



**THE
FREEDOM OF
CYCLING**

WRAP UP VELO-CITY 2017

ARNHEM & NIJMEGEN - THE NETHERLANDS



13TH - 16TH OF JUNE 2017

The region of Arnhem and Nijmegen welcomed Velo-city: the Global Cycling Summit

The motto of the biggest international conference on cycling for this year was 'The Freedom of Cycling'. Governance, Infrastructure, People, Bikenomics and Urban Planning were the main topics on the table. The Dutch story and the relation between health and sustainability was also explored in numerous sessions.

Programme highlights included the visit of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, a trip to explore Amsterdam by bike, the Mass bike parade, the first mayors session ever and the cycling festival VeloFest.

It was the biggest in its kind so far. Not only did the 2017 conference welcome more than 1,500 delegates, but it also offered the biggest number of speakers and sessions in the history of the series of Velo-city conferences. Over 260 speakers brought their view on all sorts of cycling related topic, offering a stunning 107 sessions. A total of 60 outdoor sessions and excursions were added to the program to show delegates more of the Arnhem-Nijmegen cycling region. The expo at the Vereeniging housed a 100 different booths from exhibitors from all over the world. 230 volunteers covering over 600 shifts made sure all went smoothly.

Please find here our summary of the different days of the conference, a word from the project team and an inspiring final look from key-note speaker Julia Nebrija.



THEMES & CONTENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Without the many excellent speakers, keynote-speakers and speakers of the parallel sessions alike, there would not be any sharing of knowledge and inspiration. We would like to thank all the speakers for their contributions. It would be impossible to mention you all with the unique content you provided, although a few names and their contributions will be mentioned further on. It doesn't, however, take away our overall feeling that all the speakers contributed massively in the quality of the program.

The three main questions for Velo-city 2017 were:

- WHY should we promote cycling? The theme linked to this question was People (on Tuesday).
- WHAT should we do? The themes linked to this question were Urban Planning, Infrastructure and Bikenomics (on Wednesday and Thursday).
- HOW can we do this? The theme linked to this question was Governance (on Friday).



13th of June

TUESDAY

His Majesty the King of the Netherlands opened Velo-city accompanied by the president of the ECF, Mr. Manfred Neun, and the two mayors of both cities, Mayor Hubert Bruls (Nijmegen) and Mayor Boele Staal (Arnhem). The opening ceremony was attended by many special guests such as the ambassador of Bhutan, Ms. Mw. P. Choden, and the secretary-general of the ECF, Mr. B. Ensink, Ms. Shannon Galpin (National Geographic Adventurer of the year and founder of the non-profit organization Mountain2Mountain) and Mr. Thinley Namgyel (Chief Environment Officer, Climate Change Division of Bhutan's National Environment Commission). After the opening, His Majesty cycled a part of the RijnWaalpad, the fast cycling path that connects the cities of Nijmegen and Arnhem.

On the first day of the conference, Leo Bormans set the tone by introducing happiness and criticizing the idea of a liveable city: we don't talk about edible food either. We should strive for *happy* cities! Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment Melanie Schultz van Haegen, professors Ruth Oldenziel and Kevin Krizek provided a context to the Dutch development on an European and global scale. During the Scientists for Cycling Colloquium, that was organized a day before by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), its global network Scientists for Cycling (S4C), the Radboud

University Nijmegen (Institute for Management Research - IMR) and the Province of Gelderland (the Netherlands), Cycling professor Krizek was also involved. Together with the transport group of Geography, Planning and Environment, Fariya Sharmeen and Karel Martens he took the lead in organizing the colloquium.

On the call for abstracts, over 100 submissions for the scientific colloquium were received, including more than 70 extended abstracts, 20 full papers and a handful of panel submissions. Contributions were reviewed by the scientific Steering Committee and the scientific Steering Board as part of our aim to offer a program with a high scientific rigor. The participants delivered outstanding papers and the colloquium was of a high academic level. The colloquium ended with the promise to continue with this event and we were grateful that the outcome was further linked to the next days of Velo-city 2017.

