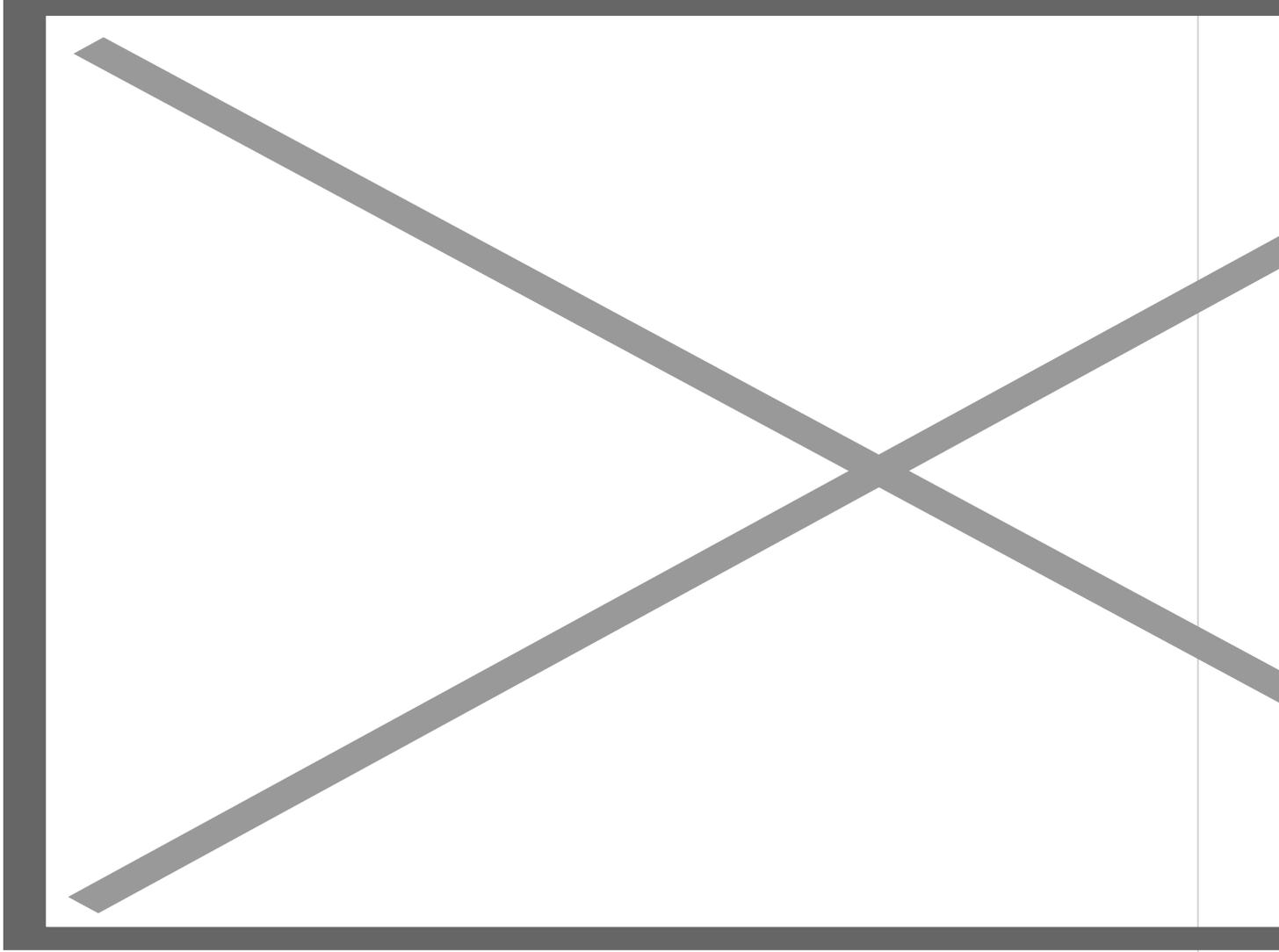


Bicycles: A mode of transportation with multiple benefits

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More and more countries are betting on bicycles as an ideal means of transportation. The advantage is absolute, both for individuals and for society.

So much so, that the UN dedicates a world day to bicycles, on June 3. The objective is to promote the use of this clean, sustainable, economical and healthy means of transport throughout the planet.

The Euronews site points out that it is considered that on average, 82% of global citizens have a favorable opinion about this means of transport. There is a global consensus on the key role of the bicycle in reducing carbon emissions and traffic. The main impediment to using it is the lack of security.

Many companies are taking steps to encourage their workers to bike to work. Across Europe, for example, more and more people are switching from cars and buses to bicycles.

The Dutch – adds the source – cycle an average of 2.6 km a day. According to one study, if this pattern were repeated around the world, annual carbon emissions would be reduced by 686 million tonnes, more than the entire UK carbon footprint.

The Government encourages this healthy habit by offering those who travel by bicycle a "mileage compensation".

Since 2006, Dutch companies have rewarded bike commuters with €0.19 per kilometer, an expense that the government allows them to deduct from their tax bill. Previously, this mileage compensation was only awarded to drivers, who could claim it to cover the cost of fuel. In 2007 it was expanded to cyclists, and since bikes don't need gas, cyclists can simply pocket the money.

A cyclist who travels 10 kilometers a day five days a week could earn about 450 euros a year.

Belgium also offers a system similar to that of the Netherlands: cyclists can request 0.24 euros per kilometer traveled. Its adoption is widespread. One in five employees, 20% of workers, in Belgian small and medium-sized companies received a bicycle allowance in the first half of 2022.

In turn, French workers can claim up to 0.25 euros per kilometer traveled by bicycle to work, up to an annual limit of about 200 euros.

In Italy, access to "bike to work" programs depends on where you live, as incentives vary greatly by area or province. The city of Florence, in the north of the country, has just launched a plan that will begin on June 3 and last one year.

Those who abandon the car and go to work by bicycle will receive 0.20 euros for each kilometer traveled within the municipality, with a limit of 30 euros per month, that is, an annual maximum of 360 euros.

In Bari, capital of the Italian region of Apulia, bicycle users receive 0.21 euros for each kilometer they travel to work, up to a maximum of 25 euros per month. The Italian Government also offers users mobility vouchers for the purchase of a new bicycle.

Cubans have been learning the advantages of moving around on bicycles, both due to the current transportation crisis and for the same reasons that people in other countries claim, namely benefits for health and the environment.

Since the so-called Special Period, in the early years of the 90s, Cubans entered this cycling adventure out of necessity. Then the country was flooded with Chinese bicycles, which can still be seen rolling through its streets. Over time, these pedal transports arrived from many other countries. Today, it is common to see them converted into tricycles serving as taxis and other functions.

The use of bicycles contributes to reducing stress and increasing people's social contact. Riding a bicycle reduces the risk of heart attack by more than 50%, benefits muscles and bones, prevents diabetes and

improves mental health. Like all exercise, it helps burn extra calories.

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