

**CYCLOVIZE2030, SAFER CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE
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ABSTRACT

The Czech Republic comes up with an ambitious project CYKLOVIZE2030 which aims to build a comprehensive and safe transport network for cyclists throughout the whole country. This network will: 1) take into account the travel needs of residents and provide travel space for active mobility modes; 2) provide connections to public transport stops, thus it will support multimodal transport system; 3) ensure the creation of a dedicated safe transport space in urbanized directions from metropolitan areas to regional centers; 4) take into account international long-distance cycle routes (with the aim to adjust the long-distance network so as it meets transport needs of local citizens as much as possible). For the period 2021-2030, approximately EUR 660 million have been allocated for a large-scale communication campaign and an online map application.

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In recent years, [cycling has been boosting](#) not only in the Czech Republic, but throughout Europe. Repeated lockdowns during covid pandemic and related measures encouraged people to use bicycles more often in both urban and non-urban areas. More cyclists on bicycles and too many cars on roads bring the issue of road safety on the agenda. The boom in cycling has thus brought to mind some of the shortcomings in cycling infrastructure that need to be addressed in the future.

The transport network for cyclists is incoherent, which results in dangerous situations for the users, such as a cycle route leading to a busy road or a cycle path suddenly ending. That is why the Czech Republic has come up with CYKLOVIZE 2030, aiming to deliver serviceability by bike throughout the Czech territory, i.e. to link every municipality with the Czech cycling network. This goal follows the government's [Urban and Active Mobility Concept for 2021–2030](#) which was adopted in January 2021 and is beneficial to both cyclists and drivers. More cycle paths bring less stress on overcrowded roads which in many sections are already at the limit of their capacity.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

1 –the construction of cycle paths is often the responsibility of small municipalities with limited budgets

In general, it is the responsibility of municipalities to deliver bicycle infrastructure, whether it is Prague with a population of 1 million, or a municipality with 111 inhabitants. To better understand the problem, comparing the Czech Republic with the Netherlands might help - although countries of a similar size, there are just over 350 municipalities in the Netherlands, while 6,200 in the Czech Republic. What does the figure have to do with promoting cycling?

In general, the larger the municipality, the greater the desire to promote cycling. Here, financial support from respective regions could bring solution to the problem.



Figure 1 - The village of Skrchov with its 111 inhabitants has to build a cycle path, the cost of which is higher than the annual budget of the municipality... Photo: our own

2 - segments where it is not possible to obtain subsidies from EU funds

Providing that the Czech Republic aims to build a safe transport network for cyclists, the experience shows the most advantageous way to do it: using traditional rural, forest and dirt roads owned by municipalities. However, there is a hindrance to this approach - the existing subsidy programmes can only be used for the construction of cycle paths. Unfortunately, once it is a cycle path, there is no access allowed for agricultural and forestry machinery which usually use both forest and dirt roads. Therefore, only regional subsidy programmes or municipal funds can be used to optimise and repair such segments. Here, adapting national subsidy programmes could bring solution to the problem.



3 - incorrect system setting of financial support for cycling transport

The construction of large linear transport and railway structures often creates a major barrier to the permeability of the environment. These barriers can only be overcome with additional measures at great and additional cost.



Figure 3 - Example of a barrier on a cycle route. Photo: Ing. Radka Žáková, Plzeňsko na kole

It is common practice in many countries for the road authority to build parallel cycle paths along roads at its own expense. In the Czech Republic, however, there is no such measure or regulation.

Moreover, if a municipality wants to build a cycle path along a watercourse, it must pay rent to the river basin authority, which is a state organisation too. An absurd requirement, considering that the state pays the state with the argument that as a good manager it must do so. As a result, some municipalities prefer not to build anything for cyclists. In other countries, the basin authority takes cyclists directly into account, but not in the Czech Republic.

All three examples require a systemic solution at national level.