Tuesday afternoon, Maria Hopman, Clarisse Linke and Martha Roszkowski shared their views on the theme People, with the remarkable outcome that the inclusion and equity challenges in the US and Brazil are similar to each other. In the evening we were warmly welcomed during the opening reception in the unique setting of the Dutch Open Air Museum in Arnhem.



14th of June

W E D N E S D A Y

To answer the WHAT question, the plenary on Wednesday morning started with the theme Bikenomics. Manfred Neun gave an overview of the benefits of cycling, Julia Nebrija and Thinley Namgyel introduced their ideas on bikenomics and well-being. The link between these two presentations was that bikenomics isn't just about the numbers, but about the people behind it. Some of those people are patients with Parkinson's disease, the topic of the studies of professor Bas Bloem. His research showed that people with Parkinson's are able to ride bikes and that cycling can be used as a diagnostic tool for Parkinson's disease.

In the afternoon most participants went by train to Amsterdam for a full program and entertainment. This was made possible by Roger van Boxtel, former Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities and current CEO of the Dutch Railways (the principal passenger railway operator in the Netherlands) as well as by Pier Eringa, CEO of ProRail (a government task organization that takes care of maintenance and extensions of the national railway network infrastructure). In Amsterdam delegates were welcomed to explore the city by bike during different bike tours. The day ended with food & drinks and a short program with, among others, vice-mayor Pieter Litjens and alderman Geert Ritsema from Arnhem.



15th of June

THURSDAY

The third day of Velo-city 2017 was full of sessions. In the morning, Brian Deegan introduced how London is 'going Dutch' and advised the audience on how to implement Dutch infrastructure lessons. Marco te Brömmelstroet followed-up on this, stating that we need to look for different solutions. We engineer for a car-dominated environment, but we should engineer for people, instead of cars. "We need more carless drivers instead of more driverless cars" he taught us. This shift requires a fundamental change in thinking - from geese logic towards swarm logic. On Thursday afternoon we switched to Urban Planning. Starting from the smaller buildings by Masi Mohammadi, we moved to the CEOs of ProRail and NS, who did a joint presentation on cycling and the rail network in a friendly conversation style. The session closed with Shipra Narang Suri, highlighting the lessons and developments from the Global South.

Early in the evening the traditional Mass Bike Parade (in Dutch: de Fiets Parade) took place. The perfect opportunity to meet the locals, cycle along and make new friends. Among the guests were many mayors from all over the world, gold medal winner of the Paralympics Daniel Gebu, the famous Dutch bicycle racer Maarten Tjallingii, and a lot of cyclists with disabilities, for whom bicycling is not only important for their health, but also a means to retain their freedom. The parade ended at the Honig complex, an old industrial area where many small enterprises are now flourishing.



16th of June FRIDAY

At the final day we made the last contacts, reaffirmed our friendships, made promises to see each other more often (and definitely in Rio). In the morning the EU Cycling Strategy was handed over to European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc, after which Mark Frequin and André Dzikus shined their light on Governance. The unusual closing of Velo-city 2017 by philosopher René ten Bos, in collaboration with Philippe Crist, gave food for reflections.

During the Friday sessions, the first ever Mayors Session during Velo-city took place. More than 30 mayors and other high level decision makers attended discussions in an informal setting. The participants were among others: the European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc, the Vice Mayor of Paris Christophe Najdovski, the Mayor of Dublin Brendan Carr, the Mayor of Oslo Mrs. Marianne Borgen, the Mayor of Rio de Janeiro Marcelo Crivella and the ITF Secretary General Jose Viegas. One of the recommendations was to really implement the Declaration on cycling as a climate friendly mode of transport (which was signed by the Ministers of the EU during the Luxembourg Presidency in 2015). François Bausch, Transport Minister of Luxembourg, and the mayors discussed on how to integrate cycling into a multimodal mobility in the best way. The mayor of Kampala, Emmanuel Serunjoji, even bought an electric bike to establish a mind shift and raise awareness for the bicycle in Kampala. The next step in the efforts of the Government for the development of active mobility will be the Big Bike Event which will take place in Brussels on 28 June 2017.

