

CISMOB

Participation on the International External Event

Velo-City 2022 | Ljubljana (Slovenia)

Report



Municipality of Águeda

June 2022



The **Municipality of Águeda** is a partner in the Interreg Europe - **CISMOB - Cooperative information platform for low carbon and sustainable mobility project**, which is in its 2nd phase. This project, led by the University of Aveiro, involves partners from the University of Stockholm (eGOVlab), ITS-Romania, Bucharest - Ilfov Intermunicipal Development Association for Public Transport, the Energy Agency of Extremadura and the Municipality of Águeda and aims, among others, to exchange experiences in the area of sustainable mobility, particularly on how the COVID-19 crisis affects the issues addressed in this context.

Águeda as a partner of the CISMOB project is developing the **beÁgueda project - electric bicycles for shared use in Águeda**, which includes a broad sustainability strategy that covers several aspects: the use of systems that allow the reduction of resource consumption and increase the efficiency of its use, the exploration of the multimodal concept of urban travel with the optimization of the use of electric bicycles (more environmentally friendly travel) and its articulation with other modes of transport, the change of lifestyles, knowledge, technological advancement, strengthening of the local economy, as well as improving the environmental quality of all citizens (locally and globally). With this project, the Municipality combines tradition and innovation, highlighting the two-wheeled sector, inseparable from the history of the municipality and its economic development, enabling its citizens and visitors to travel along the municipality's roads in an innovative and sustainable way.

In this sense, the participation in the international external event **Velo-City 2022**, which took place in Ljubljana (Slovenia) from 14 to 17 June 2022, was considered an added value not only for the Municipality, but also for the partners of the CISMOB project, as through this report it will be possible to share, with them, the experience acquired. It was also possible to learn more about the promotion of cycling as a sustainable and healthy means of transport for all, about the management of cycling mobility in other European cities (with special focus on the capital of Slovenia - Ljubljana) and new technological solutions for a better cycling experience.

In this context, from the Municipality of Águeda participated in this world conference on bicycle mobility: The Mayor, Jorge Almeida; the Head of Division, Glória Costa and the Senior Technician, Carla Couceiro.



Figure 1 and 2 - The Mayor of Águeda - Jorge Almeida, outside Velo-City, and the Head of Division Glória Costa and the Senior Technician, Carla Couceiro, inside the Velo-city venue

This world conference is organized by the *European Cyclists' Federation (ECF)* together with the host cities, selected annually, and this year it took place in Ljubljana. It has been held since 1980, and the theme of this edition was "**Cycling the Change**", where 1400 cycling citizens, including researchers and industry leaders from around 60 countries, met to promote active mobility, sustainable urban development, and to discuss and shape the future of cycling. Note that in 2021, Velo-City took place in Lisbon, where Águeda was also present.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed and influenced the habits of the population, causing relevant impacts on people's lives and increasing the fear of using public mobility sharing systems. One of the consequences was to favour even more the use of individual transport, in Portugal the private car, in cities where the culture and use of the bicycle was already evident, was even more popular.

In this sense, at Velo-City several topics were discussed by those present, with special focus on: innovations applicable to cycling (e.g. power-generating pedals, parcel transport in cities - with trailers on the front and back), *public bike sharing service*, *local strategies for better cycling*, *regional cycling connectivity: Safe & active mobility in Ljubljana and beyond*, how to "reclaim" our streets and transform our lives, *cycling to school: from safe routes to school streets*, the benefits of sustainable (cycling) tourism, cycling awareness among young people, among others.



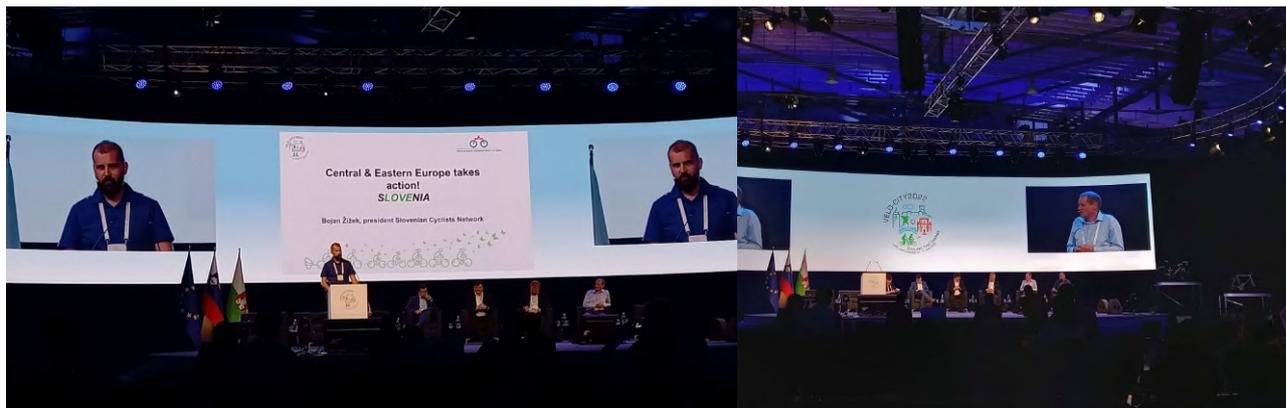
Figure 3 – Presentation of the Portuguese Cycling Federation, about *Ciclismo vai à Escola* (cycling goes to school)

The awareness of children on the use of the bicycle is considered of extreme importance, as they are a more permeable public to change and adaptation to new scenarios and realities. In Águeda, conditions have been created for the awareness and teaching of this target audience, with the action 'Águeda Bike 4 Kids' and the project 'Pedal in Águeda', being in line with national and international guidelines.



