

## **ENCOURAGEMENT THROUGH INFORMATION**

**WWW.NRVP.DE – THE WEBSITE OF GERMANY’S NATIONAL CYCLING PLAN**

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## ABSTRACT

The German National Cycling Plan (*Nationaler Radverkehrsplan*) was adopted by the government in 2002. Its aim is to increase bicycle use and safety considerably until 2012.

Governance in Germany is divided by constitution between cities, states and the national level. Therefore, the federal government has not the power to implement cycling policy on the local level on its own. In this situation, the website [www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de](http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de) ("*Fahrradportal*"/"Bicycle Portal") was introduced for coordination and the exchange of knowledge among the bodies involved in the implementation of the German National Cycling Plan: a national working group of all the German states, the federal administration, the German cities' associations and several organisations with an economic or user interest in bicycling, an intergovernmental working group with members of different departments, and various national technical and legal groups on bicycle planning and bicycle use. For them, an internal password protected work space was set up within the site.

The main area with public access provides experts and the general public with all kind of information on promotion of cycling as a part of a sustainable transport development: events, news, internet links, a bibliography, publications for download, good practices, and information about the activities of the federal administration, the German states and municipalities and the European Union. User traffic, which is monitored continuously, proves high demand for such an expert service.

## 1. FRAMEWORK

Germany's national bicycle strategy 2002-2012 aims at promoting bicycle traffic in Germany within the framework of sustainable transport politics. In 2002, the German National Cycling Plan (*Nationaler Radverkehrsplan*) was adopted by the government, and was confirmed at the end of 2005 by the newly elected governmental parties.

Its aim is to increase bicycle use and safety considerably until 2012. It has been published in German, translations into English, French, Russian, and Spanish are available (full text downloads under [www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/eu-bund-laender/bund/](http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/eu-bund-laender/bund/)).

The website provides the platform to assist the actors by information and incentives and to report about implementation.

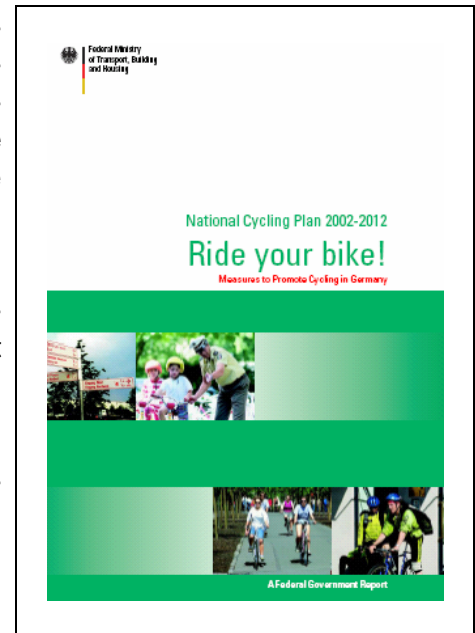


Figure 1: Germany's National Cycling Plan

One of the key ideas is that cycling has to be seen in a systems approach (cf. figure 2).

