

Gasping for air in Madrid and Barcelona? – Air pollution in Spanish cities hits the world news

Velo-city Conference and the Declaration of Seville will highlight that the bicycle is a major solution to reduce motorized traffic and therefore air contamination

Seville, February 14, 2011 – Last week the air pollution in Madrid and Barcelona reached alarming levels, exceeding limits set by European legislation. In Seville, however, the winds of change have blown in a breath of fresh air.

A statement issued by the municipal office for Environment in Seville, underlines that Seville enjoys some of the cleanest air in Spain.

Seville has not been on alert for high levels of contamination for one single day in the year 2010. What's more last week's alarming air pollution levels did not faze Seville.

One wonders why? Could it be the 60,000 trips a day that Seville's cyclists contribute to the daily reduction of cars? Especially, when one considers that more than 30% of these 'new' cyclists actually made the switch from their car to a bike?



This year's edition of Velo-city shows how a change in a city's transport model is possible when alternatives to motorized traffic are fostered. Local experiences are a good example for spreading such practices nationwide.



Seville's success story is a prime example that clearly proves the need for central governments to adopt and stimulate successful local policies that emphasize active citizen participation. Last week, during the press conference of the Executive Committee of Velo-city 2011 Antonio Rodrigo Torrijos, Deputy Mayor of Seville, and Manfred Neun, President of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) announced the latest information with regard to the event's program and the further use of its results.

Antonio Rodrigo Torrijos, Deputy Mayor of Seville comments: „We are off to a great start. The conference is just four weeks away and already 730 participants have registered. Not only will Seville benefit directly from the event (estimates range from 1,5 to 2 million Euros); Seville will also be put on the map as we are sure that every visitor will enjoy this beautiful, cycle friendly city that will serve as the centre of the world debate on cycling as a means of urban transport.”

Manfred Neun emphasizes the high quality of the presentation and the revamped conference format: "The decision to hold Velo-city 2011 in Seville was magnificent; Seville's accomplishments serve as a perfect backdrop to the many new topics, such as the link between science and cycling." Scientists from the Seville Hispalense University and the Pablo de Olavide University will for the first time, open a fresh debate on the Velo-city conference floor. The Velo-city 2011 conference in Seville represents as a milestone of change between last year's conference in Copenhagen and the 2012 edition in Vancouver.

The conference conclusions will focus on all the benefits of cycling for citizens and the society and will be captured in the 'Declaration of Seville'. This final document will be included in the agenda for the next world summit of Ministers of Transport hosted by the International Transport Forum (ITF) in Leipzig in May 2011. Representatives of more than 50 countries will meet in Leipzig to discuss the theme "Transport for Society". A wide range of topics is on the agenda for this meeting such as energy efficiency, changing passenger transport habits, the reduction of CO2 emissions, to mention just a few.

For the first time in the history of the International Transport Forum (ITF), the participants will not only focus on the technical aspects of transport policies; the significant impact that the social aspects of transportation policies may have on the overall outcome will be considered as well.

The presentation of the Declaration of Seville during the International Transport Forum (ITF) will clearly show global policy-makers how the city of Seville has been transformed as a result of the unwavering local decision to promote cycling as a means of urban transportation. The city of Seville truly is a showcase; it shows policy makers how a sound decision making process, followed by resolute action, will ultimately lead to astounding success.

680 words, 4223 characters

For more images on air pollution in Spain and information on the International Transport Forum please go to:

<http://www.rtve.es/mediateca/fotos/20110208/contaminacion-hace-irrespirable-madrid-barcelona/67295.shtml>

<http://www.internationaltransportforum.org/2011/Index.html>

About Velo-city

The Velo-city conference series is the premier international cycling planning conference series in the world, organized by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and select host cities.

Velo-city conferences serve as a global communications and information platform and target to influence decision makers, and improve the planning and provision of infrastructure for the daily use of the bicycle in an urban environment.

The conferences traditionally involve experts, representatives of associations, institutions, policy-makers and social agents, universities and companies.

More information www.ecf.com

Velo-city 2011 Seville – The Cycle of Life

The city of Seville, which was just awarded a UN-Habitat Best Practice Award, has been chosen to host the 2011 edition of Velo-city as a result of its successful establishment of a complete system of cycling infrastructures.

Velo-city 2011 expects to welcome more than 1,000 visitors from all over the world who – during the three-day conference – will highlight cycling as a means of urban sustainable transport. The conference will look into a breadth of subjects on Health, Education, Efficiency of public investment, Economic impact and employment.

Out of the more than 250 submissions that were received from 27 countries, 120 entries will be selected, to be presented and discussed in plenary and sub-plenary sessions, workshops and round table sessions. An exhibition related to urban cycling will supplement and compliment the conference.

The conference slogan, "The Cycle of Life", refers to the bicycle as a part of everyday life and a source of health for people of any age, contributing to more inhabitable cities and urban regions.

This year's Velo-city Conference will take place in Seville from March 23–25, 2011.

The official languages during the conference will be Spanish and English.

For more information and registration: www.velo-city2011.com

Media registration is open until March 4th, 2011.

For a selection of images and logos go to

http://www.velo-city2011.com/eng/informacion_interes.php or

<http://sevillacyclechic.blogspot.com/>

Feel free to contact us for further information or images.

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