Figure 4 – Presentation of the Portuguese Cycling Federation, about the Ciclin' Portugal project
- Águeda has a Ciclin' Portugal Centre, marked on the map.

In the plenary sessions, several subjects were presented and discussed, namely the *political courage for breakthrough decisions*, it was emphasised that political support, partnerships (e.g. cooperation between politicians and experts) and a *top down* and *bottom up* approach are of utmost importance to pursue actions, which contribute to a more sustainable mobility and to the reduction of GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions and, in turn, to combat and mitigate the effects of climate change, considered as a global and emerging threat.



Figures 5 e 6 – Plenary sessions

Local strategies for a better cycling and regional connectivity for an active and safe mobility were also discussed, and it was referred that it has been proved that the best solution against the use of the car is the bicycle, and for that there is the need to create conditions for bicycles to travel, namely pedestrian and cycling routes (new and improving the existing ones), in the city and surrounding areas, and in the parishes (long distance routes), so that people feel safer. Themes of great interest for the Municipality of Águeda. There is also the need to analyze places that are not being used/occupied, so that new cycle tracks can be created/constructed on them - creation of a new public space. It was also referred the time period of 2021 - 2027, regarding cycling infrastructures and networks, with the pressing need to continue working in this direction with this perspective, especially aligned with other projects and funding programmes.



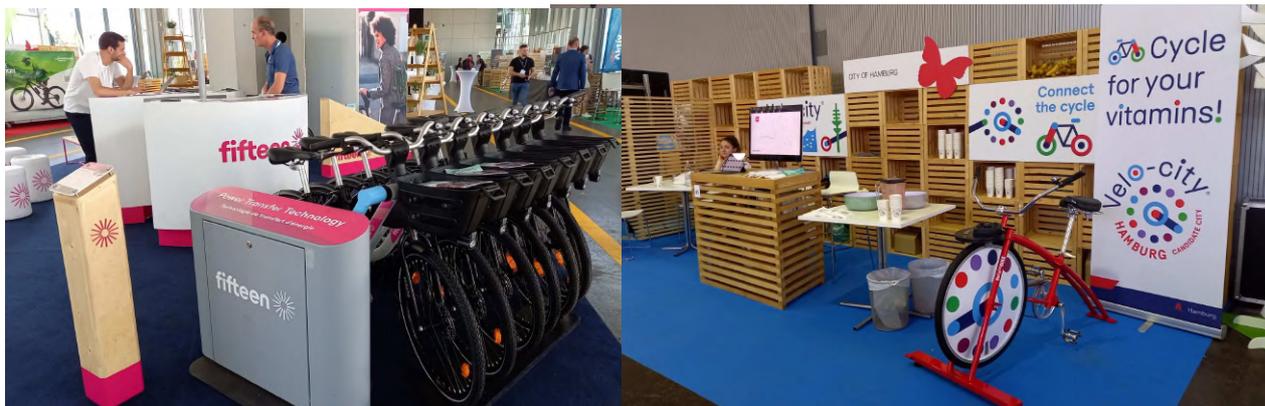
Figures 7 and 8 - a picture of a cycle track in Ljubljana and another of a bicycle parking area at the Velo-City venue

Another subject discussed was cycling as a sport. In this field, it was highlighted that sports, in general, form people, and that besides being competitive, it is also fun (*how to win, how to lose, how to respect*).

