



EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENT
AND HEALTH PROCESS



Key takeaway messages

from the Eighth Bonn Dialogue
on Environment and Health



Let's get moving!

Advancing safe active mobility for a
healthier and more sustainable future

THE PEP

Transport, Health
and Environment
Pan-European Programme



Background and objectives



The WHO European Centre for Environment and Health, in partnership with the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), convened ministers, deputy ministers, state secretaries, European Commission representatives and high-level stakeholders from cities, as well as representatives of nongovernmental organizations and youth activists to discuss the urgent need for proactive implementation actions to integrate active mobility – walking and cycling – into transport policies, spatial planning and urban design, and health and climate strategies.

For more information about the objectives of the 8th Bonn Dialogue, please click [here](#).

Programme overview

Opened by Robb Butler, Director of the Division of Communicable Diseases, Environment and Health at WHO/Europe, and Leonore Gewessler, Austria's Federal Minister for Climate Action, the Dialogue attracted nearly 200 participants from national and local governments, the European Environment and Health Task Force and various advocacy groups promoting safe active mobility. The Bonn Dialogue was moderated by Robert Thaler, senior sustainable active mobility advisor.



Photo: Leonore Gewessler, Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austria at the opening of the Bonn Dialogue

In the first ministerial panel session, the Secretary of State for Mobility from Portugal; the State Secretary for Active Hungary; the Deputy Minister of Transport and Communication of Lithuania; the Head of the Active Mobility Department, Austrian Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology; and the Director General for Mobility and Transport of the European Commission shared insights on effective national and European Union policies for promoting active mobility, discussing challenges and best practices. The second panel session focused on reshaping cities and regions to mainstream safe active mobility, featuring insights from senior stakeholders from Bremen, Brussels/Schaerbeek, Gdansk, the Caucasus Cycling Network, the European Cyclists' Federation and the WALK21 Foundation.

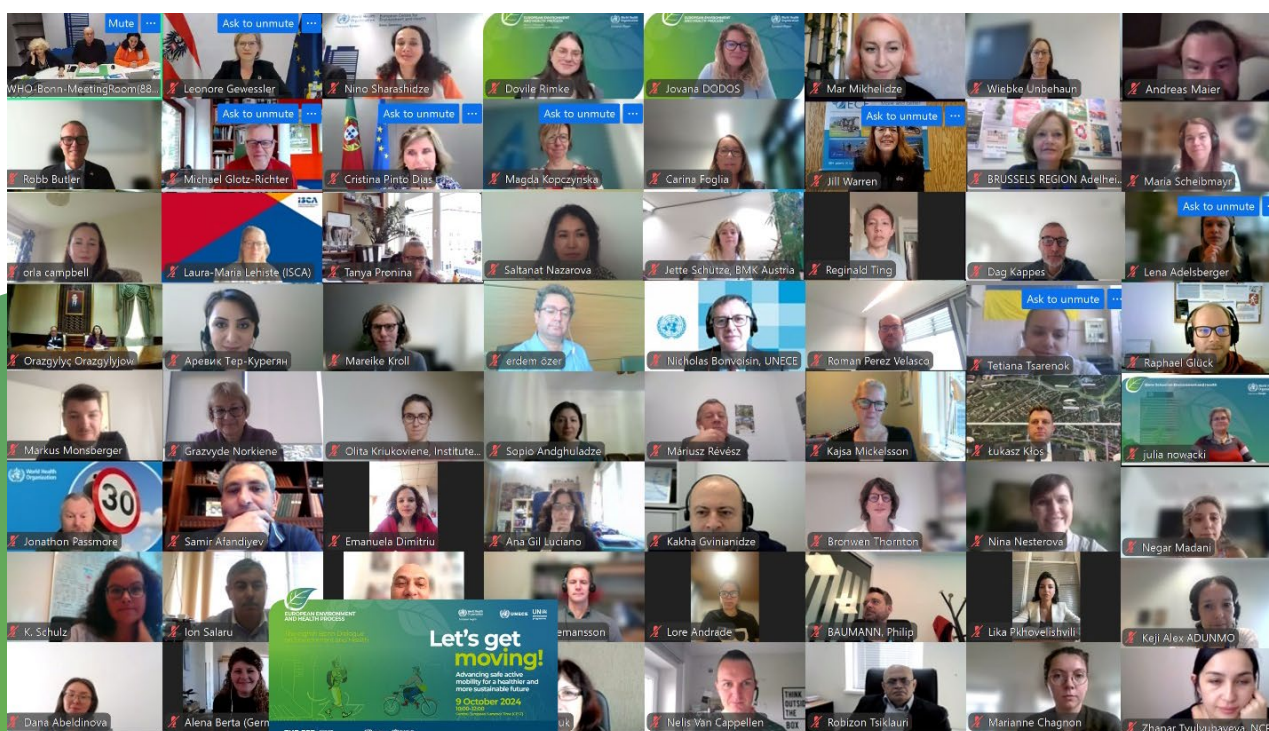


Photo: Bringing ideas together: Bonn Dialogue participants

Speakers



Francesca Racioppi

Head of Office at the WHO ECEH



Robb Butler

Director, Division of Communicable Diseases, Environment and Health, WHO Regional Office for Europe



