeism for employees who cycle. People who cycle to work reduce their risk of cancer and heart disease by almost half – affirms a research carried out over five years by experts from the University of Glasgow².

Moreover, it should be emphasized that cycling is a very affordable and accessible means of transport which was further highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, cycling has seen a big boom across Europe and worldwide over the past year as it is easy to keep the required distances while remaining active and thus cycling is a resilient way to get from A to B.

However, the increasing attention to cycling also highlighted several shortfalls that need to be addressed so we can make use of the full potential of cycling. Here it became particularly apparent that cycling needs to be considered as an equal partner in the mobility system.

Based on these observations we would like to suggest to consider the following key aspects when drafting the roadmap:

- **EU funding for safe, high quality cycling infrastructure:** Today many people would like to take up cycling but refrain from doing so as they are afraid. Having dedicated, protected and high quality cycle lanes will ensure that not only adults but also adolescents and children feel comfortable to cycle thereby leading to more sustainable transport choices.
- **Connectivity across the full mobility system:** Mobility and urban transport is becoming increasingly connected as vehicles are starting to communicate with each other and the infrastructure. Here it is crucial to also consider other road users sharing the same space such as cyclists to ensure that the connected vehicles of the future can detect them and possibly communicate with each other. Smart and connected cycling is not only comfortable and fun but can also significantly improve road safety.
- **Facilitating improved access to bikes, e-bikes and cargo bikes:** E-bike subsidy systems like the ones that have been successfully introduced in France and Italy should be generalized across the EU, making cycling more attractive for large groups of the population and giving a boost to the European Bicycle Industry. Cycling should be put on an equal, or better, footing with private motorized transport wherever scrappage or other purchase subsidy schemes are considered. Moreover, cities and regions should receive funding for setting up (e)bike sharing systems as well as provide financial support to purchase cargo bikes.
- **Promoting Public Private Partnership:** We believe it is crucial for public and private operators to cooperate to offer mobility services that improve citizens life. One great example are the variety of bike and e-bike sharing services offered in cities around Europe increasing accessibility while providing an emission-free and affordable way of moving around.

All in all, we believe that the new urban mobility framework can be an important stepping stone in making transport more sustainable by harnessing the vast potential of active modes of transport such as cycling, a cornerstone of urban mobility.

CONEBI

¹ https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/FINAL%20THE%20EU%20CYCLING%20ECONOMY_low%20res.pdf

² <http://news.sky.com/story/cycling-to-work-almost-halves-risk-of-cancer-and-heart-disease-10843398>