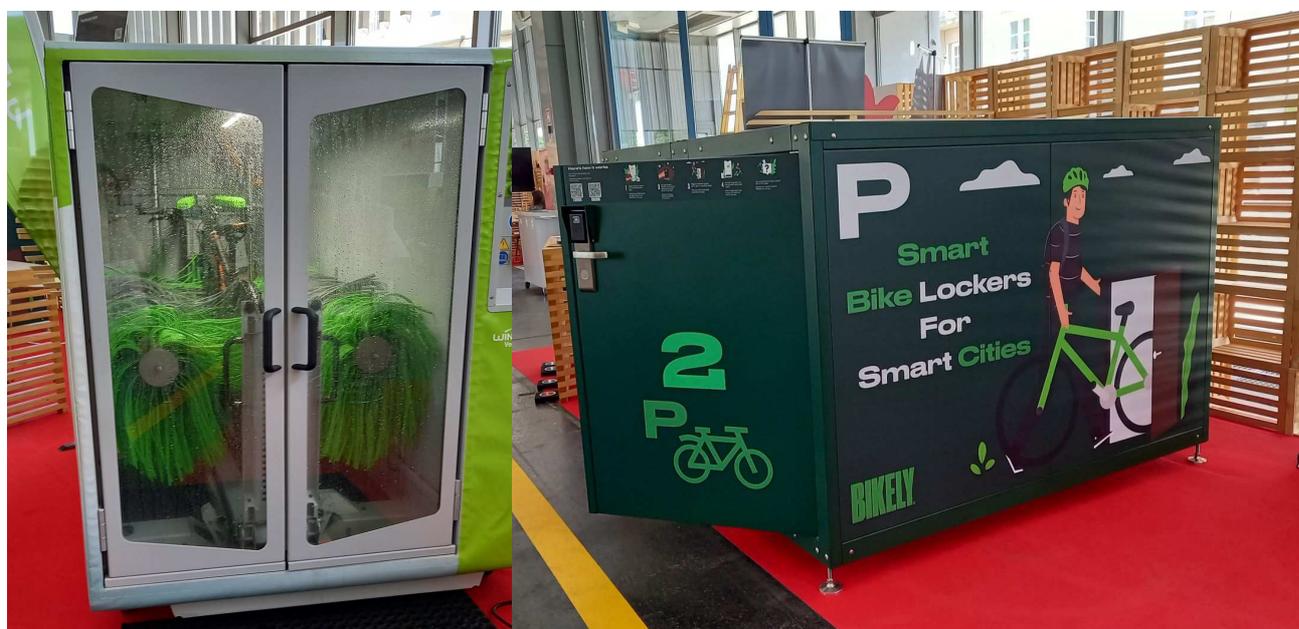
In addition to the plenary sessions, the City Council's delegation visited the various stands with the solutions presented for bicycles, components, route signs, washing and storage, among others, and took part in networking moments with representatives of the various spheres of cycling: entrepreneurs, politicians, specialists and supporters of the area of bicycle mobility.



Figures 9 and 10 - Images representing moments of networking



Figures 11 and 12 - Images of two exhibitors at Velo-City



Figures 13 and 14 - Bicycle washing solution (Bike Wash Station – Wintersteiger velobrush), more information at: <https://www.wintersteiger.com/en/Bike-Services/Products/Product-range/Bike-cleaning/559-Velobrush> | Solution for safe and accessible bicycle parking (Bikely), more information at: <https://www.safebikely.com/en/homepage>

Although the main focus was the "bicycle", there was also opportunity to view other projects and good environmental practices. In this context, we highlight an outdoor lighting project with solar energy for cycle and pedestrian paths, considered an environmentally friendly lighting solution, more information at: <https://www.solar-eye.com/>, considered interesting to be placed, for example, in the Pateira walkways.



Figure 15 - Picture of the *Solareye* display and outdoor lighting

Among other topics covered, it is important to mention sustainable tourism, namely cycling. The best way to see the city and the countryside (nature) is by bicycle or on foot, slowly and thoroughly, either individually or in organised group tours. The use of the bicycle for tourist trips allows the visitor to get to know new places, and contributes to the preservation of the environment, reducing CO₂ emissions, improving physical fitness and consolidating a good habit. It is concluded that in terms of tourism, only walking surpasses cycling.



Figures 16 and 17 – City centre of Ljubljana where people circulate only on foot, by bicycle, by scooter or in an electric mini bus that transports 4 people (Zeleni Kavalir), which circulates in the city centre free of charge, which we had the pleasure to try (image below)



Several technical visits were also carried out, most notably a visit to the oldest part of the city, which show how the city centre of Ljubljana, which was previously congested with motor vehicles, has been transformed into a public space for people walking and cycling. This transformation involved the gradual renovation of the area, which was redesigned to be a 13ha pedestrian zone, the rearrangement of a part of the main traffic axis - *Slovenska cesta* - into an area dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists and city bus users (shared space). By building or renovating the 13 bridges over Ljubljana, the embankments were connected and distances shortened, also allowing a pleasant and beautiful walk or cycle. Thus, allowing the visualisation of good practice in the management of this public space and green spaces.



Figure 18 - Image of the riverside, the surrounding pedestrian and cycling area, and one of the bridges

A *bike parade* was also held, which ended in the city centre and in which many cycling enthusiasts participated, riding their own bikes, public bikes available for this purpose and professional bikes (images below).



Figures 19 and 20 - Images from the *bike parade*

As the slogan of this edition states, the main concern is: ***Cycling the Change***, how we transform cities, towns and villages for people, and adapted so that they can enjoy the public space safely, on foot and/or by bike, and appreciate it fully!

The Municipality of Águeda, has as one of its priorities, **mobility and sustainable tourism**, and is strengthening, distinguishing and enhancing the role of friendly means of transport in society, including the bicycle, by investing in various initiatives investing in various initiatives, for its promotion and enhancement, as a soft mode of transport, in favor of more sustainable behaviors, more environmentally and citizen-friendly, but also as a factor of distinction and promotion of the territory. Águeda is known as the land of two wheels, (due to the existence of a large business fabric in this area) in a combination of tradition and innovation.

The bicycle can take you wherever you want!

Águeda, June 23rd 2022


Jorge Almeida


Glória Costa


Carla Couceiro