On Friday we also welcomed Rio de Janeiro and their mayor Marcelo Crivella together with all the sounds, dancing and colours Rio has to offer. The day ended with VeloFest, the farewell party at Sonsbeek Park, Arnhem. We enjoyed food, drinks, music, dance and the movie of Marco te Brömmelstoet 'Why we cycle', which will be a part of our legacy along with the scientific book Cycling Cities 'The Arnhem and Nijmegen Experience' by Ruth Oldenziel and Eric Berkens.



A WORD FROM THE VELO-CITY 2017 TEAM

Dear participants, dear cyclists' from all around the world,

Velo-city 2017 - The Global Cycling Summit, ended with a big bang with the VeloFest party at Sonsbeekpark. Since Rio de Janeiro will be your next host to organize Velo-city in 2018, this is our last testimony as an organization. The organization consisted of members of the ECF, the Province of Gelderland and the organising cities Arnhem and Nijmegen.

In the aftermath of Velo-city 2017 in the region of Arnhem-Nijmegen, in which we were able to process all the information, we were overwhelmed by gratitude. Gratitude for being able to fulfil our small role during these days. As the French say 'Noblesse oblige' as bicycle country # 1. Being hosts also meant that in one way or another we eventually had to say goodbye. This goodbye might compare to when a child leaves your home, which evokes mixed feelings. But when 1,500 of your children leave more or less at the same time, these mixed emotions are hardly bearable. However, we find some consolation in the fact that this means that your presence, your knowledge, insights, wisdom and above all your inspiration, friendship and smiles mattered deeply to us. Aside from the movies, pictures, social media posts we consider this to be the most precious gift you could give us.

A big thank you for all of you who made this fantastic event possible.

Our partners Gazelle, Batavus, de Fietswinkel.nl, Excellent cities, Nextbike, Pluryn, but also OV-Fiets from the Dutch Railways, Bikewerk, Radboud University, Dutch Cycling Embassy, de Fietsersbond, all team members, volunteers and all of you who joined us during this event!

