

## LINK TO EUROPE

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# EU CYCLING DECLARATION

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## Recommendations

Building on the European Parliament's resolution on cycling and with regard to the European Commission's drafting of an EU Cycling Declaration, the Metropolitan Region FrankfurtRheinMain **supports the proposed goal of doubling the cycled kilometres by 2030.**

With this short input paper, we would like to share our regional perspective on how to best achieve this goal. In general, the overarching maxim when weighing potential elements for an EU Cycling Declaration must always be whether those can actually extend and support the ability of local and regional authorities to act. The upcoming declaration should therefore foremost be an **enabling document** for the implementation level.

### NOT JUST A SIDE-KICK: THE REGIONAL APPROACH

Taking cycling seriously as a fully-fledged mobility mode means to understand it as an integral part of the functional metropolitan mobility system. Therefore, any exclusively city-focused approach to cycling policy will unfortunately miss the huge potential of cycling for the mobility transition in the peri-urban area as well.

Following this approach, the Regional Authority FrankfurtRheinMain coordinates the realisation of a coherent regional cycling network and focuses on the planning and construction of regional cycling highways. These measures form core elements of the regional SUMP with its guiding target of ensuring social and territorial inclusive mobility for all and are accompanied by a designated regional bike ambassador and an annual cycling forum to support awareness raising and dialogue, not least with businesses and employees.

Building on these experiences and knowing that governing institutions for metropolitan areas are the exception rather than the rule throughout the EU, we see a kind of **"agency gap" for such supra-municipal and sub-state measures**, especially with regard to cycling policies. The EU Cycling Declaration might be a good opportunity to shed light on this aspect.

### FOCUS ON THE PULL-FACTORS

There is a lot of untapped potential to make cycling more attractive by focusing on crucial pull factors such as **practicability and safety**. Of course, this means first and foremost updating and creating the necessary infrastructure such as quality separate bike lanes and highways as well as storage and parking facilities. But this also includes removing physical barriers to active mobility in general, and shifting transport planning towards enjoyable and comfortable public spaces. Walking as the most basic form of active mobility and working towards a new culture of mutual understanding and thoughtfulness must be part of this endeavour.

From our regional perspective, the bicycle will also be an essential tool for **multimodality**, especially as a straightforward means of solving the problem of the first and last mile. Co-funded by national grants and drawing on lessons from the CHIPS Interreg NWE-project, the Regional Authority FrankfurtRheinMain is currently working on a blueprint for mobility hubs and the setup of a corresponding regional network of mobility hubs alongside rail-based public transport lines. Bicycle storage and repair facilities can be crucial elements for enhancing multimodality at these hubs. But even more so, the current challenge is to combine this with a shared bike offer. Bike sharing is already well developed in the urban core, where there is a clear private business case. In the peri-urban area, however, the roll-out has unfortunately not yet taken place and might only be viable when supported by public actors. The right legal and financial formula still needs to be found here.

### POTENTIAL “MEASURES” ON EU LEVEL

Taken this together, we could imagine the following measures as part of the EU Cycling Declaration:

- **Learning and exchange scheme:** Organising additional funding at EU level on a larger scale might be difficult, but offering a mutual learning and knowledge exchange scheme for local and regional public officials and politicians in the field of cycling policy could already be a huge added value (e.g. reimbursing travel and accommodation costs in a transnational capacity building program).
- **Investments in infrastructure:** As the Cycling Declaration will be agreed by Parliament and Council, a quantitative indicative investment target for the member states could be proposed (e.g. % share of national transport budget or euro per inhabitants for investments in active mobility).
- **Synergies with next generation SUMP-processes:** Any effective cycling policy needs to be strategically and systematically embedded in the wider SUMP-planning processes. The reinvigorating impulse through the new TEN-T urban nodes provisions on SUMPs and the implementation of national SUMP-support frameworks following the respective EC recommendation will be the perfect opportunity to mainstream (regional) cycling support measures throughout Europe. This is particularly important in the context of the stronger accent on functional urban areas in next generation-SUMPs.
- **Raising awareness:** The already expressed proposal to declare an EU year of cycling might indeed be helpful to raise awareness and acceptance of cycling throughout the EU. However, given the Year of Rail in 2021, this need not necessarily be the case as early as 2024.