

Call to action: include cycling in recovery plans and multiannual programmes for 2021–2027

In a nutshell

The consortium of partners from nine European countries cooperating in the Danube Cycle Plans project calls you to action. Use this unique opportunity and include necessary investments in the promotion of cycling into your National Recovery and Resilience Plan, as well as in programmes of the multiannual financial framework for 2021–2027.

Strategies and plans are necessary, but nothing without funding

In this crucial time in terms of decisions about future investments into cycling related actions and developments, our partnership from nine European countries would like to highlight the need for a dedicated budget on cycling in all financial instruments in the upcoming years.

There is no doubt that cycling has already become key element of mobility. Its flexibility and affordability make it an attractive option on a wide range of trips individually or in combination with other (public or shared) transport modes. Thus, measures that promote the use of bicycles are well included in many plans and strategies addressing sustainable mobility and urban development across Europe. In line with the European Green Deal's objectives to accelerate the shift to sustainable and smart mobility, the Commission's roadmap to the upcoming Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy explicitly underlines the key role of cycling as a clean transport mode in urban and regional mobility to achieve environmental targets, particularly the reduction of GHG emissions.

Cycling – an important mobility solution during COVID-19 crisis

In the challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic, cycling has been one of the very few sustainable alternatives to collective forms of mobility, providing people with a means of transport for essential trips while fully keeping social distance and meeting the minimum requirements for daily physical activity. Cities has been quick to encourage its use and answer to the growing modal share of cycling by establishing temporary bike lanes and signposting new recommended itineraries. Bike couriers have been playing a crucial role in satisfying the skyrocketing home delivery demand in city centres. In light of travel restrictions, many countries have experienced unexpected growth in recreational cycling and cycle tourism, too.

Consider cycling in EU financing instruments

We would like to draw the attention of decision-makers on both national and international (macroregional and European) levels to the current opportunity of speeding up cycling promotion. As part of the €750 billion NextGenerationEU extraordinary recovery instrument, the Recovery and Resilience Facility recently agreed by the European Council helps member states addressing the economic and social impacts of the pandemic through their corresponding national plans ensuring green and digital transitions to become more sustainable and resilient. Meanwhile, the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) of the EU is at the starting line, providing a long-term budget of more than €1 trillion to support development, modernisation, innovation and traditional policies in the member states.

Call to action

Danube Cycle Plans will provide nine European countries (eight EU member states and the pre-accession country Serbia) with national cycling plans and cycle route networks on the basis of macroregional plans. Mentoring programmes, trainings and project conferences will ensure that all countries will be prepared for the improvement of cycling conditions and fostering the use of bicycles. Although the consortium addresses the challenges of cycling promotion by ambitious aims, the main objectives by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the above-mentioned European strategies, namely safe, sustainable and smart mobility, can be achieved only if the responsible institutions on local, regional, national and transnational level implement pro-cycling measures, such as:

- build adequate cycling infrastructure,
- encourage the extension of route networks (cross-border links, missing sections), including the completion of EuroVelo,
- improve intermodal connections and Bike-and-Ride facilities,
- increase road safety,
- provide incentives to the purchase and use of (electric) bicycles,
- support the roll out of bike sharing schemes especially in medium-sized and large cities
- implement promotional programmes and projects,
- support partnerships for cycling.

To make this happen, we recommend policymakers, consultants and decision-makers consider cycling whenever they initiate, draft, lobby for, vote, ratify or reallocate budgets, particularly in the frame of the EU recovery plan and MFF for 2021–2027.

Why to promote cycling?

Please read our brief 'Benefits of cycling – 10 reasons why to promote cycling' leaflet... *and act*.

Cycling and your National Recovery and Resilience Plan

For practical information how and where cycling could be included in your National Recovery and Resilience Plan, please check the guidance provided by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF): https://ecf.com/sites/ecf.com/files/civicrm/persist/contribute/files/CIE_ECF_recommendations.pdf

More people cycling in the Danube region

The Danube Cycle Plans project, co-funded in the framework of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, started in the summer of 2020, with the aim of developing policies, plans and promotional activities for more people cycling in the Danube macroregion. It is the consortium of 9 project partners, representing or being appointed by the responsible national ministries of 9 countries of the region, with the support of 13 associated partners, including ministries, development agencies and cycling advocacies. In this 30-month project, we are elaborating cycling strategies, cycle route network and investment plans on macroregional and national level, as well as organizing events and programmes for awareness raising, capacity building and knowledge exchange. Future investments into infrastructure will be supported by the extension of the CBA methodology with the advantages of cycling and a model investment plan for one section of the new Danube cycle route network defined by the project partners (on the basis of EuroVelo in the region).

[Here](#) you can learn more about the Danube Cycle Plans project. In case of further questions, please contact the lead partner (agnes.kurzweil@umweltbundesamt.at) or your national contact point ([here](#)).

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10 reasons why to promote cycling

„Cycling is by definition the best way of solving the problem of pollution in cities. Investments in safe and separated cycle infrastructure networks as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans would be a no-brainer and no-regret.“

Frans Timmermans, European Commission Executive Vice-President