Project Team
Velo-city 2017



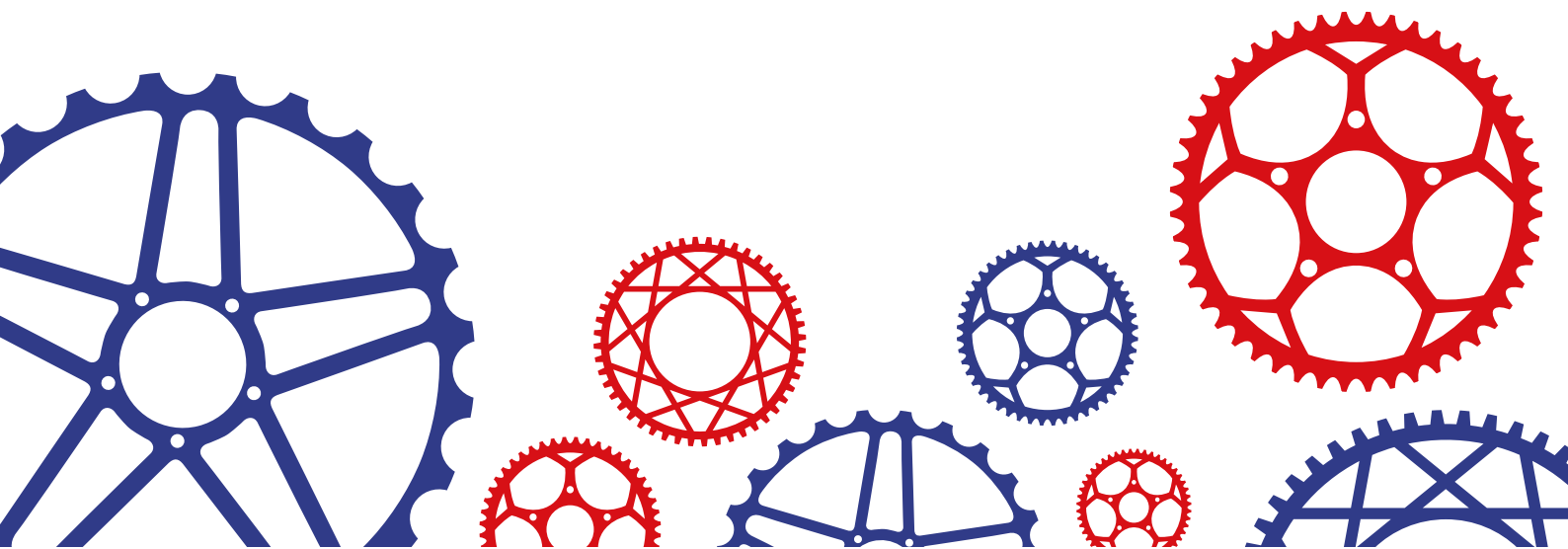
WHAT REMAINS

In the end, it is not us who can or may value the impact of this edition of Velo-city 2017 and who will carry on with the legacy of one week blessed with beautiful weather. The final say on the conference is yours. For this reason we give you the following quote from Julia Nebrija, our keynote speaker, on her experience at Velo-city 2017:

A thank you note to Velo-city 2017,

Look right, look left. Not for cars, but for the dozens of bicycles whizzing by. I've arrived in Nijmegen after 24 hours of travel from Manila for the 2017 Velo-city Global Cycling Summit and stepping out of the train station all my expectations are immediately confirmed: this is the Disneyland of cycling.

I spent a week talking, learning, playing and of course, cycling with people from all over the world united by the common belief that the bicycle will save the world. At a time when we need reliable, simple solutions to the complexities we face in our daily lives, it is fitting that on the bicycle's 200th birthday, almost 1,500 cycling enthusiasts from 45 countries gathered to celebrate the Freedom of Cycling.



THERE'S NO FINISH LINE

Metro Manila to many seems like an impossible ball to untangle. We in the nation's capital blame the lack of political will, budget, and know-how for our cycling woes. When we look to Western countries, we see unattainable perfection, but during our tours of Nijmegen, Arnhem, and Amsterdam inspecting the cycling bridges, tunnels, and miles of segregated pathways, my fellow summit-goers expressed similar challenges:

"do you think we'll see this type of infrastructure in all cities across the Netherlands in my lifetime?" asks one Dutch woman "Unlikely" says another Dutch man "With all the politicians managing their own budgets, I don't think so." They end by making a bet that if all places in Netherlands look like Nijmegen by 2050 when they are 90, they owe each other a world-class bottle of wine.

"In Luxemburg people love their cars too much"
"It's so hard to convince people in Brussels"