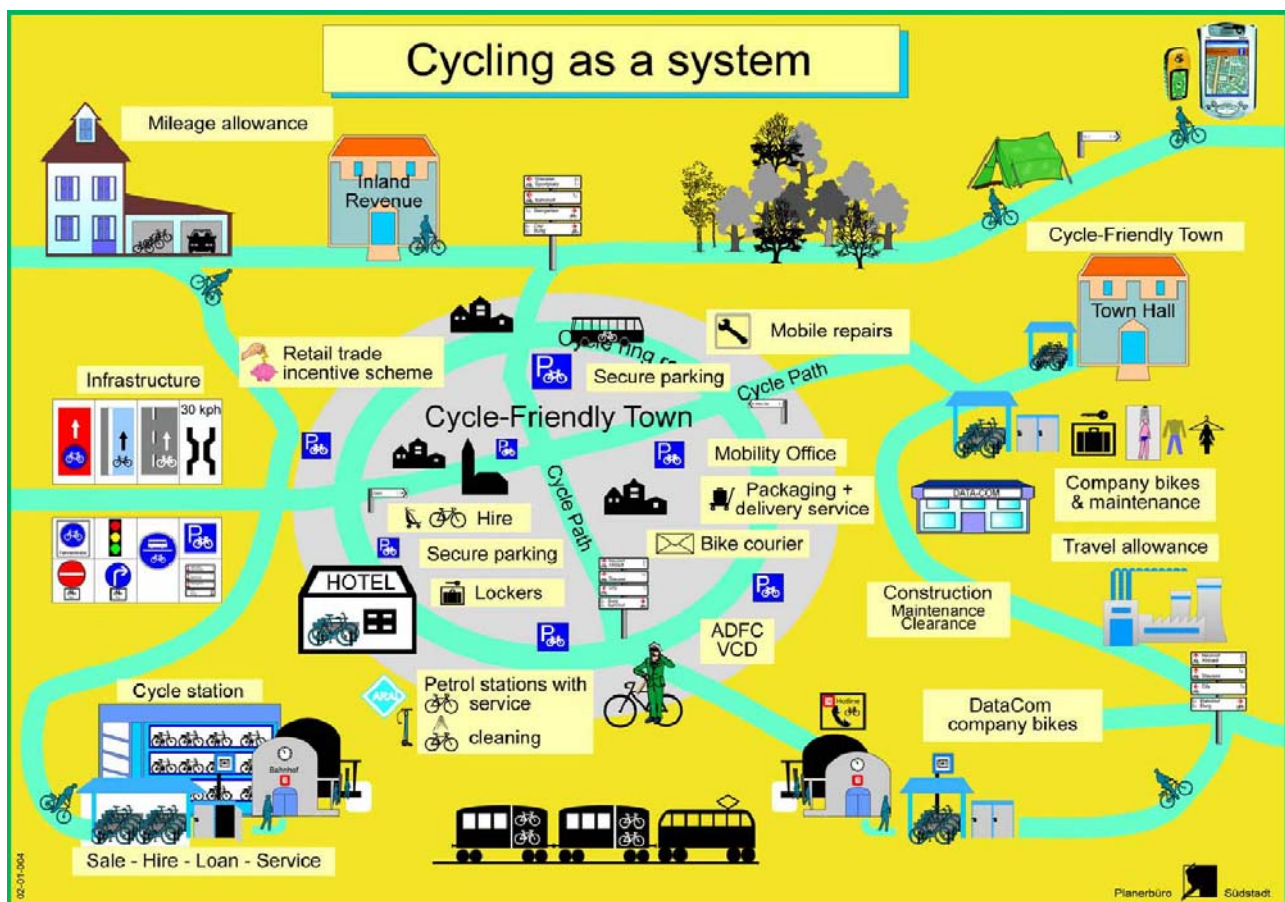


Figure 2: Cycling as a System – Diagram from the German National Cycling Plan 2002-2012

While the implementation of adequate infrastructures for cycling is usually the responsibility of the municipal level, some tasks of cycling accommodation are duties of the German federal states ("Länder"). The intention of Germany's National Cycling Plan however goes even far beyond transportation. A summary of its content is given in table 1.

*Table 1: Objectives and Measures Listed in the German National Cycling Plan 2002-2012*

Summary 1: What the Federal Government is trying to achieve	
<p><b>General objectives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase the cycle traffic share in Germany by 2012.</li> <li>● Promote cycling as part of a sustainable, integrated transport policy.</li> <li>● Promote modern, socially acceptable and environmentally friendly local mobility in line with the mission statement "city of short distances".</li> <li>● Improve road safety.</li> </ul> <p><b>Specific measures:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Doubling of the budget for building and maintaining cycle paths on federal highways in the 2002 federal budget.</li> <li>● Optimise the legal framework.</li> <li>● Campaign for improved road safety and a better transport climate, aimed at all road users (2001 road safety programme).</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordinate strategies for implementing the National Cycling Plan via the Federal Government/states "Cycling" joint working group.</li> <li>● Monitor the implementation of the National Cycling Plan, and report on the progress of cycle promotion policy.</li> <li>● Conduct research schemes (over € 1m.) and model projects.</li> <li>● Review current domestic and international research into cycling in cities.</li> <li>● Support the national "Best for bike" competition.</li> <li>● Institutional promotion by the German Cyclists' Federation and road safety organisations.</li> <li>● Establish an Internet platform open to the general public, to be known as the "National Cycling Plan Dialogue".</li> </ul>

As governance in Germany is divided by constitution between cities, states and the national level, taxation, funding and subsidies follow the principle of subsidiarity. It regulates the exercise of power in a way that nothing should be done by a larger and more complex organization which can be done as well by a smaller and simpler organization.

