

# General Call for Abstracts



**Priority topics &  
submission guidelines**



## Welcome to the Velo-city 2025 call for abstracts!

The European Cyclists' Federation and the City of Gdansk are happy to invite you to share your project, best practice, failure, expertise, data, innovation or analysis to reflect upon our main theme and its five subthemes:

### Energizing Solidarity

- **The Social Power of Cycling**
- **Shaping the Urban Transformation Together**
- **Political Solidarity for a Just Transition**
- **Cycling for Joy and Health**
- **Cycling to Boost the Economy and Save Energy**

These guidelines will provide you with all necessary information on the call for abstracts priority topics, programme design, parallel session formats, selection process, timeline as well as submission rules. **Make sure you read them carefully before submitting your abstract through our online platform.**

The Programme Team is keen on hearing voices from all over the world. We would be grateful if you could help us spread the word about this call with your contacts from around the globe!

In addition to this call, Velo-city 2025 releases a separate call for abstracts for academic sessions, curated by the European Cyclists' Federation's Scientists for Cycling network, open to academics and researchers, that will be integrated into the Velo-city conference programme. Both calls are open from 16 September until 4 November 2024 and only online submissions through the dedicated platforms will be considered.

Should any questions arise do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We look forward to hearing from you!

The Programme Team

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## 1. The Velo-city 2025 themes & priority topics

### Main theme: Energizing Solidarity

Solidarity—an empathic, transformative force embraced by the citizens of Gdańsk in the 1980s—remains a powerful and enduring symbol, deeply woven into the city's identity. The globally recognized Solidarity movement embodies the collective aspiration to improve living conditions through unity and shared goals.

Similarly, cycling represents not only freedom and sustainability but it also symbolises the power to foster connection and joy. By promoting healthier lifestyles, road space reallocation and more equitable mobility systems, cycling can drive transformative change while contributing to the decarbonisation of transport and boosting the economy.

People are at the heart of Velo-city. We invite experts to share their work and discuss how cycling can energize people and lead a gentle revolution towards decarbonised and fair mobility systems and cities for all.

### Subtheme 1: The Social Power of Cycling

Cycling transcends transportation purposes: it has the potential of becoming a catalyst for stronger communities, inclusiveness, and social equity. In today's hyperconnected world, how can cycling create stronger in-person connections and contribute to vibrant and safe public spaces? How can we encourage a respectful dialogue between different road users and promote understanding instead of aggression? This subtheme delves into different ways of how to address the needs of diverse groups, contribute to placemaking and foster understanding.

#### Priority topics: The Social Power of Cycling

- Inclusion & diversity:
  - Responding to the needs of children & youth, an ageing population, women, families
  - Addressing the needs of underserved groups: pregnant people, people with disabilities, disadvantaged communities, frail elderly people
- Approaching car-drivers
- Fostering conviviality amongst different road users: Changing the public discourse for positive communication and fighting bikelash
- Urban planning to re-connect citizens in safe environments: 15-minute city, Superblocks, placemaking practices, circulation plans, pedestrianisations...
- The transformative power of community rides



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## Subtheme 2: Shaping the Urban Transformation Together

Through this subtheme we focus on the collaborative efforts needed to create the right infrastructure and an integrated mobility offer for sustainable and resilient cities. We wish to highlight the importance of dialogue and collective action—bringing together all urban mobility stakeholders and decisionmakers to reimagine our streets, our governance models and our mobility systems, to ensure our cities are ready to face the challenges of the climate crisis.

### Priority topics: Shaping the Urban Transformation Together

- Integrated transport authorities and new governance models for an integrated mobility system (public transport, train, cycling, walking, bike-sharing, micromobility, car-sharing)
- Growing together instead of cannibalizing each other: advancing the modal shift from private car trips to sustainable mobility options
- Data collection, trip planners, MaaS, wayfinding, reporting of problems
- Reducing road fatalities through traffic calming solutions
- New cycling trends: Fat-bikes and others
- Innovative infrastructure solutions: Intersections, cycle highways, road space reallocation, treelined cycle paths, invisible infrastructure, mobility hubs, cycle parking
- Preventing bicycle theft and European/national initiatives

## Subtheme 3: Political Solidarity for a Just Transition

A just transition should ensure that the benefits of green transport policies are shared widely, while also supporting those, who stand to lose and leave no one behind. More active mobility leads to more just societies. How can we ensure that alliances are forged between relevant stakeholders and political leaders that recognize this to drive the change? We need to share best practices and transfer knowledge, while being aware of potential downsides to turn them into jumping ground for innovative solutions. The car is still a symbol of status and freedom for many which is a barrier that jeopardizes sustainable mobility choices. This subtheme addresses the fair implementation of ambitious, forward-thinking (cycling) policies that foster solidarity and well-being.