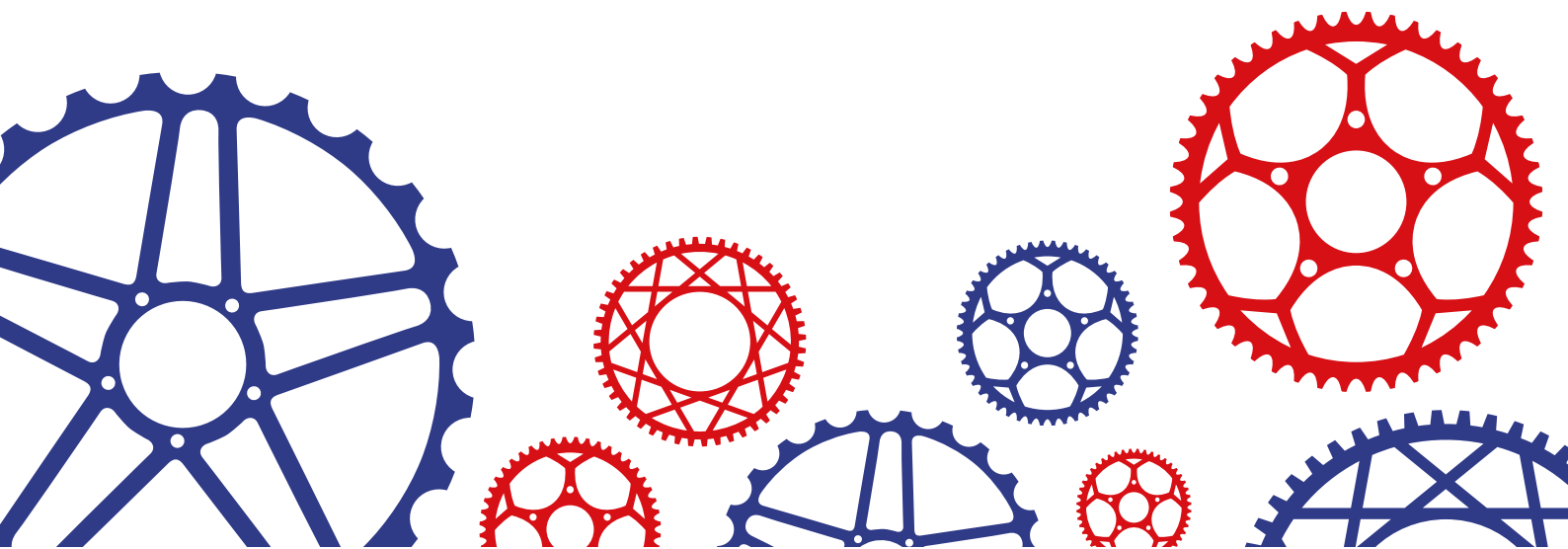
As the transport official for the City of Amsterdam explains that the underground biking is already out of date, a young man is astounded "We would be happy with this parking in Helsinki!"

Some of us are further along than others, but in general, we face the same challenges. It's not as if money, policies, and behavior change fall into any of our laps. It takes time and besides, a city is never finished; it's always a work in progress.

BALANCE, NOT CONTROL

At a traffic light free intersection in Amsterdam a mother holds her son's hand as they cross; a cable car pauses to let them pass. Cycles breeze through, cars automatically slow down as they approach, an elderly woman feels no rush as she inches her way to the curb. It's an amazing dance as people adjust to one another. Traffic of all types flow without the interruption of a signal. Contrary to belief, this actually made the intersection less congested and has not had any negative impact on safety.

Marco te Brömmelstroet, an Associate Professor in Urban Planning at the University of Amsterdam compared this free flow of movement to a swarm of birds. As he spoke during his keynote, video footage of a swarm undulates with soft music and it captivates everyone in the room. Yes, this is how we would love to feel on the road as we go about our day! Part of a mesmerizing wave we surf together. Marco shows that uninterrupted movement using one's own energy creates a sense of flow, a feeling people commonly describe when asked why they enjoy cycling.



René ten Bos, a professor of philosophy at the Department of Management Sciences, Radboud University in Nijmegen and known as the Thinker of the Netherlands says this is achieved when we strive for balance rather than control. While some aspects of bureaucracy are necessary, there is still room for self-regulation and societal negotiation, best seen when people are given the freedom to move along the road on two wheels.

The 'swarm' is familiar to many of us working in the global south. With few regulations existing or enforced, the streets are a free for all. I am inspired to think of how to leverage and support the positive side of this chaos.

