

21st MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL
TRAFFIC SAFETY DATA AND ANALYSIS
GROUP (IRTAD)

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Bicycle Traffic Rules in OECD countries

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Conducting this research, NTUA is assisting the Greek Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport with the objective to:

- Update the Greek Road Code including rules to safely manage the steadily growing cycle traffic in Greece.



NTUA administrated this survey:

- In a form of a short questionnaire comprising 8 questions
- To gather information on rules and practices from other OECD countries.
- To experts originated from 15 different countries



Survey

- Countries participated:
 - Austria
 - Belgium
 - Czech Republic
 - Finland
 - France
 - Germany
 - Hungary
 - Ireland
 - Israel
 - Jamaica
 - Luxembourg
 - Netherlands
 - Poland
 - Slovenia
 - Switzerland



- Are cyclists allowed on the road?

Conditions	No of Countries
Allowed without any limitations	3
Allowed if rules are followed	3
Allowed only when there is no special cycle lane	8
Allowed only if traffic signs allow	1
Not allowed at all	0



Cyclists are not allowed on the road without any limitations

- Are cyclists allowed on the sidewalk?

Conditions	No of Countries
Allowed without any limitations	1
Allowed only for children younger than 8-10 years old	4
Allowed only when there is special cycle lane	2
Allowed only if traffic signs allow	3
Not allowed at all	5



If allowed, cyclists are strongly restricted for cycling on the sidewalk.

- Are cyclists allowed on pedestrian roads?

Conditions	No of Countries
Allowed without any limitations	1
Allowed only for children younger than 8-10 years old	1
Allowed only when there is special cycle lane	1
Allowed only if traffic signs allow	6
Not allowed at all	6



Generally not allowed unless there is a traffic sign.

- Are cyclists allowed on shared space areas?

Conditions	No of Countries
Allowed without any limitations	2
Allowed only if following the rules	3
Allowed only when there is special cycle lane	1
Allowed only if traffic signs allow	5
Not allowed at all	4

If allowed, cyclists are strongly restricted for cycling on shared space areas.



- Are cyclists allowed on buslanes?

Conditions	No of Countries
Allowed without any limitations	1
Allowed only if following the rules	1
Allowed only when there is special cycle lane	0
Allowed only if traffic signs allow	9
Not allowed at all	4

Mostly allowed if indicated by traffic signs.



- Minimum sidewalk width for mixed pedestrian cycle traffic

Conditions	No of Countries
No minimum specified	3
Minimum 2m	1
Minimum 2.5m	3
Minimum 3m	4
Not allowed on the sidewalk	4



Minimum width is either:

- 1) posed to at least 2.5m by most countries or
- 2) not specified at all.

- Minimum sidewalk width for segregated pedestrian cycle traffic

Conditions	No of Countries
No minimum specified	3
Minimum 2.5m	4
Minimum 3m	1
Minimum above 3.5m	2
Not allowed on the sidewalk	5



Minimum width is either:

- 1) posed to at least 3.5m by most countries or
- 2) not specified at all.

- other sidewalk standards and/or rules for mixed pedestrian cycle traffic

Conditions	No of Countries
Width depends on the traffic volume	2
No extra standards	13

Apart from minimum sidewalk width, most countries do not have extra standards and/or rules for mixed traffic.



- Is cycle traffic forbidden in motorways?

Conditions	No of Countries
Yes without any exception	14
No	1

Cycling in motorways is forbidden in almost every country.



- In what other road types is cycle traffic forbidden?

Conditions	No of Countries
Express Roads	5
Tunnels	2
Pedestrian Roads	3
Sidewalks	2
Wherever indicated by sign (No particular road type stated)	3



- What are the cycle traffic speed limits by road type (national, regional, local, etc.)?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	10
The same as for cars	5

There are no special speed limits by road type determined for cycles.



- What are the cycle traffic speed limits by road area (inside/outside urban areas)?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	9
The same as for cars	5
Inside = 40 Km/h Outside (with helmet/ without passenger) = 50Km/h	1

Almost all countries have not determined special speed limits by road type.



- What are the cycle traffic speed limits on the cycle lane?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	7
The same as for cars	5
30 Km/h	2
10 Km/h near cycle crossing	1

In most countries no rules apply regarding speed limits on the cycle lane.



Speed Limits

- What are the cycle traffic speed limits on the sidewalks and pedestrian roads?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	4
The same as for cars	1
20 Km/h	1
Maximum 10 Km/h (walking pace)	5
Forbidden	4

If not forbidden, 10 km/h is the speed limit usually applied to sidewalks and pedestrian roads.



Speed Limits

- What are the cycle traffic speed limits on shared space areas?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	7
The same as for cars	3
20 Km/h	4
Depending on the sign	1

In most countries no rules apply regarding speed limits on the cycle lane. If it does, the speed limit is usually 20 km/h.



- What are the cycle traffic speed limits for different cycle types?