3. COORDINATION AND COOPERATION - KEYS TO SUCCESS

There's the National Coordination Commission for the Promotion of Cycling in the Czech Republic with key organisations participating in the promotion of cycling as members. The Czech Ministry of Transport is the main coordinator of the Commission. The Commission has a national cycle coordinator whose main task is to link partners at national, regional and

local levels; the coordinator works outsourced under the umbrella of the Partnership for Urban Mobility. In addition, there are two cycling working groups, one consists of representatives of the local cycle coordinators and is led by the Partnership for Urban Mobility, and the other of representatives of 14 regional cycle coordinators. Both working groups bring suggestions to the National Coordination Commission to be addressed at the level of the Ministry of Transport.



Figure 4 - Establishment of a working group of regional cycle coordinators at the national cycle conference (12/2022).
Photo: our own

The following three areas have been emphasised:

- 1) **Focus on urban mobility.** If European funds are focused on urban areas, that logically means cities and their surroundings take the first attention. The aim is to motivate and educate cities to have their own cycle coordinators to promote cycling measures within the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan.
- 2) **Focus on raising awareness.** Several media brands are being developed, incl. CYKLOVIZE2030 which aims to present a plan to deliver safe cycling infrastructure by 2030, as well as to present cycling as an attractive means of transport in the Czech Republic; we deliberately do not talk about cycle tourism or leisure cycling, which have already gained a strong position in the country. Good practice examples will be presented through the CityChangers* initiative.
- 3) **Focus on developing a safe transport network for cyclists.** The Czech Republic is probably the only country to use this term, which means for cyclists to reach any destination safely by bike, or not to be pushed to use the road network where the number of cars has recently increased significantly. Three tools are used to achieve this goal: legislative, financial and organisational ones. The legislative area is to focus, among other things, on eliminating the problems described in the previous

* <https://www.citychangers.eu/>

paragraphs. Financing is not such a problem in the Czech Republic. We usually have sufficient funds allocated for the development of cycling infrastructure. The focus will therefore be on delivering sections where it is not allowed to build cycle paths yet.

4. PRINCIPLES OF IMPLEMENTING A SAFE TRANSPORT NETWORK FOR CYCLISTS

The Cycling Promotion Commission coordinates the implementation of a **safe transport network for cyclists at three levels**:

- 1) **At the level of cities and adjacent municipalities.** The working group of representatives of the local cycle coordinators helps with implementation here. They focus on addressing cycling not only in urban, but also in non-urban areas, where links to the nearest villages should be provided. Of course, cycling should be strongly anchored in the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.



Figure 5 - Map of the Czech Republic with urban areas highlighted. Source of the map: Ministry of the Environment CR

- 2) **At regional level.** This is where the working group of regional cycle coordinators plays a key role; however, it is necessary to explain to foreign partners what role the region plays in promoting cycling. In discussions with foreign experts, we have found that in some countries the state is assumed to take over the guarantee for the construction of some sections, especially in the corridor of long-distance cycle routes. However, this situation will not happen in the Czech Republic, where municipalities are responsible for the construction of cycle paths! Although, they sometimes do not care, as mentioned above. This is where another local authority comes into play, which is the region. There are 14 regions in the Czech Republic, each with its own Regional Cycling Strategy to address the regional cycling network and offer coordination, methodological and financial assistance in the implementation of problematic sections. In addition, there's a regional cycle coordinator in every region to help get funds for

municipalities with the most limited budgets. In some cases, it even steps in as an investor in the construction of cycling infrastructure on its backbone network of national and regional routes.