BIKE PEOPLE ARE MY PEOPLE

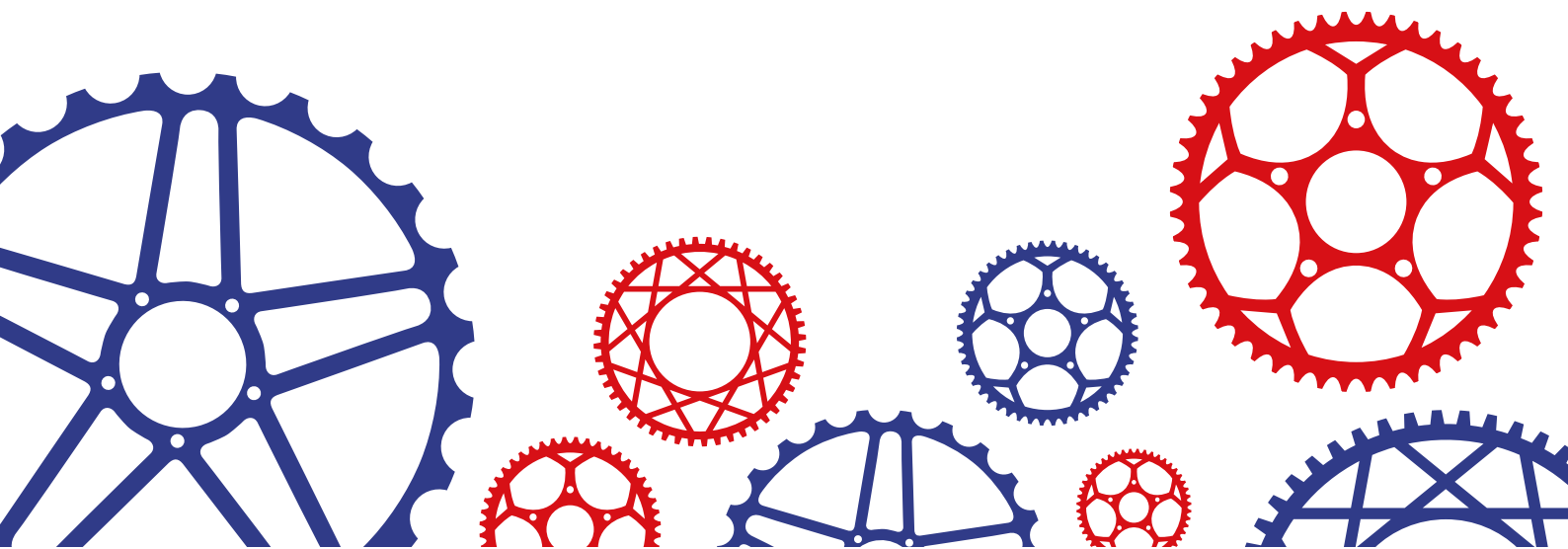
After the closing ceremony I tearfully reflect on the summit with Firoza Suresh, founder of Smart Commute Foundation in Mumbai. We felt in our shared emotion that this summit was about more than knowledge exchange. It was the affirmation that our hard work will one day mean something. On the global scale, people relate to and admire what we are going through in pursuing the seemingly insurmountable in cities like Mumbai and Manila. Our colleagues from Rio and Cape Town know the same struggle and see the same potential in our cities. It is group therapy, it is emotional support and above all it is encouragement to keep trying. We hug and swear to visit each other. I have made a friend who, however far away, will give me that extra push when I need it. I met many people like this during the summit whose business cards I will actually keep and use.

It's my second year at Velo-city. I attended the summit in Taipei in 2016 and was excited to see many familiar faces this year around. It's starting to feel like a community, among participants and even with the cities that welcomed us with open arms. As we cruise along the bicycle parade, people come out of their houses to cheer us on. Bands greet us in surprising corners of the town. We eat at a local food truck festival and party at a warehouse compound home to various independent businesses.

As we sweat together on the dance floor, this is the part of the summit where we celebrate the bicycle as a lifestyle, something that facilitates the type of interaction we want to have between people and places. Because at the end of the day, however we value it- economically, socially, environmentally- the summit reminds us that the bicycle is synonymous with one thing: happiness.

Thank you to everyone who made Velo-city 2017 a summit to remember!

Julia





VELO-CITY 2017 IN NUMBERS

1.500

PARTICIPANTS

60

OUTDOOR SESSIONS

260

SPEAKERS

230

VOLUNTEERS COVERING

600

SHIFTS

107

SESSIONS

800

ONLINE NEWSARTICLES

100

EXPO BOOTHS

11.628

SOCIAL MEDIA
MENTIONS