

INTRODUCTION

The Portuguese Federation of Cyclotourism and Bicycle Users (FPCUB) is a National Scope NGO and a member of FIA, which groups Associations, Clubs and Centers, promotes action for sustainable mobility and has delegated to BICIAUTO - Portuguese Club of Drivers and Bicycle Users its representation in the intermodal subject (Vehicle, Bicycle, Public transportation and other soft modes).



CLUBE BICIAUTO is an affiliated society to the Portuguese Federation of Cyclotourism and Bicycle Users (FPCUB). Its aims to encourage intelligent mobility, increasing awareness amongst car drivers for road sharing with bicycles users, public transports and other sustainable means of transport, as well as promoting safety behaviour, respect of the public space and citizen fellowship amongst road users.

MISSION

BICIAUTO endorses traffic speed-reducing schemes, the cooperative usage of the road by motor vehicle drivers and bike users, as well as by pedestrians, public transports and other sustainable and ecologic means of transport. It aims to organize informative sessions and training programs on accident prevention, road safety, and urban cycling skills.

The objective of BICIAUTO is to develop the cooperation between institutions and the implementation of urban space management plans aiming at benefiting mobility, promoting bicycle riding as an alternative or a complement to motor vehicle driving in the urban environment.

COMBINE THE IMPOSSIBLE?



The idea every cyclist makes of the city cycling adventure is determined by certain common factors. Amongst them, road conditions and behaviour of car and lorry drivers are the weightiest reservations. The effect that road obstacles have on the cycling experience may be relative to the cycling skills of the user but for the cyclist is usually harder to handle the confrontation with *steel mammoths and their tamers* on the steering wheel. Motor vehicle

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drivers are predominant on the roads, streets, lanes, squares, and everything around it! When attempting to dispute these areas one knows how frustrating it can be.

Larger or smaller motor vehicles, taxis, buses, and motorbikes are often driven faster than the maximum allowed speed and are always (I shall highlight 'always') driven too fast. The speed differential of a motor vehicle is never less than twice and often higher than 4 or 5 times the speed of a bicycle in the same lane, which makes it easy to understand the fears and hesitations expressed by so many people when it comes to try bicycles as a travelling alternative. The artificial safety sense one gets at the steering-wheel is inversely proportional to the one felt at the handlebars.

Studies have shown that cyclist safety increases with the number of cyclist on the road. However, the data analysed were taken from environments that are very different from our own Portuguese reality. In the Portuguese roads, the immense impunity is paired with a truly behavioural anarchy. Whilst drivers are relatively worried about being caught in the middle of an infraction, the authorities are focused in passing fines rather than preventing the violation of the rules and law enforcement is far from being omnipresent.



Moreover, the general infrastructure is poor. In Lisbon the radar system is ridiculous and the speed management in Cascais Coastal Road (Marginal da Linha) is absurd where speed cameras installed on traffic lights are absent. Although "street bumps" present some degree of danger including to drivers who circulate at regular speed they are still the most effective speed reducing method through out the country. There is much to be done before we acknowledge the role bicycles have in turning our roads safer but only those of us that commute using both cars and bicycles are able to establish the bridge between both worlds, worlds that are as distant as they are close together.

BICIAUTO was formed recently as a club of drivers that are also cyclists, commuters that use at least car and bicycle on their daily routes and travels. This club is momentous as nowadays many of us have to travel from the suburbs into the city centres using routes that are impossible to cycle and where public transport is not an alternative; people are still reliant on cars whilst it is more and more difficult to deal with parking problems and with ever increasing prices fuel is becoming a comparable luxury good.

Motor vehicle drivers are many of the potential future urban pedalling users. Drivers that also cycle are not only more aware of bicycles on the road but can also influence their social circle positively, participating in the much needed change of mentalities. Moreover, A BICIAUTO commuter knows both vehicles strengths and weaknesses and is surely a better conductor whether using the car or the bicycle, participating towards safer roads.

Whichever is the machine we chose to use to travel, our main goal should be arriving safe and sound to our destination. This reason alone justifies the foundation of our club.

Humberto Candeias – Vice-presidente BICIAUTO, in <http://simplycommuting.net>
(adaptado ao inglês por Adriana Candeias)
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MEMBRO: E.C.F. - European Cyclists' Federation, A.I.T. - Alliance-Internationale de Tourisme | Confederação Portuguesa das Associações de Defesa do Ambiente | UECT - Union Européenne de Cyclotourisme, ConBici - Coordinadora Ibérica en Defensa de La Bici COPPT - Confederação Portuguesa de Prevenção do Tabagismo | ONGA de âmbito nacional registada na APA - Agência Portuguesa de Ambiente