Leonore Gewessler

Federal Minister for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, Austria



Robert Thaler

Senior Sustainable Active Mobility Advisor



Panel discussion 1: European and national policies to boost safe active mobility



Cristina Pinto Dias

Secretary of State for Mobility,
Portugal



Máriusz Révész

Prime Minister's Office/
State Secretary responsible
for Active Hungary



Agnė Vaiciukevičiūtė

Deputy Minister of Transport and
Communications, Lithuania



Magda Kopczyńska

Director-General for Mobility and
Transport, European Commission



Wiebke Unbehaun

Head of Division Active Mobility
and Mobility Management

Federal Ministry Republic
of Austria Climate Action,
Environment, Energy, Mobility,
Innovation and Technology

Panel discussion 2: Reshaping cities and regions to mainstream safe active mobility



Adelheid Byttebier

Vice-Mayor on Mobility and
Education in Schaarbeek,
Brussels-Capital Region, Belgium



Łukasz Kłos

Director of Municipal Transport
Services, Gdansk, Poland



Michael Glotz-Richter

Member of European Commission
Expert Group on Urban Mobility,
Bremen, Germany



Mar Mikhelidze

Co-founder of Caucasus Cycling
Network and the Bicycle Mayor of
Tbilisi



Jill Warren

CEO, European Cyclists' Federation



Bronwen Thornton

CEO, WALK21 Foundation

Let's get moving!



The event launched the film “**Let’s get moving! 100 reasons to walk and cycle more**”, aimed at inspiring communities to embrace active mobility.

Catch a glimpse of the film by following these links:
[English](#), [French](#), [German](#) and [Russian](#).



For more information, check out the “**#LetsGetMoving! 100 reasons to walk and cycle more**” campaign page [here](#).



Key takeaway messages for advancing safe active mobility for a healthier and more sustainable future

The Bonn Dialogue concluded with the following key takeaway messages for policy-makers and stakeholders to intensify and further advance promotion of active mobility in the WHO European Region and accelerate the implementation of agreements, strategies and plans for cycling and walking:

- 1. Enhancing and sustaining political support for active mobility, also against political headwinds.** Significant progress has been made in adopting strategic agreements to promote active mobility, particularly cycling. Several countries and cities have established national and urban strategies, and European master plans and declarations have been adopted to promote cycling and also walking. It is now key to focus on implementing these agreements and encouraging governments, organizations and city planners to mainstream active mobility in urban planning and policy-making. It is important to reach out to all policy-makers, stakeholders and citizens, providing fact-based information to enable clear and consistent communication of the broad benefits of active mobility.
- 2. Broadening political focus from cycling to walking and advancing implementation.** There is a need to expand political attention beyond cycling to include walking by advancing comprehensive strategies and implementation plans for active mobility. This requires defining clear objectives and actions, building supportive frameworks with adequate financial and human resources, fostering institutional coordination and creating strong partnerships.



Fig. 1. Word cloud of participant insights: top 3 actions for advancing active mobility at national and Regional levels

- 3. Building European and national programmes for safe and green infrastructure networks for walking and cycling.** Establishing sustainable, long-term infrastructure funding programmes at both national and Regional levels is essential to co-finance and support cities in building safe infrastructure networks for cycling and walking. National programmes and European Union co-funding are vital to replace the current patchwork of active mobility with a safe walking and cycling infrastructure across the Region. Adequate funding is also crucial for creating, upgrading and maintaining these networks to ensure access to key locations and promote sustainability. European Region and international financial institutions should also prioritize funding investments in safe infrastructure networks for active mobility within their portfolio.
- 4. Improving safety to promote active mobility.** Improving safety and liveability in our cities requires streets and spaces that encourage cycling, walking, resting and driving safely. Enhancing traffic safety is critical for promoting active mobility. Some of the key measures include: traffic calming, establishing a 30 km/h urban speed limit, and safe crossings with sufficient crossing time to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.
- 5. Enhancing innovative spatial and mobility planning.** Innovative spatial and mobility planning prioritizes pedestrians and cyclists. It focuses on creating active mobility networks through the 15-minute city approach, which ensures that all services needed – such as those provided in workplaces, shops, parks and schools – are located within a 15-minute walk or cycle. This approach includes ensuring access to essential services, promoting sustainable urban development and counteracting urban sprawl. Additionally, mobility management in communities, companies, schools and institutions has to promote and incentivize walking and cycling.
- 6. Reclaiming urban space.** Reallocating urban public spaces is vital for fostering active mobility. Efforts must focus on promoting citywide pedestrianization – increasing pedestrian zones, creating green and cool streets with drinking-water facilities and broad sidewalks. Other measures include implementing low-emission zones and restrictions for through traffic.