In general, the federal government in Germany is in charge of health, the environment, the economy and long distance mobility, but not of urban affairs, education or police. Thus, the federal government can only implement several aspects of cycling policy. To improve conditions for cyclists in Germany to its full extend, institutions and groups on the local and national levels have to cooperate.

On the contrary to other duties of transport policies, cycling policy has no well-established structures so far. To implement Germany's National Cycling Plan, the state, local and regional authorities and private partners have to cooperate. In this situation, the federal level has taken the task of coordination.

As a result, several working groups had been established to coordinate the German National Cycling Plan:

- an advisory committee,
- a joint working group of the federal government, the federal states and other organisations,
- an intergovernmental working group with members of different departments,
- about a dozen sub-groups, project groups and technical committees.

Additionally, there are several national groups with an interest in cycling policy, i.e. the German cities' associations, several economic and user organisations, and various national technical and legal groups on bicycle planning and bicycle use.

## 2. GERMANY'S NATIONAL WEBSITE ON BICYCLING

Since the internet assists effectively the connection of working groups, and supports their cooperation and exchange of information, it had been chosen in the first run as a tool to support their work. Furthermore, the internet enables to present the progress of the national cycling policy in public: Activities and goals of the state, the federal, and the municipal level, and of various federations can be published and distributed with easy access. Since the demand of information on effectively promoting the bicycle as part of an integrated transport system goes far beyond these groups, most information on the internet platform "*Fahrradportal*" (Bicycle Portal) is available publicly. The internet addresses are [www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de](http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de) and [www.nrvp.de](http://www.nrvp.de).

[www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de](http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de) was put up in 2004/2005 by Difu, the German Institute of Urban Affairs. It has been developed in close cooperation with the unit in charge of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development and the federal and states joint working group for cycling. Due to Difu's long tradition in integrating and coordinating projects and programs between the various political levels of the German federal system, and due to its competent proposal, it has been selected through a tender process.

The present website as shown in figure 3 is a special service for people working or being interested in cycling, i.e. people working in municipal administrations, experts, researchers, interest groups, etc.

