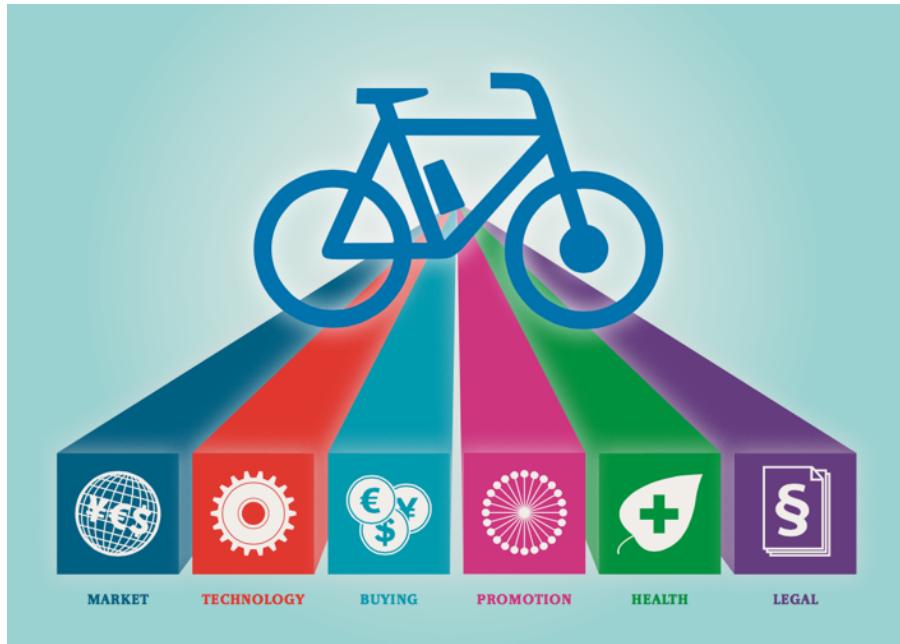


The pedelec: a vehicle that doesn't actually exist!

Your vote counts for a change in the bike definition.



The pedelec was invented and patented by Egon Gelhard in 1982. Then in 1990, Michael Kutter built the first rideable pedelec prototypes and in 1993, Yamaha made the first mass-production pedelec. Fundamental to making this mass production and successful sales possible was the concession by the Japanese government that this new vehicle could, despite having a motor, be accepted as a bicycle.

In this decision, the Japanese government had decided to ignore the UN Vienna Convention on Road Traffic of 1968. This treaty clearly defines the different forms of road traffic vehicles. The definition of a bicycle is unambiguous: it is a vehicle “propelled solely by the muscular energy of the persons on that vehicle, in particular by means of pedals or hand-crank”.

So as soon as even the tiniest motor is fitted to a bicycle, according to the definition it becomes a motor vehicle.

In past years there has been very little awareness of this definition, because electric bikes were only being sold in relatively small numbers. Now, though, pedelecs have a very visible presence worldwide.

In 2014 the European Court of Justice made a ruling which made it clear that all motor vehicles must have insurance – and that pedelecs are motor vehicles. The EU

has now reacted to this judgement. There is now the very real prospect that all pedelecs in the EU will have to be insured like cars.

On the 24th May 2018, the EU published a proposed amendment to tighten up the Motor Insurance Directive, and according to this, third party insurance would be mandatory for pedelecs.

An extract from the document from the European Commission proposing the amendments to Directive 2009/103/EG reads: “Furthermore, the impact assessment explains that new types of motor vehicles, such as electric bicycles, Segways, electric scooters already fall within the scope of the Directive. The use of these new types of electric motor vehicles in traffic has the potential to cause accidents whose victims need to be protected and reimbursed swiftly.”

Several trade and consumer organisations are now attempting to persuade the EU to exclude the pedelec from this mandatory insurance requirement, despite that fact that the ECJ judgement leaves little political room for manoeuvre.

ExtraEnergy is taking a different approach to solving this problem: by amending the UN definition so that pedelecs are treated the same as bicycles. Demands to accommodate driverless cars have proven that with sufficient political will changes are possible in a very short timeframe. We can assume that there are barely any politicians who will dare to speak actively against the pedelec. For this reason we hope that with sufficient pressure from the public, pedelecs could be declared equal to bikes within two to three years, and that pedelecs would therefore be unambiguously recognised, internationally, as bicycles instead of as motor vehicles.