Fig. 2. Word cloud of participant insights: top 3 actions to make cycling and walking safer and more appealing in cities

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- 7. Ensuring safe and easy access to public transport for pedestrians and cyclists.** Public transport, cycling and walking are the perfect sustainable mobility combination. Transport and infrastructure planning must seamlessly combine walking and cycling networks with public transport to provide optimal connectivity. This integration includes easy and barrier-free access to stations and stops without any detours and barriers, along with clear information systems for easy integrated travel. Combined bicycle and public transport travel must be improved across the European Region, with easily accessible and safe Bike&Ride facilities at every station, attractive bike-sharing systems connected to railways and bus routes, as well as better equipped trains and busses that accommodate bicycles. To reduce car use, priority should be given to a mix of “push” and “pull” measures, such as reorganizing parking (e.g. by reducing on-street parking spaces and applying parking fees), incentivizing car-sharing systems and integrating urban planning with the provision of high quality public transport and safe infrastructure for active mobility, to reduce car dependency.
 - 8. Embedding promotion of active mobility in legislation, planning guidelines and design standards.** Since pedestrians and cyclists are the most vulnerable road users their needs and their promotion must be properly anchored in the national road traffic codes and traffic regulations, infrastructure directives, design standards and traffic planning guidelines. Promotion of active mobility, safe walkability and easy accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists should also be enshrined in spatial planning legislation, as well as infrastructure building and planning regulations. Moreover, active mobility promotion should be embedded and upgraded in European Region legislation and standards. The Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT), designed to estimate the health and economic benefits of increased walking and cycling, can support better informed infrastructure and transport planning.
 - 9. Building capacity for active mobility.** Capacity-building initiatives, including training programmes for policy-makers, practitioners and students, must be implemented to enhance understanding of active mobility. Such initiatives should also include establishing professorships, research programmes and university curricula for active mobility, and integrating active mobility education into driver’s licence training, as well as cycling training for children and the elderly. Moreover, current data reporting on walking and cycling must be improved significantly; modal split data currently underestimate active mobility, particularly the share of walking.

- 10. Stimulating and strengthening the positive social and economic effects of walking and cycling.** Walking and cycling provide enormous economic benefits in various economic sectors, including manufacturing, retail, tourism, hospitality and leisure, while also improving health and environmental quality. Promoting the positive social and economic benefits of walking and cycling supports the local economy, encourages cycling and hiking tourism, and fosters inclusive mobility. Improved infrastructure, such as well-maintained paths and bike lanes, makes walking and cycling safer and more attractive, reducing barriers for people of all ages and abilities and encouraging more equitable, widespread mobility options.
- 11. Strengthening health in cross-sectoral cooperation, projects and partnerships.** Building and strengthening partnerships among countries, cities and civil society is key to promoting active mobility. This involves cross-sectoral cooperation, sharing of experiences, and focussing on concrete visible actions and results for implementation projects. The perspectives of health-care experts and providers must be taken into account in mobility planning, alongside city planners and mobility experts. Additionally, other stakeholders should be engaged in these discussions to promote active mobility more effectively, including educational institutions and academia, companies, tourism organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens – particularly children, youth and the elderly.
- 12. Broadening and improving communication of benefits.** Communication is a key factor in raising awareness among stakeholders and citizens to foster the transformation and acceptance of active mobility. Efforts should focus on effectively communicating and advocating the many individual health benefits as well as the environmental, social and economic advantages of active mobility. Efforts should include raising public awareness, in particular regarding the need for more physically active healthy lifestyles, and launching social media campaigns that feature authentic testimonials from influencers promoting active mobility, to break down prejudices and counteract false narratives.

For more about the Bonn Dialogues on Environment and Health, click [here](https://www.who.int/europe/teams/who-european-centre-for-environment-and-health-(bonn-germany)/bonn-dialogues-on-environment-and-health).



[www.who.int/europe/teams/who-european-centre-for-environment-and-health-\(bonn-germany\)/bonn-dialogues-on-environment-and-health](https://www.who.int/europe/teams/who-european-centre-for-environment-and-health-(bonn-germany)/bonn-dialogues-on-environment-and-health)