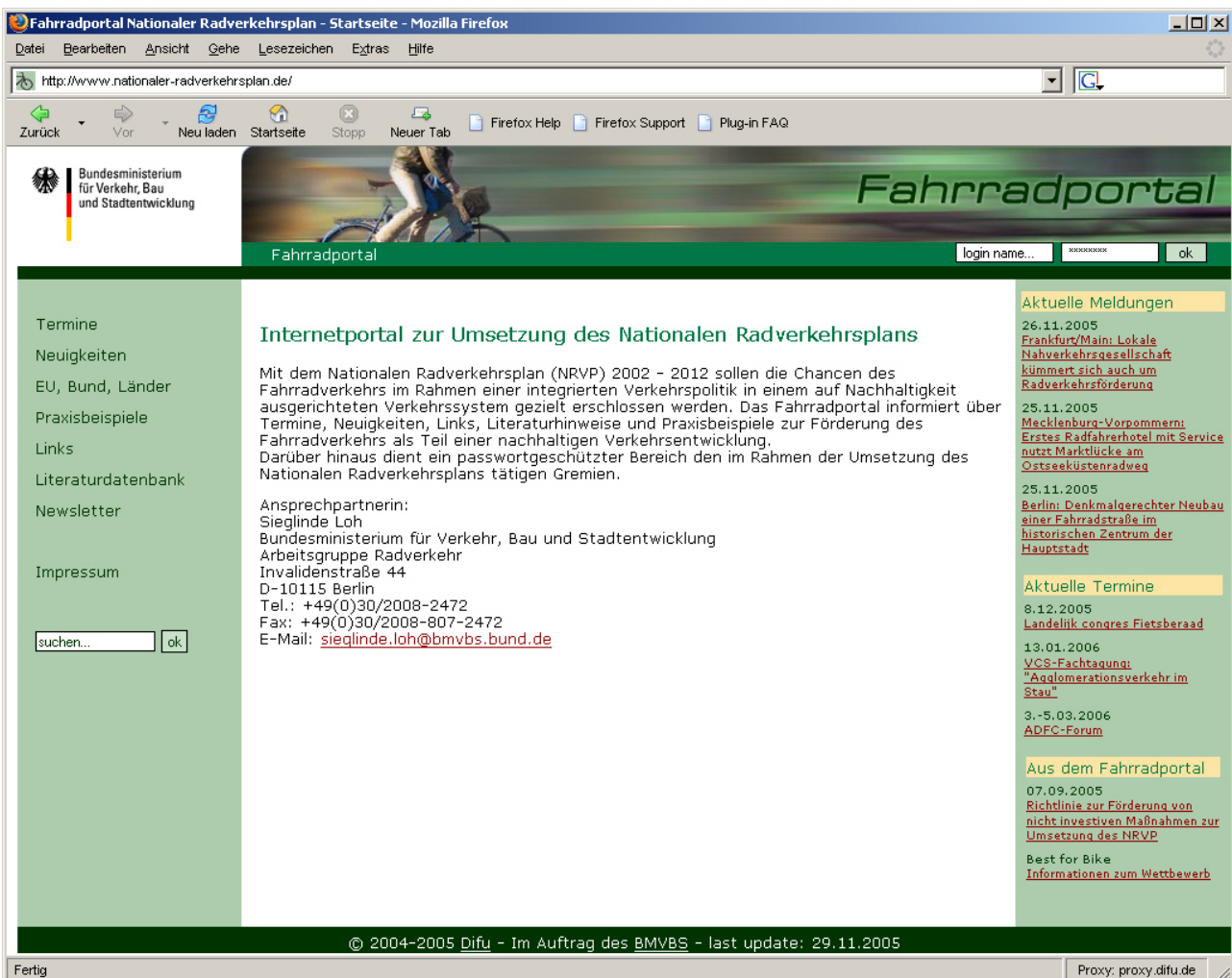


Figure 3 Start Page (November 2005)

For the several working groups mentioned above, the website contains an internal password protected work space with discussion forums and the possibility to exchange electronic documents. The main area however is available for public access.

As user traffic is monitored continuously, the usage of the particular areas of the website is well-proven.

### 3. CONTENT OF WWW.NRVP.DE

#### 3.1 INTERNAL PLATFORM FOR REGISTERED USERS

For all the national working groups mentioned in chapter 2, the website provides an internal platform for registered users only. Access is approved by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development. The internal work space enables the upload, download and display of documents, events and news for internal and/or external users, and internal discussion forums for every working group. At present, about 112 people in 10 groups have access to this part of the *Fahrradportal*. They cause about 6 % of user traffic – 94 % is caused by non-registered users within the public area.

#### 3.2 PUBLIC AREA

##### 3.2.1 OVERVIEW

The main area however is available for public access. It provides experts and the general public with all kind of information on promotion of cycling as part of a sustainable transport development: events, news, internet links, a bibliography, publications for download, good practices, and information about the activities of the federal administration, the German states and municipalities and the European Union.

The contents are complemented continuously. On the first hand, a working group within Difu has the task of collecting, organising and supervising additional contents. Furthermore, the internal group of users can also upload news, events, and publications not only for their internal use, but also for the public.

Two thirds of the contents (i.e. news, events, literature, good practices) cover Germany, one third cover information from abroad (cf. table 2). However, as the English and French pages and publications within *www.nrvp.de* will remain limited to a few, the content is largely limited to the world's German speaking community.

