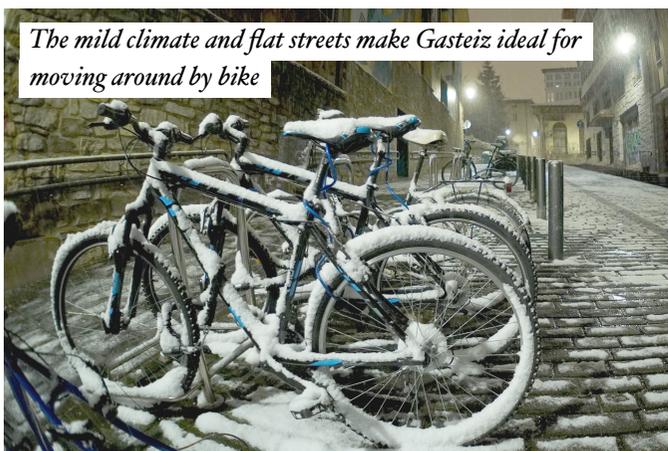


WEEKLY ENGLISH PRACTICE

How **Green** and **Bicycle Friendly** is **Gasteiz Really?**

25/03/21 / **Keyword: bicycle**

ECP coach John gives his strong opinion about the proposed changes by Vitoria-Gasteiz council to the rules regarding the circulation of bicycles in the city.



The mild climate and flat streets make Gasteiz ideal for moving around by bike

Gasteiz has long had a well-deserved reputation as a bike-friendly city which has **enhanced** its green credentials. However, the PNV-led local council has just announced a series of possible measures, which, in my opinion, and that of many other cyclists, will, if implemented, put that hard-earned green reputation in serious **jeopardy**.

The proposals are:

- 1) Circulation by bike only on cycle paths or roadways.
- 2) It will be forbidden to ride in pedestrian areas - meaning the pavement - except for children under 15 years of age. However, children under 12 years of age may ride on the pavement with an adult.
- 3) Bicycles will only be permitted to park on **bike racks** and street furniture, but **NOT benches** or trees.

The councillor in charge of (im)mobility was quoted in El Correo as saying that, "Vitoria has been permissive with the bicycle!"

But what do they actually mean by that? For many years, Vitoria has had clear and concise regulations on cycling, and if anyone has had to enforce them it is the Council, which means that this "permissiveness" could only be due to laziness or a failure to do things properly on the council's part.

From a cycling point of view, it is true there is a lot of "permissiveness" in terms of cars parking in double lines in cycle

lanes. The invasion of cycle lanes by runners and pedestrians. No real speed control in 30 km/h zones by traffic police. A lack of proper **signposting** at cycle priority crossings. I could go on...

Already, the council are quoting figures of how much cyclists will be fined if they do not obey the proposed new rules. Yet again, politicians are resorting to **threats** and sanctions, rather than trying to convince the public and look for consensus. I propose a completely different approach.

As a cyclist, I do admit that some of us on two wheels do not always follow the rules and can be an irritation to pedestrians, but let's be honest, it's fast cars that kill pedestrians and cyclists. The statistics show that very few pedestrians are even slightly injured by cyclists riding on pavements.

It is not helpful to create false divisions between pedestrians and cyclists. All cyclists are pedestrians too and many are also car drivers. We need to continue the pedestrian and bike-friendly policy in Gasteiz and **foster** a more cooperative and mutually respectful atmosphere between us all. *Turn to page 2*

Useful vocabulary

enhanced: increased and improved quality

jeopardy: danger of loss, harm or failure

bike racks: a place to to park bikes. Usually metal

benches: a long seat for a few people, usually found outdoors

signposting: a way of giving information, especially on roads

threats: a statement of intent to cause damage or harm

foster: to encourage or promote the development of something

criss-cross: a pattern of intersecting lines

Let's chat about that!

1. What are the council's new mobility proposals?
2. Does John agree or disagree with the proposals?
3. Why does John say the quoted councillor is in charge of "(im)mobility"?
4. Are you mostly a pedestrian, cyclist or car driver?
5. Do the proposals make Gasteiz less green?
6. If you were council leader, what would you do?
7. What do you think about the quotes? (see page 2)

LIVE! English Events

Come and socialise in English!

An ECP LIVE! English event

Cinema Nights

The last Friday of every month: 18:15

WhatsApp John to attend
Cinema Nights
657731354

Remaining dates:
26th Mar
30th April
28th May
25th Jun

Friday 26th March
Send a WhatsApp to John to book your place!



In neighbourhoods like Salburua, where the pavements are more than 3 metres wide, I propose to allow cyclists to ride responsibly on the pavements until traffic is slowed to 30 km/h on the roads, and clearly marked and safe cycle paths are allocated.

Cyclists and scooter riders also need to show respect and learn the rules. Riding with no hands or texting while riding is NOT allowed. They also need to know they have no right to speed across zebra crossings, which is extremely dangerous. They should dismount and push their bike or scooter across the road.

Car drivers must be clear that on elevated crossings with the yellow **criss-cross** lines, they have to give way.

It would be a shame if the city's green credentials were lost by implementing these proposals as they stand. We all need to talk more and impose less, but, most of all, educate ourselves about the existing rules and respect them and each other.

Written by ECP Coach John Hird

"To me, it doesn't matter whether it's raining or the sun is shining or whatever: as long as I'm riding a bike, I know I'm the luckiest guy in the world"
- Mark Cavendish

"Bicycles are the most efficient vehicles on the planet, 50 times more efficient than cars, and twice as efficient as walking."
- Godo Stoyke



Remaining dates:
(Not in April)
8th May
5th Jun

Use this Zoom link to join
Coffee Saturdays
<https://zoom.us/j/97583959914>

An ECP LIVE! English event

Coffee Saturdays

The first Saturday of every month: 11:00

Follow us on **Instagram Facebook, YouTube** and **Twitter** for regular updates and practice!

