



VELO-CITY 2009

PRESS KIT

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1. PRESS RELEASE

Velo-city 2009 presents:

“Re-cycling cities”, a unique conference about ‘how cycling transforms cities’

Brussels, 21 April 2009 - From 12 to 15 May, the 15th edition of Velo-city – the world’s leading event dedicated to urban cycling – will be held in Brussels. During this four-day event, cycling in cities will be looked at from different perspectives by keynote speakers, organisations and institutions. The conference will be hosted by Pascal Smet, Brussels’ Minister for Mobility, at the Tour & Taxis site.

“Just because a city is not cycling-friendly today, doesn’t mean it has to stay that way. With the right mobilisation of politicians and citizens, everything can change. The success of ‘re-cycling cities’ depends on the willingness of people to think and act differently”, says Manfred Neun, President of the European Cyclists’ Federation, which organises Velo-city. This sets the scene for Velo-city 2009 very clearly.

The conference will demonstrate the role and potential of **cycling in cities**. Themes to be discussed include urban planning, ways to improve cycling infrastructure, how cycling contributes to combating pollution and climate change, the health benefits of cycling, the impact of taxes on mobility choices, and intermodal transport, but also the promotion of cycling among specific target groups, such as women and children. Over 100 speakers have been invited to conduct 4 plenary and 28 subplenary sessions. Conference attendees will be able to organise their programme according to their needs and areas of interest.

A special cycling tour for the conference attendees (Thursday 14 May at 16:00) will feature the progress made by Brussels in terms of infrastructure and efforts to become a cycling-friendly city. Only a few years ago, cyclists in Brussels were considered an endangered species, but it is now clear that Brussels has the potential to develop its own cycling-friendly environment in just a few years. The European Cyclists’ Federation hopes that this example, as well as the stories of ‘forerunner’ or ‘climber’ cities, such as Amsterdam or Bordeaux, will inspire many other cities to promote and encourage cycling.

European focus

As Brussels is also the capital of the European Union, there will be a focus on the European institutions’ role in promoting the use of bicycles in an urban context. For the final plenary session of Velo-city 2009 on Friday 15 May, conference attendees will be invited to the European Parliament, where a ‘Charter of Brussels’ will be signed by the European Commission and the mayors of other cycling-friendly cities in Europe. EU Commissioner Antonio Tajani will also be present to launch new initiatives from the European Commission to support cycling in cities.



Who will be there?

The events organised for Velo-city bring together a wide range of stakeholders involved in the promotion of and provision for cycling such as representatives of the academic world, NGOs, research institutes, the bicycle industry, public institutions, governments and citizens.

The programme for Velo-city 2009 features keynote speakers from the European Commission, the United Nations, the World Health Organization and many other important organisations, cities, cycling associations, the bicycle industry and the academic world. The following high-profile speakers have already confirmed their participation:

- Siim Kallas – European Commissioner for Administrative Affairs, Audit & Anti-fraud
- Antonio Tajani – European Commissioner for Transport
- Alain Juppé – Mayor of Bordeaux and former Prime Minister of France
- Jean-Pascal van Ypersele – Vice Chair of the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) and scientific adviser to the United Nations
- Prof Dr. David Banister – Oxford University
- Francesca Racioppi – European Regional Advisor for the World Health Organization (WHO)
- Guillaume Vanderstichelen – Duval Guillaume
- Helle Soholt – Gehl Architects
- Sam Adams – Mayor of Portland, Oregon – USA
- Klaus Bondam – Mayor of Copenhagen, Denmark

In total there will be **4 plenary sessions** and **28 supplementary sessions** to which more than **100** speakers have been invited.

A technical tour of the city of Brussels and excursions to Ghent and Liège are also part of the week's programme.

In addition to the conference itself, a poster exhibition will be open to the public at Tour & Taxis all week long, where numerous cycling-related projects will be on show.

On 17 May 2009, Pro Velo (a local member of ECF) will be inviting everybody, both in and outside of Brussels, to participate in their yearly DRING DRING event – a family-friendly cycling day in Brussels that finishes with a big cycling party at Tour & Taxis.

With this programme, the Velo-city conference organisers genuinely hope to contribute to the integration of cycling as a fully fledged means of transport in intermodal urban travel.