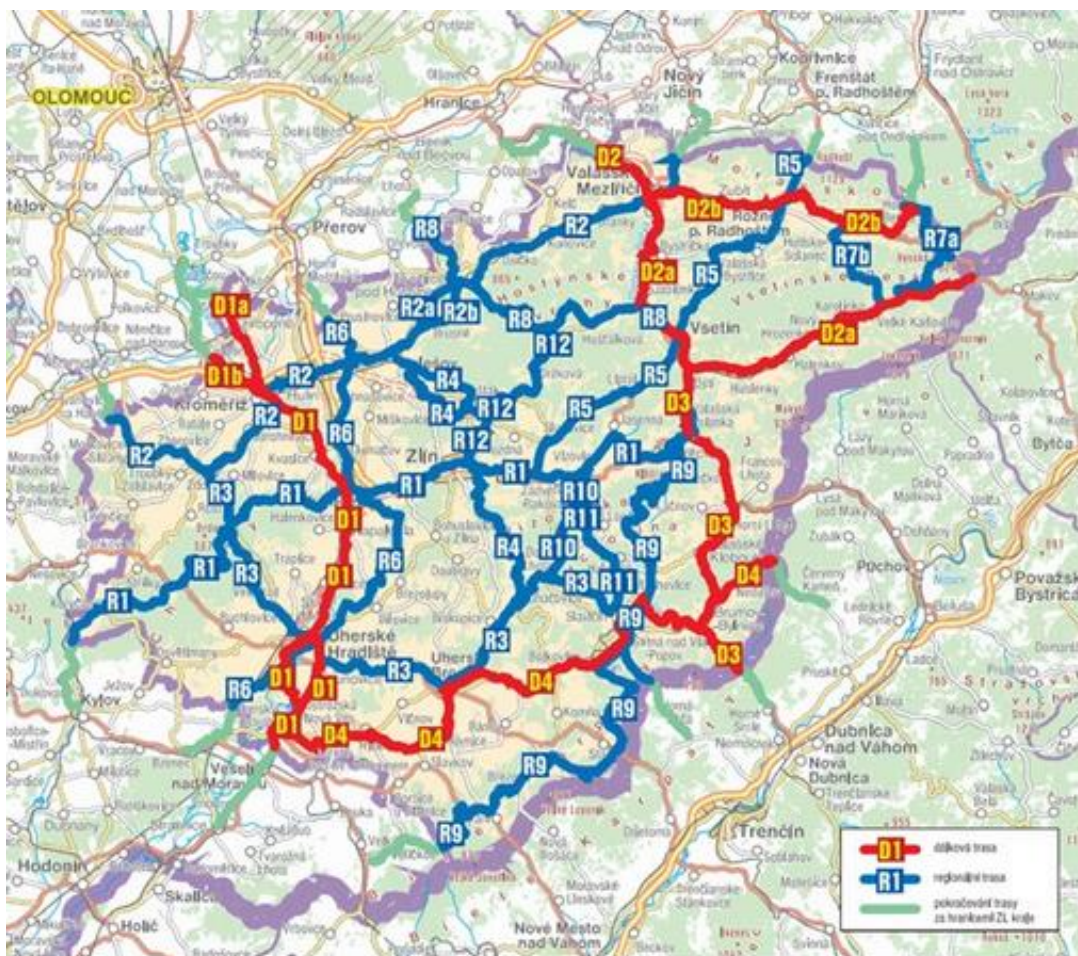


Figure 6 - Example of the proposed network of national (red) and regional (blue) routes in the Zlín Region. Source of the map: www.cyklostavby.cz

3) **At the national level.** The first draft of the national backbone cycling network dates back to 1997, updated in 2013 and 2022, based on data and inputs from the regions. However, it should be stressed again that the national authorities do not build cycle paths on this network, but offer coordination, methodological and financial assistance in the implementation of problematic sections. As far as finances are concerned, European funds for cycle paths have already been allocated for the period 2023-2027, or municipalities and regions can continue to draw on the State Fund for Transport Infrastructure. As mentioned above, some of the sections on the network are not allowed to be transferred in cycle tracks (see the description of the Problem 3). Currently, negotiations are underway between the Ministry of Transport and the regions to receive special subsidies for these sections, and to address the possibility of systematically removing barriers in negotiations with forest and dirt road managers or owners.

