

EuroVelo

Combining cycling with public transport



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 **ECF**
EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION

 **EuroVelo**
the European cycle route network



Combined cycling and public transport journeys are the ideal solution for environmentally sustainable mobility and can provide a genuine alternative to the private motor vehicle in seamless door-to-door journeys whether for recreation or everyday mobility.

The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) coordinate the development of EuroVelo, the European cycle route network. When communicating the network the ECF always highlight the connections between the EuroVelo routes and public transport networks. Studies have shown that cycle tourists are more likely to use public transport in comparison with average tourists.

Most locations in Europe are accessible by public transport; however, the terms and conditions for combining the different modes, particularly in terms of bike carriage, can vary considerably.

The purpose of this guidance is to identify the main measures that should be implemented by public transport operators, public authorities and other relevant stakeholders to encourage combined bike and public transport journeys. The recommendations apply to both the buses, trains, ferries, aeroplanes themselves as well as the supporting buildings and infrastructure (i.e. stations, terminals, ports etc.)

The guidance is structured with general recommendations that apply to all (or most) modes at the beginning followed by some mode-specific recommendations.

Definitions and clarifications

For the purposes of this document public transport has been defined as being forms of transport that are available to the public, charge set fares, and run on fixed routes. Although aeroplanes do not meet the above definition they have been included in this manual due to their continuing importance in providing connections across Europe, particularly over longer distances.

The guidance aims to cover bike and public transport combinations for both touristic and everyday mobility purposes; however, in some cases the needs of these different groups can be different.

Please note that the manual is not designed for users who wish to use these services. For this, the ECF always advise contacting the relevant service provider in advance.



The importance of connecting cycle routes with public transport networks

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The importance for users and cycle route operators

Cycle routes, including EuroVelo routes, should be directly connected to public transport interchanges, in order to:

- Provide accessibility to different routes for a wide target audience.
- Reduce the environmental impact of transport and tourism.
- Provide alternatives on challenging route sections (i.e. avoid mountainous sections or public roads with high volumes of motorised traffic.)
- Connect different sections of the same route divided by barriers (e.g. rivers).

The importance for public transport operators

Public transport operators that activate cyclist friendly measures can benefit from:

- Expanding the catchment area of their services.
- Increasing off-peak usage (by cycle tourists).
- Reducing demand for car parking.
- Reducing congestion around interchanges.
- Increasing revenues.
- Competitive advantage over competitors.

Basic requirements for connecting EuroVelo routes with public transport

The possible technical, organisational and financing solutions, as well as the type of public transport services (train, bus, ferry etc.) will inevitably vary across Europe. However, the basic requirements for connecting EuroVelo routes with public transport are the following:

- Public transport connections at intervals no greater than 150 km.
- Detailed and regularly updated service information with reservation possibilities.
- Fair pricing policies.
- Regular services (where bike carriage is possible) with sufficient on-board capacity, comfort and safety.
- Safe bike storage and parking facilities at public transport interchanges.
- Connected bike-sharing systems.



- **Information** (online, in passenger buildings and on the trains, buses and ferries): Public transport company websites should have a dedicated section containing all necessary information related to bicycles (i.e. terms and conditions) and online timetable search engines should come with a bicycle carriage query function.

Within passenger buildings the location of bike parking and bike rental should be clearly signed. It should also be indicated where customers should go to load their bicycles (supported by announcements) to reduce the possibility of delays. Similarly it should be made clear on the bus, train and ferry where bicycles should be stored.

- **Prices of bicycle tickets:** if there is a charge for the cycle itself then it should be per journey, not per individual service. Ideally, frequent travellers can benefit from annual bike passes, multipacks of 1-day bike passes or other advantageous offers. This can apply to tourists too - in some locations where one operator provides a number of services that are likely to be combined by cycle tourists (e.g. island hopping or multiple river crossings) then special tickets that are valid for a certain period (e.g. one month) can be attractive.

Some transport operators have entered into partnerships with cycling organisations, which include discounted / free bicycle carriage for their members.

- **Ticket reservation schemes and sales channels:** Ensure that there are simple booking procedures. Reservation should be optional although it should be made clear if this is a risk on popular services with limited space for cycles. Whether buying a ticket from a counter, a ticket machine an automatic machine or online it should be possible to reserve a bicycle space at the same time as the seat and the seats should be reserved near the bicycle (if relevant).
- **Accessibility** (both in the passenger buildings and outside): Safe access to stations and terminals by bicycle must be provided. Cycle signs for stations and terminals should be provided on major cycle routes at least within 5 km. On approaching the building it should be clear – both in terms of signage and cycling infrastructure – the best way either to enter or to access the building or to access the bike parking facility. It should equally be clear how to access major cycle routes when leaving the buildings too. Large elevators should be a standard feature where there are facilities located at different heights (e.g. to access rail station platforms).