2. Brussels Mobility

Brussels Capital Region: Minister for Mobility, Mr. Pascal Smet

Brussels Mobility is the public service department in the Brussels Capital Region responsible for facilities, infrastructure and transportation.

We oversee the development of mobility strategies, co-ordinate projects to develop, rejuvenate and maintain public areas and roads, and manage public transport infrastructure, taxi services and other public-owned facilities in the region. Brussels Mobility has 570 employees with different areas of expertise, who manage the annual budget of more than 700 million euros.

Around three in every five journeys made in Brussels cover a distance of less than 5 km and could therefore easily be made on foot or by bike. There are two sides to our work to promote non-motorised forms of transport:

- creating and adapting infrastructure to ensure that cycling is both safe and enjoyable;
- increasing public awareness through information campaigns, organising events and co-ordinating mobility plans for schools and businesses.

Infrastructure

Brussels Mobility is responsible for developing the network of regional cycles routes (ICR), including the necessary signposting. To date the regional network comprises 16 radial routes with three circular routes connecting them.

200 km of the region's roads are already equipped with cycle lanes or cycle tracks. The 480 crossroads controlled by traffic lights in the region have advanced stop lines for cyclists. Other improvements to cycling provisions include the systematic installation of bicycle racks (1,800 spaces) and the creation of one-way streets with cyclist contra-flow.

We are particularly interested in encouraging people to combine cycling and public transport:

- installation of ramps and improving access to stations;
- creation of regional cycle points close to the major stations (*Gare du Nord*, *Gare centrale* and *Gare du Luxembourg*);
- covered bicycle racks at the metro stations and SNCB (Belgian National Rail) stations on line 26.



3. ECF (European Cyclists' Federation): ECF Chairman, Mr. Manfred Neun

ECF has a particular relationship with Velo-city: the first Velo-city conference took place in 1980 and led 3 years later to the creation of ECF. This year celebrates the 15th conference, which is once again organised by ECF. The last Velo-city conference in Munich was a success with almost 1,000 participants, and we are full of hope to renew and increase this success with Velo-city 2009 in Brussels.

The Velo-city conference series offers a wonderful opportunity for networking over the 4 days, involving politicians, academics, consultants, industrialists, bicycle users and authorities who can exchange their experiences and ideas. Velo-city 2009 is expanding this idea even further by organising the first veritable Expo Velo-city, in which companies, consultancies, cities and regions will present themselves to fellow participants as well as to the general public.

The choice of Brussels as host was linked to the request from certain local authorities for enhanced cycling in the city. Velo-city is more than a conference, it is a way for a city to show to its residents, its neighbouring cities and the rest of the world that efforts have been made and are going to be made in respect to cycling. To improve the modal share of cycling, it is necessary not only to build new infrastructure but also to implement a cross-disciplinary policy.

Moreover, Brussels is not only the capital of Belgium but also the heart of the European institutions, thus putting cycling on the agenda of the European Union, which will renew its leaders in June 2009. In 2007 the Commission published the Green Paper entitled "Towards a new culture for Urban mobility", which should be followed by an "Action Plan" this year. Bringing cycling to the attention of future decision-makers is a key element of Velo-city 2009. With this in mind, the Velo-city conference will end in the European Parliament on 15 May with a speech by EU Commissioner Antonio Tajani, discussions with members of the European Parliament and the signing of the Charter of Brussels.





4. Velo-city: When, Where, What...

- **Dates:** 12 to 15 May 2009
- **City:** **Brussels**
- **Type:** **European Conference**
Held every 2 years
- **Place:** **Tour & Taxis**
Avenue du Port 86c
B 1000 Brussels, Belgium
- **Numbers:** **1,000 participants**
- **Target Public:**
 - Professionals
 - Institutions
 - Companies
 - Private sector
 - Individuals
 - Associations
- **Objective:**
Integrating cycling as a means of transport in its own right



5. Expo Velo-city 2009

11 to 17 May 2009
Open: 10:00 to 18:00

- Belgian pavilion
- European pavilion
- Partners at the exhibition
- Private sponsors, including transport companies
- Associations
- Partners at the exhibition – 4 categories
- Cycling policy
- Cycling-friendly world
- Expertise & Infrastructure
- Products
- Bicycle lift demo*
- Test Track
- Beliris Photo Competition
- Other activities

Free and open to the public!

