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Developing an EU Cycling Strategy

European Parliament resolution of 16 February 2023 on developing an EU cycling strategy (2022/2909(RSP))

(2023/C 283/11)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the Commission 'Fit for 55' package of 14 July 2021 on delivering the European Green Deal,

— having regard to the Commission communication of 18 May 2022 entitled 'EU "Save Energy"' (COM(2022)0240),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 14 December 2021 entitled 'The New EU Urban Mobility Framework' (COM(2021)0811),

— having regard to the Commission communication of 9 December 2020 entitled 'Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy — putting European transport on track for the future' (COM(2020)0789),

— having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/73 of 17 January 2019 imposing a definitive anti-dumping duty and definitively collecting the provisional duty imposed on imports of electric bicycles originating in the People's Republic of China ([1]),

— having regard to the European Committee of the Regions opinion of 12 October 2016 entitled 'An EU Roadmap for Cycling' ([2]),

— having regard to the European Court of Auditors (ECA) special report No 6/2020 entitled 'Sustainable Urban Mobility in the EU: No substantial improvement is possible without Member States' commitment',

— having regard to the Commission communication of 10 March 2020 entitled 'A New Industrial Strategy for Europe' (COM(2020)0102),

— having regard to its resolution of 20 January 2021 on the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines ([3]),

— having regard to its resolution of 6 October 2021 on the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 — Recommendations on next steps towards 'Vision Zero' ([4]),

— having regard to the speech delivered on 30 June 2022 by Executive Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans at the Bicycle Summit in Copenhagen,

— having regard to the principle of subsidiarity and, in particular, to Article 5(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

— having regard to the Member States' 'Declaration on Cycling as a climate friendly Transport Mode', endorsed during the Luxembourg EU Presidency in October 2015,

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([1]) OJ L 16, 18.1.2019, p. 108.
([2]) OJ C 88, 21.3.2017, p. 49.
([3]) OJ C 456, 10.11.2021, p. 47.
([4]) OJ C 132, 24.3.2022, p. 45.

— having regard to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular to Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities and Communities, in which cycling is viewed as making cities and human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable,

— having regard to the statement by the Commission of 7 July 2022 in reply to the question to the Commission on developing an EU cycling strategy (O-000025/2022 — B9-0017/2022),

— having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

— having regard to the motion for a resolution of the Committee on Transport and Tourism,

A. whereas transport is a significant source of air pollution, and whereas sustainable transport modes, such as cycling, are essential for achieving the EU's climate and pollution reduction objectives and for delivering on its ambitions in the EU 'Save Energy' and REPowerEU initiatives;

B. whereas cycling brings many benefits, such as better health, reduced road congestion and noise pollution, improved air quality, economic growth and environmental and social benefits;

C. whereas cycling is a relatively inexpensive means of transport, which most citizens can afford, and promotes a sustainable economy;

D. whereas more safe cycling infrastructure is needed to unlock the potential for cycling, which is a valuable alternative for travel over short distances;

E. whereas the EU cycling ecosystem already represents over 1 000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and 1 million jobs and can scale up to 2 million jobs by 2030; whereas e-bikes represent an opportunity for the growth of the cycling industry, providing potential to create green jobs and absorb reskilled workers from other sectors;

F. whereas the lack of secured parking and measures to prevent theft, as well as the lack of dedicated cycle paths, are considered to be the two prevailing obstacles to attracting new users and achieving the full potential of cycling in cities;

1. Considers that cycling should be recognised as a fully-fledged mode of transport; asks the Commission to develop a dedicated European cycling strategy with the aim of doubling the number of kilometres cycled in Europe by 2030; calls on the Commission to ensure the harmonised collection of data on cycling, including industrial data;

2. Notes that cycling has increased as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rising price of fossil fuels since Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine; encourages regional and local authorities to consider maintaining the cycling infrastructure put in place as a response to the pandemic via their regular urban planning processes, and to take tangible actions to properly integrate cycling into their urban mobility frameworks, while acknowledging its potential to contribute to better connectivity between suburban areas and city centres, in particular through cycle highways;

3. Encourages, with a view to fostering multimodality, the creation of synergies between cycling and other modes of transport, such as making more places available for bikes inside trains and providing more secured parking areas for bikes at stations and mobility hubs;

4. Considers that European policies and support should take enabling cycling into due account when building or upgrading the TEN-T infrastructure, including adding cycle paths parallel to railway tracks and inland waterways, where feasible;

5. Encourages Member States and local authorities to significantly increase investments in the construction of separated cycling infrastructure, to integrate affordable e-bike and bike-sharing schemes into their mobility plans' networks and reflect cycling as a vital last-mile solution in urban nodes;

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6. Highlights that urban infrastructure planning should be developed in accordance with EU road safety legislation, including safety standards for cycling; calls on the Commission to speed up its work regarding the guidance on quality requirements for high-quality and safe cycling infrastructure provided for under the RISM Directive ([5]); underlines the need to improve intelligent transport system technologies so that they become better at recognising cyclists on the road;

7. Calls on the Commission to recognise the cycling industry, including battery manufacturing for e-bikes and the circular economy, and in particular SMEs, as legitimate partners in the mobility ecosystem of the EU industrial strategy, and in industrial infrastructure programmes and funding schemes; calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage projects on cycling and related sectors such as mobility, tourism, health and sports, among others;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support the production of 'Made in Europe' bicycles and components, thereby stimulating the competitiveness of EU industry, by bridging the investment gap, maintaining a global level playing field and stimulating supply chain reshoring and security, and by encouraging high-quality jobs, creating cycling clusters and enhancing industry-related vocational training;

9. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the accessibility of cycling to persons with reduced mobility, as well as making cycling affordable for vulnerable groups; notes that the European Social Climate Fund and the structural and investment funds can help those who are most affected by 'transport poverty' by supporting the purchase of bikes or access to bike-sharing services;

10. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and regional and local authorities to conduct educational campaigns and training, including information campaigns, to increase awareness for road safety, supporting the safe use of bikes and e-bikes; calls further on the Commission to propose guidelines on safe cycling (helmets, age restrictions, carrying children, etc.), and requests that particular attention be paid to encouraging cycling among women and older people, notably through improving safety;

11. Notes, in this context, that proper enforcement and monitoring are essential for users' safety and security, and calls for the focus to be placed on the enforcement of existing rules in order to ensure the respectful coexistence of different transport modes;

12. Underlines the potential of e-bikes to increase cycling; notes that in order to maintain the swift deployment of and access to e-bikes, those with assistance capable of attaining speeds of up to 25 km/h need to be given proper legal classification in both EU and national legislation;

13. Points out that due consideration should be given to safe and secure bike parking spaces and charging capacity for e-bikes in housing planning;

14. Encourages companies, public organisations and institutions to promote cycling through specific incentives, including programmes for employees and the installation of sufficient bike parking spaces with e-bike chargers, and providing adequate sanitary facilities;

15. Stresses that cycling tourism and cycling in rural areas need to be supported by accelerating the development of the EuroVelo network and its 17 routes, in particular by ensuring stronger support as well as exploiting synergies with the TEN-T network;

16. Encourages the Member States to reduce the VAT rates for the supply, rental and repair of bikes and e-bikes;

17. Calls on the Commission to designate 2024 as the European Year of Cycling;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and to the Member States and their parliaments.

([5]) Directive (EU) 2019/1936 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management (OJ L 305, 26.11.2019, p. 1).