<i>Table 2: Shares of National and International Contents</i>			
<b>Contents on 28.2.2006</b>		<b>Germany</b>	<b>International</b>
Events	121	79 %	21 %
News	303	75 %	25 %
Links	200	57 %	43 %
Good practices	28	88 %	12 %
Total	652	71 %	29 %

Two newsletters are published regularly – one newsletter for all members of the internal working group and one newsletter for the public users of the internet platform. It is subscribed by 454 persons or units (28.2.2006). Both newsletters are published in German only.

### 3.2.2 EXAMPLE: DATABASE ON EVENTS

The menu item “*Termine*” (Events) lists events like seminars, conferences, symposia, large public events like mass bicycle tours, and so on. The events are selected mainly with a focus on Germany, but important events worldwide are listed as well. By click on an event, more detailed information is given (cf. figure 4).

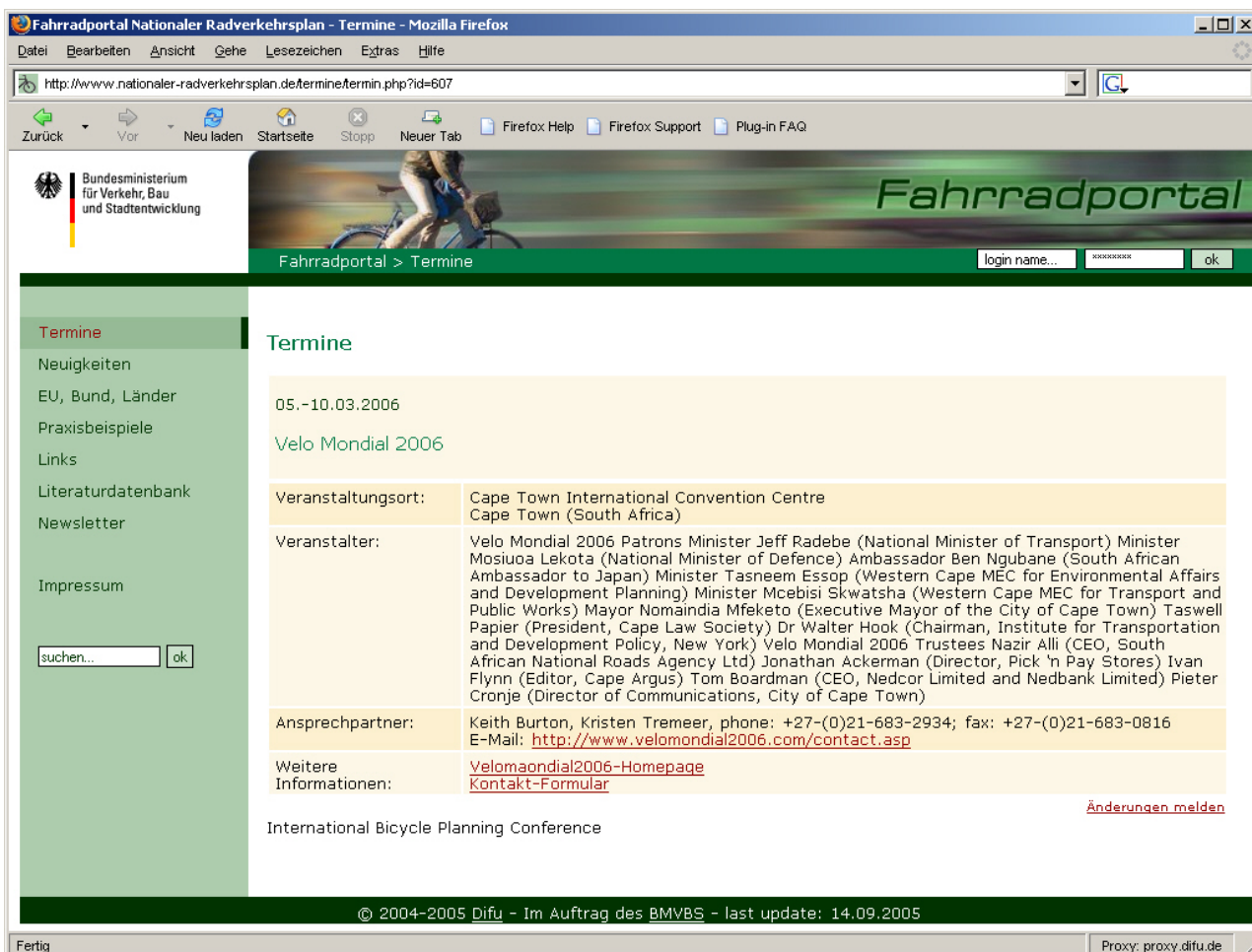


Figure 4: The Velo Modial Display – an Example from the List of Events

### 3.2.3 DATABASE OF NEWS

By a click on the menu item “*Neuigkeiten*” (News), the latest five news are shown. Via several sub menus, one can display a complete list of all news or choose a selection of news sorted by criteria of content and/or region.

At the end of February 2006 the portal contains 300 news. It is the part of the website that has the most traffic. Circa 25 news are added monthly. All news are classified by territory and by category and can be selected by a search procedure.

### 3.2.4 EXAMPLE: DATABASE OF GOOD PRACTICES IN CYCLING POLICY

The pages on (good) practice examples had been implemented in October 2005. They contain information on different types of examples, i.e. on bike parking, bike + ride, infrastructure, health, mobility management, etc. Information about a practical example is structured by a standardised scheme (type of example, detailed description, target groups, financing, evaluation, contact per-

sons, etc.), and is jointly put into the database by local experts and Difu. Without any censorship, good practice examples can be proposed by anybody around the world. At February 2006, there were 28 examples, and about two new examples are added monthly.

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Fahrradportal' website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/praxisbeispiele/anzeige.phtml?id=2015>. The website header includes the logo of the Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung and the title 'Fahrradportal'. A navigation menu on the left lists various sections like 'Termine', 'Neuigkeiten', 'EU, Bund, Länder', 'Praxisbeispiele', 'Links', 'Literaturdatenbank', 'Newsletter', and 'Impressum'. The main