



BICYCLE RESEARCH REPORT NO. 118

June 2000

Traffic Planning Group/Südstadt Planning office

REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF CYCLING IN GERMANY

Systematically promoting cycling should bring about a reduction in CO₂

Key Facts

According to the first report on the situation of cycling in Germany the bicycle can still make a considerable contribution to reducing CO₂ and other environmental, health and local political problems, if communities, federal government, provinces, associations and private undertakings systematically promote cycling in future.

Content

With its first report on the situation of cycling the Federal Ministry of Transport has fully informed the German Bundestag [lower house of German Parliament] on cycling in Germany and has offered suggestions and recommendations for making improvements.

In order to prepare for this, staff from two planning offices had been collecting information on cycling in a research project. In previous years its significance has increased considerably. In several German regions and cities cycling has developed into a tradition and a distinctive "bicycle culture". The federal government and a few provinces have produced a good volume, by international standards, of classified roads showing cycle-parks and individual provinces have a set of sophisticated measures and financing spectrum to promote cycling.

Participants from private industries and institutions too are increasingly getting involved in the cycling routine, e.g. medical/health insurance companies within the framework of health provision, service suppliers or public transport operators combining cycling and public transport. The bicycle has made a contribution to road safety but not to the same extent as other road users where the general tendency has been to reduce danger especially for accidents involving injuries.

There are particular deficiencies, especially for those involved at government and local levels in the conceptionally-strategic lay-out. Only a small number of provinces and communities concentrate their activities on the promotion of cycling in commercial plans that define their aims, realisation times and chief measure-points. On the one hand, there are the political status of promoting



cycling and the relationship to the other means of transport outside political discussion and on the other hand, not all areas of responsibility are covered. This concerns mainly the areas dealing with service as well as advertising and the incentives to use a bicycle which are particularly important when changing from the car to the bicycle.

The federal government in its report declares its support for traffic policy aims to boost the role of the bicycle both in everyday life as well as in the ever-increasing cycling for pleasure because this serves a sustainable development of a housing estate or a city, and above all the reduction of CO₂-emissions.

In order to achieve both these essential tasks, namely *increasing the proportion of cycle-traffic to the total amount of traffic* and *increasing the safety of cycling*, activities to promote cycling based on the demands of the user in the cycling system must be made known (cf. diagram enclosed) namely:

- Functional, safer bicycles for all journeys and cyclist groups
- Attractive, safe cycling networks, cycle parks, cycle-friendly traffic regulations and reliable, helpful signposts
- Good possibilities for cycle-parking and a decrease in the risk of theft
- A good link-up of bicycle and public service transport
- A widespread service tender plus incentives for using a bicycle
- Promoting good conduct by all road users that is traffic safe and based on a partnership in a traffic environment felt to be traffic safe.

The government's areas of responsibility that have not yet been exhausted are chiefly the improvement in traffic law, financing, public relations work and imparting of knowledge. One comprehensive area of responsibility for government, provinces and communities to deal with is the arrangement of the *administrative-organisational system*. To ensure a well-aimed and efficient way of promoting cycling, the financing system for the communities has to become more broadly structured in future by the government (GVFG) and the provinces.

Moreover, government and provinces ought to systematise the present promoting of cycling, to improve the framework conditions for the communities and other interested parties and at the same time to take steps themselves in their areas of responsibility, e.g. builders responsible for cycle ways on federal and provincial roads.

One of the reasons for the frequent shortage of possibilities to promote cycling is that the potentials and the efficiency of cycling are still not very well



known. In this way mobility by bicycle causes comparatively lower public investment and running costs per kilometre as compared with motoring. The economical reason for promoting cycling cannot yet be designated exactly. Practical procedures for comprehensive transport- system assessment of the use of measures for motor-traffic, public transport and cycling would relieve communities of “strategic” verdicts in favour of cycling.

- Report Traffic Planning Group/Südstadt Planning Office; Report on the situation of cycling in Germany. Final Report Volume I/Final Report Volume II Materials, Research Report FE 70468/95 of the Federal Ministry for Traffic, Hannover/Cologne 1997; “*First Report by the Federal Government on the situation of cycling in the Federal Republic of Germany 1998*”, ed. Federal Ministry for Traffic, Building and Housing, Bonn 1999
- Authors Dankmar Alrutz; Wolfgang Bohle, Burkhard Horn, Traffic Planning Group, Große Barlinge 72a; 30171 Hannover, Ulrich Kalle, Ursula Lehner-Lierz, Franz Linder, Südstadt Planning Office, Schaafenstr. 25, 50676 Cologne
- Source Unpublished Research Reports can be borrowed by the customer. The report by the Federal Government is on the Internet under <http://www.bmvbw.de/Verkehr/Fahrradverkehrsbericht>, and is available free from the Federal Ministry for Traffic, Building and Housing, P.O. Box 200100, 53170 Bonn, Tel. +49-228-300-0, Fax -300-3428

