

INSPIRATION

Atmo France and the Club des villes et territoires cyclables join forces for a common article on the need to develop the use of the bicycle.

Signed jointly by Guy Bergé, Chairman of Atmo France, Catherine Hervieu, Chairwoman of Atmo Bourgogne-Franche-Comté and Vice-Chair of the Club des villes et territoires cyclables, and Pierre Serne, Chairman of the Club des villes et territoires cyclables, this article demonstrates that the use of the bicycle meets at one and the same time the challenges of public health, the fight against air pollution and climatic change.



« For breathable cities and other areas, what role does the bicycle have? »

During the lockdown period, the Certified Air Quality Monitoring Associations (AASQA) observed a significant improvement in the quality of the air in France directly linked to the drop in road traffic. The relaxation of lockdown has seen the return of road traffic and its harmful effects on the quality of the air which also plays an aggravating role in this pandemic. New challenges have therefore emerged: how to go from one place to another and abide by the physical distancing measures? How to draw upon the experience of the last few weeks in order to change our modes of travel in urban areas, especially as the studies show that motorists are the people most exposed to air pollution?

To meet these challenges, Atmo France, which groups together the AASQA, together with the Club des villes et territoires cyclables (CVTC) wish to promote, each in its area of competency, to the elected representatives, technicians and all the citizens, the co-benefits of active mobilities, when they can be practised, both in terms of health and the improvement in the quality of the air. In point of fact, the

positive relationship between active mobilities and the quality of the air is such that it is important to foster and develop the use of the bicycle in France.

A climate, public health and air quality challenge

The bicycle does not pollute! Every year air pollution causes 48,000 premature deaths in France. A cyclist takes part not only in preserving the quality of the air, but also in reducing speed and sound pollution and CO2 emissions. The cyclist also participates in the creation of a calmer living environment. The bicycle is good for your health! It offers the possibility of having regular physical activity and thus fighting a sedentary lifestyle and its harmful effects on your health. It exposes cyclists less to air pollution than motorists (who suffer twice or three times more the effects of pollution inside a car). In these times of health crisis linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the bicycle reduces the risk of contamination through the physical distancing it entails.

The bicycle is an efficient mode of transport! For journeys of less than 6 kilometres, the bicycle is quicker than the car. A cycle lane enables, over the same width of lane, the passage of a flow of traffic 3 times greater than that of a lane dedicated to cars (5000 bicycles an hour as against 1400 cars).

Let's pursue the dynamic in favour of the bicycle

Over these last few weeks, we have seen a big increase in cycling transition amenities. If these amenities are only temporary, making them permanent features ought to be looked into. Our urban, suburban and rural areas can accommodate more secure cycling routes and amenities to help make the bike become a fully-fledged means of transport!



About the Atmo France Federation

Atmo France is the federation of the national network of Certified Air Quality Monitoring Associations (AASQA) distributed over the whole of France (one per region). It runs the AASQA network by ensuring the coordination, pooling and optimization of the work of the associations and represents them at meetings with the national and European authorities by taking part in debates about how to improve the quality of the air and the atmosphere. Through its actions, Atmo France pursues an objective of general interest, that of contributing, alongside the other national players, to providing France with an efficient means of ensuring both the monitoring of the quality of the air and the support and follow-up of the actions designed to improve it. The network puts its expertise at the disposal of all the players concerned.

For more information: www.atmo-france.org



About the Club des Villes et des Territoires Cyclables

The Club des villes et territoires cyclables, created in 1989 by 10 pioneer cities, today groups together over 1500 local authorities: communes, conurbations, Departments, Regions, representing over 40 million inhabitants. A force for change, it is a major player in terms of the promotion of the use of the bicycle and active modes of transport and urban development policies. It takes part in all the major debates, in France and abroad, for better street sharing, for the development of calmed areas, for the safety of cyclists and pedestrians and to encourage sustainable mobility.

For more information: <http://www.villes-cyclables.org/>