

## VELOMAI AND EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY OF OUR STAFF BICYCLES AS PART OF THE EQUATION



Brussels, 17 May 2022

*(version française suivra)*

**VELOMAI 2022** is here again, and **TAO – The Independents** is keen to support it.

As on previous occasions, this is a good opportunity to promote sustainable transport initiatives in a friendly way at an institutional level. We salute this initiative as in the previous years, and do invite colleagues to participate. It will run till 31 May, and this year's theme is 'Cycling for Peace' and supporting Ukraine.

 [link to program](#)

Beyond this festive action, what lays behind should be in our view not only to raise awareness, but to take time to continue reflecting, proposing and

promoting best practices in the general interest, with measurable goals and feasible working calendars, always taking into account well justified special particular situations.

One evidence that is in our view worth mentioning: **our staff has heard the message**. In pre-pandemic figures, the evolution of transport means to work has significantly advanced over the years. Between 2006 and 2017, the number of staff members coming to the office by bicycle raised from 6 % to 13 %, whilst those doing so by car diminished from 50 % to 30 % over the same period. Walkers remain more or less on the same numbers, and public transport users have also raised from 33 % to 44 %.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Let us focus today on bicycles**, definitely a part of the equation, though clearly not the only one when promoting a reasonable holistic sustainable package.

The public enthusiasm for urban cycling has been growing steadily in Brussels and the Commission has followed suit in the campaigns designed to put more people on bicycles. Indeed much has been done to make the life of cyclists easier and safer, in recent years. But **let's not rest on our oars**.

We are reaching a plateau in the number of daily cyclists in Brussels. The improvements of the last couple of years have drawn new people into cycling from among those more adventurous and committed. Those who do not fear an accident, verbal or physical abuse from a small yet vocal minority of angry motorists and those who accept the risk of their bicycle being stolen from a public place in broad daylight and... sold on Facebook Marketplace with impunity. That is the moment we are in right now. The substandard quality of the cycling infrastructure is still preventing the more risk-averse and the less crazy among us from riding. **Now it's time to make cycling safe enough for all!**

EU institutions play a vital role in the social fabric and economic landscape of Brussels. Therefore, **the Commission should use its weight to engage in a constructive dialogue with the local authorities** to make Brussels a bicycle friendly champion of sustainable transport.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Figures elaborated by OIB and presented at the Staff Committee

Let's be bold and let's aim high. **Let's make Brussels the bicycle capital of the world!** Despite its hills, its weather and its long-term car addiction.

- Let's make sure that **each new piece of urban infrastructure** and each **new transformation project** gives bicycles a place they deserve, unlike the recent makeover of the Brussels downtown which has forgotten cycle lanes ( as hard to believe as this may appear !). And the downtown is not the only example of recent works that have made cycling more difficult.
- Let's ask Brussels authorities to send out more police officers on bicycles to oversee that none of the newly build **cycle paths are squatted by randomly parked cars.**
- Let's request Brussels authorities to combat bicycle theft more efficiently "**bait bike**" schemes and through a better surveillance of the illegal second hand market.
- Let's request building a **conveyer lift for bicycles** to ease the climbing from the downtown to the uptown.

Brussels has come a long way and the EU staff has been at the forefront of that change. Now it's time to put out best foot forward and make Brussels a capital of **clean air and relaxed, happy commuters!**

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To celebrate this action and to encourage colleagues to adopt the bicycle attitude, **TAO** is pleased to put forward a **QUIZ** to win:

- 1<sup>st</sup> PRIZE : A [Triban 100 bicycle](#) (flat bar or sporty handlebars) from the Decathlon brand
- 2<sup>nd</sup> PRIZE : a quality [Decathlon bicycle helmet model Van Rysel](#) (or similar)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> PRIZE : a [multi-tool model 900](#), Decathlon brand

★ **3 lucky winners** will be drawn from all the correct answers submitted to

: [osp-tao-afi@ec.europa.eu](mailto:osp-tao-afi@ec.europa.eu)

## **QUIZ** *(for Commission staff only)*

The European Cyclists' Federation estimates a raising of the number of cycling trips in the EU from 160m per day (2017) to HOW MANY by 2030 ?

A. 190m

B. 240m

C. 320m

D. 380m

**Replies to be sent before 31 May 2022!**

**Good luck!**

Your **TAO** Team