content area is titled 'Deutschland, Hamburg: Hamburg (1,7 Mio. Einwohner)' and 'Das Hamburger Fahrradhäuschen'. It features a list of project details: Handlungsfeld(er), Handlungsebene, Projektbeschreibung, Zielgruppe, Evaluation, Projektträger / Projektbeteiligte, Laufzeit, Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Dokumentation, Ansprechpartner, and Stand der Information. An image of a wooden bicycle shelter is shown with the caption 'Fahrradhäuschen in Hamburg (Copyright: Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt)'. Below this, the 'Handlungsfeld(er)' section is expanded, showing 'Abstellen / Bike+Ride'. The 'Handlungsebene' section is also expanded, showing 'Landesebene'. The 'Projektbeschreibung' section is expanded, showing '1. Allgemeines'. A paragraph describes the need for secure bicycle parking in dense urban areas, mentioning the challenges of parking in basements, backyards, or garages. It notes that parking on the street exposes bicycles to wind and weather, and that locking them to a street lamp is not always sufficient. The text suggests that bicycle shelters can provide a secure parking space near residential buildings. A second image of a green bicycle shelter is shown with the caption 'Fahrradhäuschen in Hamburg (Copyright: Behörde für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt)'. The browser's status bar at the bottom shows 'Fertig' and 'Proxy: proxy.difu.de'.

Figure 5: Example of (Good) Practice – a Small House for Bicycles

### 3.2.5 EXAMPLE: LIST OF INTERNET LINKS

The list of internet links may also be of interest for people from abroad, since a lot of German sites as well as international ones are listed.

- [YOUTH ON THE ROAD](#)  
The Youth on the Road initiative held by P.A.U. Education with the support of the European Commission (Directorate General of Transport and Energy) aims at promoting the participation of young people in road safety actions.

International

- [International Bicycle Fund](#)  
A non-governmental, nonprofit, advocacy organization, promoting sustainable transport and international understanding. Major areas of activity are non-motorized urban planning, economic development, bike safety education, responsible travel and bicycle tourism, and cross-cultural, educational programs.
- [Velo Mondial](#)  
Velo Mondial aims to bring all international stakeholders together to create a higher-level synergy of expert knowledge. This will support the position of bicycle planning on the agenda of local and national governments. Velo Mondial will provide an opportunity for cities to improve their support for bicycle planning in order to achieve the benefits that cycling can offer.