* The Bicycle Lift is a mechanical unit adapted to the urban environment, and works similarly to a ski-lift, helping to push cyclists uphill. **A prototype of this Bicycle Lift can be previewed and exclusively tested at Velo-city 2009.** Every visitor can test the lift using their own bike under the guidance and advice provided by experts. The Bicycle Lift is an incredible invention which could change our daily lives. Come and test it!



6 Excursions

6.1. Liège, a city with a spirit: programme for Velo-city day on 13 May

A short introduction to Liège

Located in the heart of Europe with excellent rail, road and waterway links, Liège is the economic capital of Wallonia. Its river and green hills make it a charming place to live for its 200,000 inhabitants. In the semi-pedestrianised centre of the "Ardent City", you can soak up the relaxing atmosphere while enjoying culinary delights and discovering the city's cultural highlights (museums, theatres and architecture). Likewise, a stroll through the city's parks and gardens and its maze of narrow streets and dead-ends is a delight.

Liège is a vibrant city with ambitious plans in terms of mobility. In a few years' time, the arrival of a modern tramway will transform the face of the city. And in the not so distant future, a free bike hire service is set to open in both Liège and several of its surrounding districts.

Programme for the day

The conference participants will arrive at Liège's brand new TGV station designed by Santiago Calatrava. They will then attend a reception at the *Hôtel de Ville*. From here they will take part in the various themed tours and activities organised to showcase the diverse cycling projects which have been developed in the city.

Three aspects will be highlighted:

- Training and education (6 workshops/activities). In a city where cycling is still not people's first choice, training and education are essential if children are to have the chance to learn to ride a bike and to develop good cycling instincts. In collaboration with the district children's council and a local school, the conference participants will have the opportunity to experience the different stages of the "*Brevet du Cycliste*" training course for themselves. They will even get to act as an examiner for the final test.
- Tourism (7 guided bike rides). Discover Liège, its heritage, architecture, districts and industry by bike: the best possible way to experience all the city has to offer.
- Infrastructure (5 guided bike rides). The Liège region is characterised by steep hills, but the city has made the most of its low lying areas and the bottom of its valley, and has developed its cycle network here, notably along the river Meuse and the disused railways which have been given a new lease of life. The Walloon network, known as RAVeL (*Réseau Autonome des Voies Lentes*), consists of safe routes for non-motorised forms of transport for use by tourists and the city's inhabitants alike.

The conference participants can choose from a total of 18 different tours, activities and guided bike rides, depending on their areas of interest.

The day will end with a dinner, at which the conference participants will have the chance to meet the people responsible for local cycling projects and to share their thoughts.

And afterwards?

In addition to raising the profile of cycling and promoting the bicycle as a transport option, the day will enable Liège to strengthen its relationship with the district children's council. The council members provide a link to their district and schools, highlighting locations where bike racks and safe cycle paths are required, resolving problems, etc. Velo-city is the starting point for new campaigns and the concrete implementation of plans to ensure that Liège is a more cycling-friendly city for everyone in the future.





6.2. Velo-city 2009 in the cycling city of Ghent

Ghent has been invited to help organise the Velo-city conference. This means that on Wednesday 13 May, some of the conference members will visit Ghent to find out about the cycling policy in our city. The programme is as follows:

13:00	The group arrive at Gent-Sint-Pieters railway station
14:00	Various cycling and walking trips in and around Ghent
17:00	End of the cycling trip at the Kouter and free time to visit Ghent
19:00	Dinner at the town hall
From 21:00	Return to Brussels by train

The main intention is for the conference members to become acquainted with the various aspects of Ghent's cycling policy. They can subscribe to cycling trips with a variety of themes in which the historical and cultural wealth of Ghent is not forgotten. The cycling trips that we are organising are:

