



PEDAL POWER RULES! AN AMBITIOUS PUBLIC POLICY IN FAVOUR OF CYCLING

Final publication - December 2017

SUMMARY

Despite clear benefits on so many levels (whether it be in ecological, socio-economic or health terms), and its proven efficiency on certain day-to-day trips, cycling underwent a remarkable post-war decline in many European countries, and this trend is yet to be reversed in France.

After its use became widespread, especially among workers during the first half of the twentieth century, the bicycle found itself almost entirely out of sight and mind in cities during the baby boom years, when the individual mobility brought by motorised transport became the very symbol of progress and modernity. In France this was obviously true for the motor-car, but also specifically for two-wheeled motor vehicles, the development of which was favoured by planning policies that mingled the all-powerful car with public transport.

Some northern European countries woke up to this decline as early as the 1970s and, in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, public policies successfully enabled the gradual re-affirmation and widespread adoption of cycling as a routine habit. France (like the UK and Spain) was unable or unwilling to initiate a similar turnaround, and fell twenty to thirty years behind more advanced countries in terms of the perception of cycling as an efficient means of mobility in everyday life, in public policy and in infrastructures. The reaction in France in the last decade has yet to turn cycling into a widely popular practice.

The negative impact of urban planning structured around the car, a sense of insecurity in urban areas, concern about theft, the absence of the kind of infrastructures which can create "safety in numbers", but also the lack of a national strategy, the hotchpotch of local and national competencies, localised costs for benefits on a broader scale. and the lack of incentives to cycle to work: these are among the many hurdles that cycling has yet to clear. We have therefore conceived three ambitious proposals to support the widespread use of bicycles in France and reintegrate the bike as a mode of transport in its own right:

- 1) Firstly, we have sought a solution for the lack of national strategy for encouraging the use of the bicycle. With this in mind we have developed the concept of an **Inter-ministerial Mission for Cycling (Mission Interministérielle pour le Vélo - MIV), with strategic development plans at national level.** We outline a first initiative for the IMC in the form of a **National Plan for Promoting the Use of the Bicycle.**
- 2) Secondly, we have sought a solution for the lack of investment in cycling infrastructure at local and regional level. For this purpose, we envisage an **Investment Fund for Active Mobility,** under the control of the French National Sickness Insurance Fund (CNAM).
- 3) Thirdly, we have attempted to restore the balance of financial incentives offered by employers with regard to the commuting habits of their employees. The **Unified Mobility Budget (Budget Unique Mobilité)** will make it possible to support mobility, whatever the mode of transport used.