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## COP24: Bicycle Mayor appointed in Katowice to accelerate climate action

Poland's first Bicycle Mayor appointed at UN Climate Change Summit

**11 December 2018**

A Bicycle Mayor has been appointed in Katowice, the southern Polish city hosting this year's UN climate talks, known as COP24. Cycling changemaker Grzegorz Mikrut will help accelerate the city's transformation, to unlock the massive social and environmental gains that come from increased cycling. The appointment comes with a call to cities around the world to make their own public commitment to addressing climate change during COP24, by also joining the rapidly expanding global Bicycle Mayor network.

Thousands of people from around the world are attending COP24 this week to identify solutions to the climate crisis. Recent reports suggest that the Paris climate commitment to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees will not be achievable without widespread, international commitments. Tackling air pollution is seen as one of the biggest health co-benefits of addressing climate change. It was recently announced that the equivalent population of six Amsterdams die every year from air pollution alone. Poland has been criticised for regularly breaching both World Health Organization (WHO) and European Union (EU) air quality standards, and because of its continued use of coal as a major fuel source. Katowice specifically is also extremely reliant on car transportation, with little infrastructure available to walking and cycling. Addressing these challenges in the city hosting COP sends a clear signal to the world.

By 2050, if even just 7% more trips were made by bike and foot, we could avoid around five gigatons of carbon emissions, equivalent to taking all motorised transport off the road and out of the skies across Europe for five full years. BYCS, a Dutch social enterprise working internationally on breakthrough cycling solutions, wants to go further - its mission is called 50by30: half of all city trips by bike by 2050. Amid concerns and criticism that not enough international action is being pledged at COP24, BYCS hopes the appointment of Poland's first Bicycle Mayor will accelerate the global transition to more liveable cities, with sustainable economies at their core.

**Maud de Vries, co-founder of BYCS, said:**

*“We came to COP24 to help spread the message of how cycling positively transforms cities and to secure concrete actions. We are delighted to have been able to help Poland take this decisive step of finding its first Bicycle Mayor and we now call on all cities around the world to follow Poland’s lead. Increasing cycling requires low investment but provides huge returns - it helps tackle challenges around air pollution, climate change and resource use while unlocking massive social, environmental and economic gains for everyone. It’s time for every city to join the cycling revolution and think beyond the car.”*

Bicycle Mayors are independent city catalysts. They identify solutions to accelerate cycling adoption then unite all city stakeholders to make it happen. What started in 2016 with one Bicycle Mayor in Amsterdam - the global capital of cycling - has now spread to every continent. The network was established and is coordinated by BYCS. After consultation with local partners, it appointed Grzegorz Mikrut - a university professor and a member of the Polish Cycling Federation - as Katowice’s Bicycle Mayor at an event in the city last night.

**Grzegorz Mikrut, the new Bicycle Mayor of Katowice, said:**

*“This is the statement that Poland and Katowice needed to make during COP24 to show that it is serious about shifting the status quo and creating more liveable cities, fit for the future. As an independent, voluntary Bicycle Mayor, I can bypass the country’s political stalemate to deliver real action. I will now begin the process of listening to all citizens and groups to identify the most pressing challenges, and the smartest solutions, and then I will bring people together to make change happen. Increasing cycling is something that every city must do to address the urgent challenges of today and to prepare for a more exciting, healthy and prosperous future.”*

If you’d like to join the Bicycle Mayor program or would like to support the global network, go to [www.bicyclemayor.org](http://www.bicyclemayor.org)

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

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## **BYCS**

BYCS is an Amsterdam-based social enterprise driven by the belief that bicycles transform cities and cities transform the world. Our mission is called 50by30: 50% of all trips by bicycle by 2030. It demands the brightest ideas and the most determined action. And we believe it will lead to a fundamental increase in health, happiness and prosperity for all. We work towards 50by30 through initiating, testing and scaling breakthrough ideas around cycling. We invest our profits into managing the global Bicycle Mayor program. In all our work, we always ask – ‘where can the bicycle take us?’

[www.bycs.org](http://www.bycs.org)

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### ABOUT BYCS

BYCS sees a world where 50% of all city trips are by bicycle by 2030. We call this global vision 50by30. This ambitious goal demands the brightest ideas and the most determined action. We believe it will lead to fundamentally healthier, happier and more prosperous cities.

BYCS acts as a catalyst for breakthrough solutions around cycling. We create and accelerate ideas, and we kick start collaborations. We're pursuing our bold 50by30 goal by launching innovative programs that can scale and engage people globally.

To realise 50by30, we work with others who share our vision. If you'd like to contribute to one of our programs or have a suggestion for a way we could collaborate, we'd love to hear from you.

**BYCS**

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