- **Along the Leie** - Cycling Tour along the Leie promenade (cycle route)
- **East-West cycle best** - Cycling Tour along the East-West cycle route
- **The Lord of the Rings** - Cycling Tour past cycling attractions on roads in the district and the ring-road around the city.
- **Water / What moves in Ghent** - Cycle by the water
- **The city coloured yellow with bicycles** - Visit of the cycle-hire project 'StudentEnmobilititeit'
- **Maximum bicycle service at Max Mobiel** - Visit to the bicycle specialist Max Mobiel and the station environment around Gent-Sint-Pieters and Gent Dampoort
- **Bike locked, thief blocked** - What is Ghent doing to combat bicycle theft?
- **IPOD – an integral approach for the public domain in Ghent** - Cycling trip on recently resurfaced squares and streets within the Integral Plan for the Public Domain (IPOD) in Ghent
- **CIVITAS – European resources for sustainable mobility** - Cycling trip along the corridor that is being tackled within the European CIVITAS project
- **Slow please** - Cycling along slow roads in Ghent
- **Green ribbons in the city** - Cycling along the green routes in Ghent
- **Green lungs for Ghent** - Cycling Tour through the green areas in the city
- **From North to South** - Cycling Tour along the North-South cycle route in Ghent
- **An accessible Ghent for everyone** - Projects for accessible public domain
- **Interesting stories on the bicycle** - Historical tourist cycle tours through Ghent





7. Dring Dring 2009

Tomorrow I'll take my bike!

From Monday 11 to Sunday 17 May 2009, Brussels will be the place to be for all cyclists, whether you are a "dedicated enthusiast" coming to share your experiences or a more "novice pedaler". During the Dring Dring week, everyone will have the chance to jump on a bike and rediscover the city; hence the slogan for this week of activities, "Tomorrow I'll take my bike"!

The 2009 event looks set to be exceptional. Not only because **Velo-city, the international biennial cycling conference**, is taking place at the same time as Dring Dring, but also because the cycling associations of Brussels are working together to organise an even more extensive programme of activities.

"The services provided by all these associations may well be very different, but ultimately we are all pursuing the same goal: to inspire as many people as possible to use their bikes," explains Remco Ruiter, one of the directors of Pro Velo.



Every year, Dring Dring guarantees **a week dedicated solely to the bike, which culminates in a Cycling Festival (at Tour & Taxis)**.

Whether you are a complete novice or a seasoned cyclist, everyone who travels to work or school by bike is welcome at the cyclists' breakfasts organised each day during the week. Alternatively, you can take the opportunity to discover the district where you live or work by taking part in one of the lunchtime district bike rides.

Real beginners will have the chance to "give it a go" in complete safety thanks to well-supervised training courses.

This year, bicycle workshops are giving everyone the chance to come and have their beloved bike repaired or, better still, to learn how to repair it themselves with the help of a mechanic.

The week will end on Sunday 17 May with the Cycling Festival. This event will NOT be taking place at the *Cinquantenaire* park, as usual, but at TOUR & TAXIS! An entire day of cycling activities has been organised, including: a second-hand bike sale, guided tours by bike, by boat and on foot, an engraving service, information about protecting your bike against theft, crazy bicycles and other vehicles, a skills testing course for children and much more. Throughout the day there will be entertainment from street theatre groups, which will add to the fantastic friendly atmosphere which the festival always generates. The Brussels Circus School, which is based at Tour & Taxis, will also open its doors to give the event an additional carnival touch.

Dring Dring 2009 is a Brussels Capital Region event organised by the cycling organisations Gracq – Les Cyclistes Quotidiens, Fietsersbond, les Ateliers de la rue Voot, Cyclo and Pro Velo, in collaboration with Velo-city and with the support of Alpro Soya.





Tomorrow I'll take my bike! Press events

Pictures and interviews with pupils taking part in cycling activities

- Monday 11 May: 560 pupils & accompanying adults: Schaerbeek, Evere and St Josse
- Tuesday 12 May: 536 pupils & accompanying adults: Etterbeek, Woluwe St Pierre and Woluwe St Lambert
- Wednesday 13 May: 445 pupils & accompanying adults: Uccle
- Thursday 14 May: 582 pupils & accompanying adults: Anderlecht
- Friday 15 May: 719 pupils & accompanying adults: Ganshoren, Jette, Koekelberg and Berchem-ste-Agathe

Contact:

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Evening cycling rally on Tuesday 12 May

Cyclists take over the city!

To mark the start of Velo-city 2009, hundreds of conference participants and members of the public who are regular bike users will travel en masse by bike from the Tour & Taxis site (leaving at 18:00), through the historic city centre, to the *Place Sainte Catherine*. We are expecting between 500 and 1,000 cyclists.

The entertainment and celebrations will go on until 22:00.

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Cycling Festival – Sunday 17 May – Tour & Taxis (all day)

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Information, photographs and press kit available at www.dringdring.be



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For more information, please visit the press corner on the website:
<http://www.velo-city2009.com/press-corner.html>