- **Bicycle carriage** of 'complete' bicycles should be possible on all public transport services. Whilst it is possible to transport folded or disassembled bikes many public transport services in Europe (although the requirements and conditions vary). While this is an option for some cyclists and is supported, it should not substitute being able to transport complete / assembled cycles. Folding bikes account for a relatively small sector of the market and a large number of cyclists are not comfortable disassembling their cycles. If combined cycling and public transport journeys are to be encouraged then it should be made as easy as possible to combine the modes.

There should be a dedicated area or rack where bicycles can be stored safely. Ideally, there should be sufficient space for storing and manoeuvring tandems, recumbents and bike trailers too. In some situations where the access to buses, trains, ferries is not on ground level, the loading and unloading of bicycles is made easier by providing ramps.

Airlines are often an exception to the above because of the standard way that larger luggage is transported and stored during the flight.

- **Bicycle parking at stations and terminals:** In larger interchanges cycles can be stored and accessed at guarded stations with management or with automated access systems. In smaller stations and terminals bicycle lockers or racks protected from the weather and monitored by CCTV should be provided. Bicycle parking should be located not far from the main entrance, as close as possible to the main flow of traffic. The number of spaces provided should reflect local circumstances, which should be regularly monitored.
- **Bike-sharing systems:** For customers not intending to travel with their own bicycle, bicycles can be rented from bike-sharing systems or bike rental firms located in or close to passenger buildings. If the company is not rolling out its own bike-sharing system, integrated ticketing with local bike-sharing providers should ensure door-to-door seamless transport.
- **Ongoing monitoring and communication with user groups:** Monitoring and evaluating the use of the types of measures set out in this manual will enable them to be adjusted to reflect the local circumstances and ultimately, encourage more multi-modal trips while minimising any disruption to other users. Regular communication with organisations representing cyclists (e.g. ECF's Members, National EuroVelo Coordination Centres and Coordinators) can ensure that the service meets their requirements and can identify measures to increase the number of passengers combining modes



Further to the general recommendations, there are some additional comments and recommendations specific to this mode.

- Several studies have shown that compared to average tourists, cycle tourists are much more likely to travel to/from their destination by train. This is partly due to the fact that cycle tourists often intend to cycle between two different locations.
- Evidence from the Netherlands also suggests that commuters can be encouraged to combine these modes too – over 40% of Dutch rail customers travel to the station by bike.
- **The additional recommendations are:**
 - **Ensure that there is suitable infrastructure in place within station buildings to enable users to ascend and descend floors in order to access/exit the relevant platform to be done with a cycle. The preference is usually large elevators but ramps, bicycle escalators etc. may also be used.**
 - **Retain and ideally expand Europe's night train services with cycle carriage. Due to cyclists' preference for travelling by train, night trains are particularly valued by cycle tourists wanting to travel longer distances to reach their destinations.**



Further to the general recommendations, there are some additional comments and recommendations specific to this mode.

- The growth in long distance and international coach services in recent years has positively influenced the European cycle tourism market particularly in those areas poorly serviced by the railway network.
- Bus services offer the advantage of typically being closely integrated with cycle routes (e.g. they often share the same infrastructure: public roads).
- **The additional recommendations are:**
 - **Wider use of external bus bike racks and, where there is demand, trailers. These have the advantage of cycles not taking up the limited space inside the vehicles and also allow them to be stored without being dismantled. For a variety of reasons, in Europe bus bike racks tend to be installed at the rear of buses and there are a number of suppliers that provide different models, usually with both ready-made and bespoke options.**



Ferries and ports and aeroplanes and airports

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Further to the general recommendations, there are some additional comments and recommendations specific to these modes.

Ferries and ports

- Sea and river ferries can provide important connections for accessing certain cycling routes and indeed in some cases they form an essential component of the route itself.
- **The additional recommendations are:**
 - **Provide clear and safe access points for entering and exiting ferries.**
 - **Make sure that bicycles can be safely parked during the voyage taking into account movements caused by waves. Particularly for longer journeys, the bike parking area should be monitored (e.g. with cameras) and/or provided with bike lockers.**

Aeroplanes and airports

- Most airlines offer the possibility to transport bicycles but the terms and conditions do vary. In nearly all cases the bike will need to be dismantled and stored in a box or bag.
- **The additional recommendations are:**
 - **Clear information about how to prepare the bike for the particular airline.**
 - **Dedicated area, including tools, for dismantling/reassembling bicycles and facilities for transporting the bikes (e.g. free bike box rental).**
 - **More strategically: a basic standard for cycle packaging and cycle handling agreed with all carriers and with all ground handling service staff / contractors.**

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