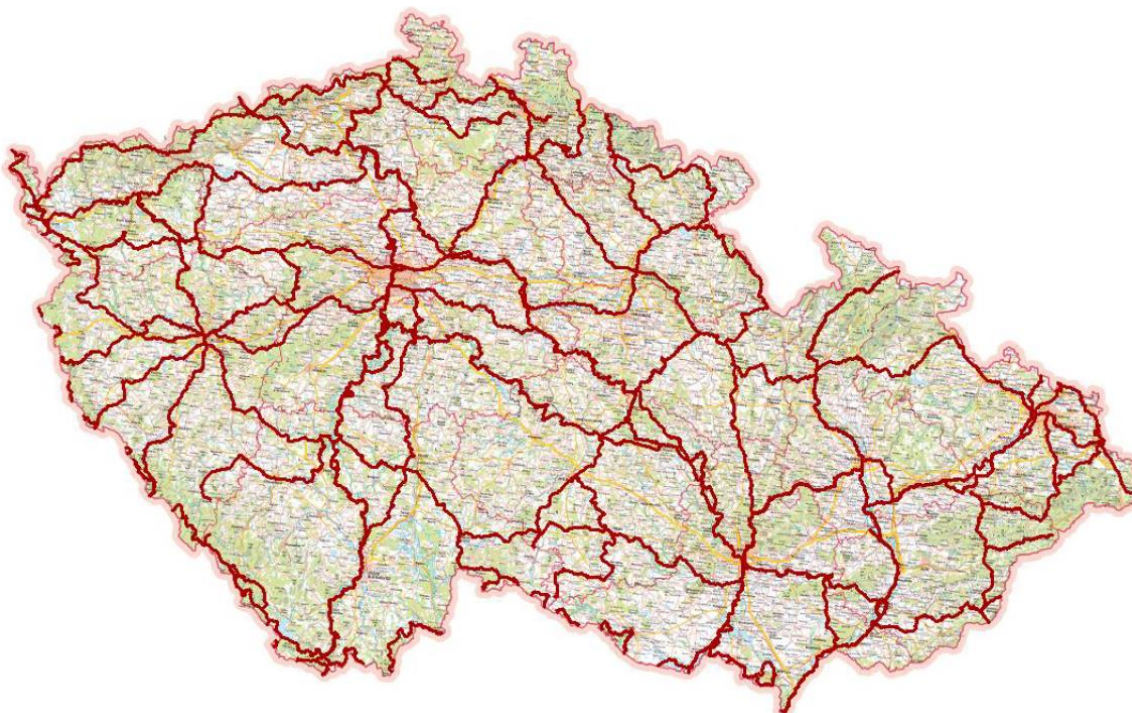


Figure 6 - long-distance backbone cycling network in the Czech Republic (01/2023. Source of the map: www.cyklostavby.cz

5. CONCLUSION

Aby se aktivní mobilita mohla stát významnou součástí přepravní práce v České republice a mohlo docházet k nárůstu jejího podílu na celkové přepravní práci, je zapotřebí vytvořit pro tento způsob dopravy odpovídající dopravní síť, která svým uživatelům poskytne bezpečný dopravní prostor. Není tedy žádoucí dále rozdělovat cyklostezky (alternativní dopravní prostor) na dopravní a turistické podle motivace uživatelů. Žádoucí naopak je systém platný pro silnice pro motorová vozidla, kde tento faktor není zohledňován a důležitým faktorem je poptávka po dopravním prostoru. Již není tedy podstatné, zda motivací dopravních potřeb uživatelů je turistika či jejich každodenní dopravní obsluha.

Dobrá zpráva na závěr. CYKLOVIZE2030 je podporována také v rámci programu Fondu zábrany škod České kanceláře pojistitelů*, ze kterého jsou podporovány projekty, jež mají za cíl zvýšení bezpečnosti na silnicích.

To ensure that the transport modal share of active mobility is more significant and increasing in the Czech Republic, the development of a safe transport network is necessary, which will provide a safe transport space for all users. It is therefore not desirable to keep dividing cycle paths (alternative transport space) according to the motivation of users into transport and tourist ones. On the contrary, the system applicable to motor vehicle roads is what should be preferred, where the important factor is the demand for transport space, and it is not relevant whether the motivation for users' transport needs tourism is, or their daily transport needs.

Good news in conclusion. CYKLOVIZE2030 is also supported by the Czech Insurance Office's Damage Prevention Fund programme, which supports projects aimed at improving road safety.

* <https://www.fondzabranyskod.cz/>

REFERENCES

1. The paper was created as a report on the implementation of the government Urban and Active Mobility Concept for 2021 – 2023*
2. Czech website for CYKLOVIZE2030: <https://www.stavbycyklo.cz/>

* <https://en.dobramesta.cz/strategy>