## Priority topics: Political Solidarity for a Just Transition

- Examining policies against mobility justice and countering gentrification
- Encouraging knowledge transfer from advanced to less advanced cities
- Changing the image of active mobility after Central and Eastern Europe's system transformation
- Supporting a more bike-friendly post-war Ukraine
- Ensuring the harmonised implementation of the European Declaration on Cycling and European directives such as cycle parking qualitative standards for buildings (EPBD- Energy Performance of Buildings Directive) and the inclusion of cycling in large infrastructure projects (TEN-T- trans-European transport network)
- Funding and financing opportunities, such as the Social Climate Fund
- Fiscal incentives

## Subtheme 4: Cycling for Joy and Health

Cycling is a gateway to joy, health, and a deeper connection with the world around us. No wonder more and more people enjoy cycling as a sport, for leisure or during their holidays. Cycling tourism is booming, offering the opportunity to discover new places and get to know new people in a sustainable way.

How could we attract more recreational cyclists to also use their cycles as everyday transport mode? Can cycling tourism routes support more cycling in rural areas? With increasing homeworking, enabling more people to cycle safely is an important way to counter the lack of physical activity and offer flexible mobility choices. It also helps to unwind and fight mental health issues. Through this subtheme we wish to explore the numerous benefits of cycling that extend beyond its role as a transportation mode.

## Priority topics: Cycling for Joy and Health

- Modal shift: How recreational cycling can lead to daily cycling, the impact of large events,
- Cycling tourism routes for commuting,
- Cycling tourism: positive health and CO2 emissions saving impacts,
- Cycling for better mental health,
- Cycling in suburban and rural areas.

## Subtheme 5: Cycling to Boost the Economy and Save Energy

More cycling can have an impressive impact on our economy: not only does it reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, but it also creates jobs locally and eases the burden on health budgets. It can be pivotal in generating new green jobs across various sectors, from the building sector to the bicycle industry or urban logistics. With the need to decarbonise transport, the boom in e-commerce and food delivery forces transition towards cycle logistics and more cycle friendly employers. How can bike-sharing support this? The role of active forms of mobility in energy transition is often overlooked or underestimated. This subtheme looks at the potential of cycling for our economies and the prospects of the European cycling industry.

### Priority topics: Cycling to Boost the Economy and Save Energy

- Job creation potential of the cycling sector
- Building up the cycling industry in Europe and beyond
- The economic impact of cycling
- Cycle logistics and cargo bikes
- Cycling to work and cycle friendly employers
- Bike-sharing and bike leasing

## 2. Programme design and session formats

Velo-city 2025 Gdansk will kick-off its programme on **Tuesday 10 June and last until Friday 13 June mid-day**. Selected abstracts will feed into over 50 parallel sessions, that will take place in the formats listed below. Parallel sessions will last 60 minutes each, except for workshops that will last 120 minutes. Most sessions will be built with abstracts for single presentations from the call for abstracts. Some formats, however, require full session proposals. If you choose the formats *two-way track debate*, *workshop*, *fireside chat* or *open format*, you will be asked to provide more information on the speakers in your session and your plan to organise it. Session proposals with no geographical and gender diversity will not be accepted

### PANEL DISCUSSION

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

Panel discussions are moderated debates with maximum 4 experts around a similar topic. This format provides space for thought-provoking discussion and debate. Initial short input presentations of 5 minutes are given by each speaker at the beginning of the session, to frame the debate. After that, a moderated discussion with all speakers follows. At the end of the debate a Q&A session with the audience takes place



## **FAST PEDAL TALKS**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

Fast pedal talks are characterised by a presentation style in which 20 slides with mainly pictures are shown for 20 seconds each (total of 6 minutes and 40 seconds). This format keeps presentations concise and fast-paced, allowing for a lot of new ideas to be presented in a short period of time. If time allows, a short Q&A session follows at the end.

## **MESS-UP SESSION: FROM FAILURE TO SUCCESS**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

Selected speakers openly discuss their professional defeats and share the lessons learned. The idea is to bring slightly more light-hearted content to the stage and at the same time give participants a chance to see that mistakes happen – the important thing is to learn from them. Each speaker has around 15 minutes and should include presenting and discussing lessons learned with the audience.

## **LECTURE**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

Lecture format features 3 to 4 presentations (12-15 minutes each). Presentations cover a wide range of similar topics and are followed by a short Q&A session with the audience.

## **STORYTELLING & TESTIMONIALS**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

Storytelling sessions invite maximum 3 speakers to tell stories illustrating or enhancing relevant topics from the conference theme and subthemes. They should reflect the authentic experience of an individual, a team, or a community, but be told like a traditional story. The narrative should contain a beginning, middle, and end, characters and themes that hold interest, like adversity and triumph. Stories should be about 15 minutes long, with time for Q&A session with the audience afterwards.

## **WORKSHOP (Session proposal)**

**Setup: 6-10 Round tables, longer session of 120 minutes**

Hands-on interactive sessions, where attendees can develop new skills, collaborate with peers, and apply their learning in a practical setting. The scope can range from developing a plan, elaborating on specific infrastructure options and solutions, taking on different roles in decision-making or consultation process, etc. The format allows space to create and collaborate and leads to a stronger learning experience. The audience is limited (max 10 persons per table).

