

# CITY OF BICYCLES

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Ferrara is the Italian city of bicycles where use of this means of transport is among the highest in Europe: in 1991 the percentage use was 30.7 against 30% in Copenhagen and 27.8% in Holland. In 2000 a survey carried out by DataBank on a representative sample confirmed that 30.9% of Ferrara's inhabitants use bicycles. (Data refers to total number of journeys).

The awareness of not only being the Italian city with the greatest number of cyclists but of occupying a position at European levels led to comparison with similar cities and to the exchange of information for improving the quality of cycling mobility. Of particular significance is the membership of the European network of *Cities for Cyclists* that currently links 30 cities from 14 nations.

In 1999 the DG XI European Commission published the volume "Cities for Bicycles, cities for the future" in which Ferrara is quoted as an example to follow. Ferrara is currently included in the SAVE II-IN TANDEM Cycling Proposal programme for the promotion of the optimum energy use in individual transport, conducted by the WHO (WHO-Centre for Urban Health) and in the BYPAD project co-ordinated by the ECF for evaluating the policies adopted in different European cities for promoting the use of bicycles.

In 2000 the Ministry of the Environment gave an award to the city of Ferrara for its promotion of the use of the bicycle in town through the setting up of the Bike Office for Sustainable Mobility. Upon the recommendation of the Ministry of the Environment Ferrara was included as a practical example of sustainable mobility in the guidelines drawn up by the UNECE (UN agency for the environment) in view of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Kiev in 2003 for the its promotion of bicycle use.

Within the Urban Traffic Plan an operative and planning instrument for the improvement of the conditions of cycling mobility, Bici Plan, has been included. In Bici Plan the historical centre has been considered as a part of the city that favours cycling, while for the outskirts of the town separate radial cycle tracks (7 in the planning stage, 2 already completed) that allow cyclists to reach the outlying areas have been thought out.

The problem of the accident rate has obviously been the most serious we have had to face up to and in order to reduce the risks we have decided to operate upon criteria of traffic-calming and separation. The historical centre is surrounded by a city wall, on the outside of which a cycling ring road has been constructed. Work on raising the road level for vehicles passing through the gaps in the wall is in progress, which means continuity of the cycling route and at the same time a slowing down of the traffic flow.

The primary objective is making the points of conflict, identified in the urban Traffic Plan, safe.