Conditions	No of Countries
None	12
The same as for cars	1
25 Km/h	2

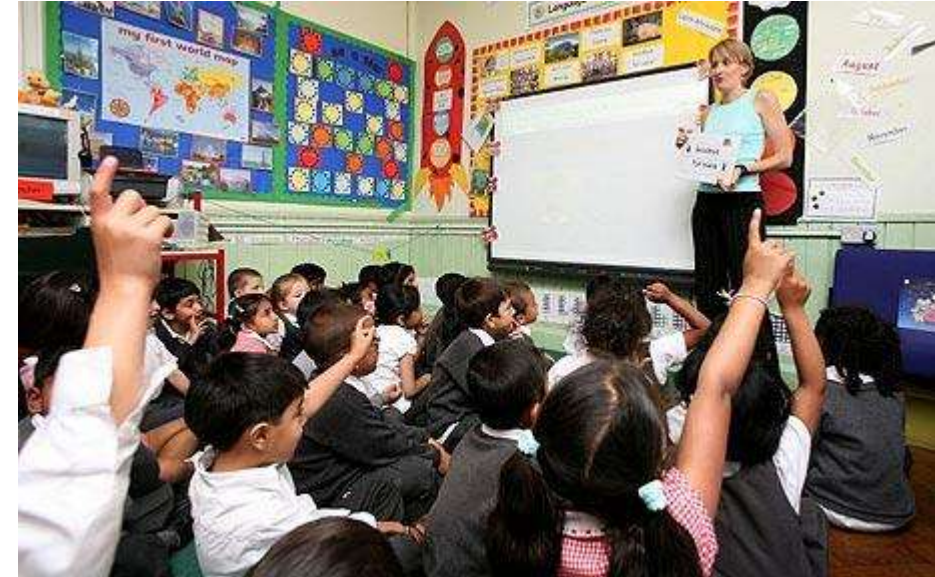
There are no special speed limits applied for different cycle types in the majority of the countries participated in the survey.



- how is knowledge of traffic rules ensured?

Conditions	No of Countries
Not ensured	6
Taught and officially tested at primary schools	8
Prosecution if failed to obey the law	1

Knowledge of traffic rules is usually not ensured.
Nevertheless, rules are taught and officially tested in most countries.



Age

- What is the minimum age a cyclist can travel on the road?

Conditions	No of Countries
No limitation	8
At least 8 years old	2
At least 10 years old	3
At least 12 years old	2



Half of the countries apply no limitation in the minimum age one can cycle and those who do put that limit to at least 12 years old.

- Up to what age an adult companion is compulsory?

Conditions	No of Countries
No limitation	8
At least 8 years old	1
At least 10 years old	5
At least 12 years old	1



Again here, half of the countries apply no limitation whereas the majority of the rest put an age limit of at least 10 years old.

- Is helmet a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No (but highly recommended)	11
Yes if cyclist is less than 12 years old	1
Yes if cyclist is less than 15 years old	1
Yes if cyclist is less than 18 years old	2

Helmet is not a compulsory equipment in all countries for adults and in most countries for everyone.



- Are reflecting clothes a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No (but highly recommended)	12
Only if pedals cannot be equipped with reflecting device	1
Yes outside urban area under bad visibility conditions	2



No, reflecting clothes are not considered compulsory for the majority of the countries.

- Are reflecting devices on the cycle a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	2
Yes	13

With specific requirements from most countries about reflectors on pedals, back and rear of the bicycle.



- Are lights a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	0
Only when weather conditions/light conditions require it	7
Yes (with no specific requirement)	3
Back and rear light mandatory	5



All countries consider lights a compulsory equipment.

- Is bicycle bell on the cycle a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	2
Yes	13

With specific requirements from some countries such as a bell that can be heard from 20m distance.



- Are mirrors on the cycle a compulsory equipment?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	14
Only if a trailer is pulled	1



- Is particular equipment needed for particular age groups?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	11
Helmet	4

Children are obligated to wear a helmet while cycling in some countries.



Passengers

- Is carrying passengers by bike allowed and if yes under which conditions?

Conditions	No of Countries
No	0
Yes without limitations	1
It is allowed only if bicycle has proper seat	11
It is allowed only if bicycle has proper seat and footrest	3



It is allowed to carry passengers in almost all countries if the bicycle has a proper seat and/or footrest.

Passengers

- How many passengers is it allowed to carry by bike?

Conditions	No of Countries
No passengers allowed	0
No limitations once the bicycle has been built or specially adapted to carry passenger(s), it is allowed	8
Up to 1 passenger allowed	2
Up to 2 passengers allowed	4



Conclusions

Cyclists are strongly restricted when not cycling on a cycle lane:

- They are mainly allowed when indicated by signs
- In many countries children are the only cyclists allowed on sidewalks and pedestrian roads

As for the minimum sidewalk width:

- Half of the countries either forbid cycling on the sidewalk or have not specified a minimum yet.
- The rest poses a minimum of 2m and 2.5m for mixed and segregated pedestrian cycle traffic respectively



Conclusions

Cycling is forbidden:

- in motorways in all countries
- In expressways in a number of them

In most countries no rules apply regarding speed limits by road type/area or on cycle lane unless it is a sidewalk/pedestrian area or shared space area where a 10km/h and 20km/m speed limit usually applies.

Knowledge of traffic rules is usually not ensured.



Conclusions

It was found that a minimum age limit of at least 12 years old is applied for cycling on the road and that up to 10 years old companion is compulsory for half of the countries participated in this survey.

Helmet, mirrors and reflecting clothes are not considered compulsory for the majority of the countries.

As for the helmet, some countries apply restrictions for young cyclists.



Conclusions

Almost all countries consider lights, bicycle bell and reflecting devices on the cycle a compulsory equipment.

As long as there is a proper seat and/or a footrest, it is allowed to carry passengers in almost all countries.

No limitations apply in most countries on the number of passengers allowed once the bicycle has been built or specially adapted to carry that number of passengers.



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