## **TWO-WAY TRACK DEBATE (Session proposal with max. 4 speakers)**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

This format takes a central theme or question, preferably a slightly divisive one, and has speakers debate for and against, forming opposite camps. At the outset, the participants are polled to measure their opinion on the topic. Following the debate, they



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are polled again to see how many are now in favour or against. An additional perspective can be added by asking the speakers to switch roles during the debate. Please make a clear topic suggestion with speaker suggestions for both camps (2 per camp).

### **FIRESIDE CHATS (session proposal with maximum 3 speakers)**

**Setup: Theatre seating, 60 minutes**

An informal yet structured and meaningful conversation between a moderator and a guest or two guests. This format provides a unique opportunity to uncover speakers' personal stories, ideas and vision. This format emphasizes a relaxed tone, making the discussion more personal and approachable and encourages interaction with the audience. Please add the names of the suggested moderator and guests.

### **OPEN FORMAT (session proposal)**

Do you have an innovative idea and would like to organise a session in a format that has not been listed above? Pitch your idea to us keeping in mind these features:

Session length: 60 minutes or 120 minutes

Room set-up: Theatre seating or 6-10 round tables

Innovation: Tell us how this format increases the attractiveness of the programme, encourages audience interaction etc.

## **3. Selection process & timeline**

The Velo-city 2025 Gdansk programme will be designed by a Programme Team composed of designated experts from ECF and the City of Gdansk. The final decision will be based on the evaluation of the abstracts performed by an international expert reviewing team according to their area of expertise. Every abstract will be evaluated and rated by at least three experts according to the following criteria:

- **Alignment with the conference theme, subtheme and priority topics**
- **Level of innovation and originality (content and format)**
- **Prospect of transferability**
- **Focus on process and measurable results**
- **Potential for engagement and empowerment of the audience**

After the review, the Programme Team will build sessions on the priority topics related to the conference theme and subthemes. Selected abstracts will be assigned to relevant sessions, paying particular attention to stakeholder, geographical and gender balance, to represent the diversity of the sector. An International Programme Committee composed of selected experts advises the Programme Team along the process to ensure alignment with our sector's priorities.







## Timeline

Abstract submission deadline: 4 November 2024

Abstract evaluation by the international reviewing team: 18 November 2024 – 6 December 2024

Abstract allocation during the Programme Committee meeting: 13 - 17 January 2025

Publication of the preliminary programme with session titles: Mid-February 2025

Notification on abstract status: Mid-February 2025

Deadline for speaker confirmation and registration: Mid-March 2025

Programme publication with speakers and sessions: End of March 2025

Deadline to submit the final presentation: End of May 2025

Velo-city 2025 Gdansk: 10-13 June 2025

## 4. Submission rules

Applications for abstracts must comply with the following rules:

1. Please adhere to the **themes and subthemes** to ensure the relevance of the abstract and choose the most relevant one applicable to your abstract.
2. Be aware that only one person per abstract will be able to present and be granted with the speakers' ticket fee. If you choose the formats two-way track debate, workshop, fireside chat or open format, all speakers in your session proposal will be granted with the speakers' ticket fee.
3. A selected speaker is not allowed to designate a substitute in case they are not available. It is up to the Velo-city Programme Team to make such a decision.
4. Abstract & session format:
  - a. The **abstract title** should be limited to 20 words (this will not be included in the abstract word count).
  - b. The maximum word count is **300 words**, written in **English**.
  - c. Do not include tables or pictures.
  - d. The final decision on the session format will be taken by the Velo-city Programme Team, who is tasked to design the programme with the submitted abstracts. It might differ from your initial choice.
5. **Submission:** Abstracts must be submitted through the Velo-city 2025 [website](#). No abstracts sent by email will be accepted.





6. **Acceptance of abstracts** into the conference programme will be based on the evaluation by the international expert reviewing team and the Velo-city 2025 Programme Team.
7. Speakers will receive a notification on the status of their respective abstracts via the email specified during the abstract submission.
8. Speakers of accepted abstracts will be required to confirm their attendance and finalize their registration by 17 March 2025 prior to their final inclusion in the conference programme.
9. The Velo-city organisers do not cover travel and accommodation costs, but speakers do enjoy a reduction of 25% on the full conference ticket fee.
10. Selected speakers give the organisers the right to share their presentation slides and use extracts in ECF publications (with reference to the source).
11. Selected speakers give the organisers the right to take pictures and record their speech in audio and/or video format to share it with Velo-city participants and to use extracts in ECF publications (with reference to the source).
12. Selected speakers commit to help promoting the Velo-city 2025 Gdansk edition with their networks.

We look forward to reading your abstract. Should you have any further question do not hesitate to contact us!

Your Velo-city Programme Team

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