The pedelec as such is not currently described by any international standard to which it is possible to refer. Furthermore, the legal requirements for pedelecs are highly variable across the world. For this reason we developed an ideal set of legal requirements as a reference, as part of the EU's Go Pedelec! Project from 2008 to 2012. This safeguards the bicycle character of the pedelec much more unambiguously than the current range of legal rules.

In Europe, the USA and China in particular, insurance companies are realising that it is still possible to sell legally compliant pedelecs which nonetheless have more the character of a light moped, for which the risk of accidents is significantly higher than for a bicycle. So long as this remains the case, mandatory insurance will continue, rightly, to be raised as an issue.

In the Go Pedelec! proposal for an ideal legislative framework the pedelec is redefined so that its bicycle character is indisputably retained, and yet it's even

more fun to ride. Under this proposal, a pedelec rides just like a normal unassisted bike does on the flat, regardless of how steep and hard the terrain actually is (see graphic in the photo gallery). For such a pedelec the power assistance factor is unlimited up to 15 km/h; only the motor-assisted acceleration is limited. In addition, the power assistance cut-off speed limit is set in relation to the applied muscle power, in the range 15 to 32 km/h, comparable to a road bike on the flat.

This ensures that such a pedelec will be just as safe to ride as a bicycle. In some situations, such as hill starts, it will be even safer to ride than a bicycle, because you can accelerate more safely and quickly to a stable riding speed. This applies even for heavily laden pedelecs.

This proposal was agreed to by the insurance industry many years ago, and they still support it. Without any increased risk there is no need for any extra insurance protection of the kind that is mandatory for motor vehicles.

Three things are therefore needed:

A new definition for the bicycle in the UN Convention on Road Traffic which includes the pedelec.

An international standard which provides a precise specification for pedelecs under the amended UN Convention definition.

National laws which treat pedelecs the same as bicycles, in accordance with the amended UN definition.

ExtraEnergy is convinced that the time has come to make all three things happen. This is the only way to lay a firm foundation for the development of the global pedelec market. Even if today's sales figures seem significant, they are positively homeopathic compared to the true potential of the pedelec.

That's why ExtraEnergy has started a campaign at AVAAZ.org. This will make it clear to governments that there is wide public support for an amendment to the definition of the bicycle, and for reform of the regulations on pedelecs. The objective is to find supporters in as many governments across the world as possible for this demand to amend the definition of the bicycle at the United Nations.

Your voice counts!

Add your voice here: <https://www.openpetition.de/petition/online/pedelecs-should-be-equal-to-bikes>

For further information, watch the following video: <https://vimeo.com/274378746>

A summary of the standardization and the right conditions is available for download at the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/yahakgzo>

About ExtraEnergy

ExtraEnergy has carried out independent e-bike and pedelec tests since 1992. Since then the organisation has established itself as the most influential information, user protection and promotional organisation for light electric vehicles (LEVs) worldwide.

The founders realised from the start that these vehicles need to be experienced first-hand. Since 1997 the Test IT Track has been on the road, and today has three units for the Test IT Show. ExtraEnergy is also rooted at its test facility in Tanna, where 25 years of test reports and LEV history are on display at the LEV Museum.

Other services on offer include presentations and exhibitions at trade and public shows, plus information distribution with the assistance of correspondents worldwide.

Alongside our physical presence, www.extraenergy.org provides a treasure-house of information online. With support from the European Union and the IEA (International Energy Agency), in 2012 the Go Pedelec! Handbook was published in German, English, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Italian, Spanish and Chinese, including much new information and best practice studies for electric-assist two-wheelers.

As founding members of the EnergyBus and BATSO (Battery Safety Organisation) associations, ExtraEnergy is also active on both the ISO (International Standards Organisation) Standards Committee, with a focus on mechanical standardisation, and on the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission), and so helps set safety and communication standards for LEVs worldwide.

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For immediate publication - a sample copy would be much appreciated!