Ausland

Dänemark

- [Dansk Cyklist Forbund](#)  
Danische Interessenvertretung, Verbraucherschutzorganisation und verkehrspolitischer Verein, der die Interessen aller Radfahrerinnen und Radfahrer vertritt. Informationen in Dänisch, Deutsch und Englisch.
- [Odense - Denmark's National Cycle City](#)  
Kommunale Radverkehrsförderung in Dänemark. Informationen in Dänisch und Englisch.
- [The City Bike and Copenhagen](#)  
Internetauftritt der Stadt Kopenhagen zum Fahrrad-Verleihsystem in Kopenhagen sowie zu den Gesundheitsaspekten der Fahrradnutzung. Informationen in Dänisch und Englisch.
- [Vejdirektoratet / Ministry of Transport - Danish Road Directorate](#)  
Informationen in Dänisch und Englisch.

Estland

- [Fahrrad-Club Vanta Aqa](#)  
1979 von ehemaligen Studierenden der Tartuer Universität gegründeter Fahrrad-Club, der sich der Förderung des Radverkehrs in Städten verschrieben hat. Der Club gilt als Initiator für die Gründung des nationalen Fahrradroutennetzes Estlands und hat diese Idee erfolgreich umgesetzt. Ebenfalls ist der Club sowohl im Europäischen Radfahrerverband (ECF) als auch in der Initiativegruppe des internationalen europäischen Radwegenetzes "EuroVelo" tätig.

Frankreich

- [Paris](#)  
Homepage zur Radverkehrspolitik der Stadt Paris

Großbritannien

- [Creating a chain reaction - The London Cycling Action Plan \(2004\)](#)  
The Mayor's vision is to make London a city where people of all ages, abilities and cultures have the incentive and confidence to cycle whenever it suits them. The Plan has been developed to set out measures that will help achieve this vision and deliver lifestyle and economic benefits for London. Working together TfL, the London boroughs and many key stakeholders will implement the Action Plan measures to deliver a step change in cycling in the Capital. The overall aim is a tripling of cycle use with a target of an 80% increase in cycling by 2010.
- [Department of Transport, UK - Cycling](#)

Figure 6: Clipping from the Link List

The link list includes – by the end of February 2006 – 200 links.

### 3.2.6 EXAMPLE: LITERATURE DATABASE

Another feature of interest is the literature database. Difu is a producer of a large database for literature covering all aspects of municipal tasks. The part of it which refers to cycling policy is now available for free through the *Fahrradportal*. Whenever the full text of a publication is electronically deliverable and content provision is not copyrighted, the database not only contains its bibliographic reference with abstract but also free download opportunities. Furthermore, since Difu co-operates with Berlin's Senate Library, there is now a comprehensive collection of bicycle literature in the Senate Library. By the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2006 the database contained 313 titles including 65 pdf-documents for free download.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "Nationaler Radverkehrsplan - Literaturdatenbank - Mozilla Firefox". The address bar shows the URL "http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/literaturdatenbank/hrvp/suche.jsp". The page has a green header with the text "Fahrradportal" and a sidebar on the left with the text "Literaturdatenbank" and a "Logout" button. The main content area is divided into two sections: "Schnellsuche" (Quick Search) and "Erweiterte Suche" (Advanced Search). The "Schnellsuche" section has a search input field, "Suchen" and "Abbrechen" buttons, and radio buttons for "Einfache Suche" (Simple Search) and "Komplexe Suche" (Complex Search). The "Erweiterte Suche" section has a search input field, "Suchen" and "Abbrechen" buttons, and a table of search criteria with dropdown menus for "Autoren", "Titel", "Schlagwörter", and "Quelle", and a "Dokumenttyp" dropdown menu. The status bar at the bottom shows "Fertig" and "Proxy: proxy.difu.de".

Figure 7: Search Features of the Literature Database

### 3.2.7 EXAMPLE: INFORMATION ABOUT ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, BUILDING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The menu item “EU, Bund, Länder” supplies information about activities on the levels of state, federal, and the European Union. In February 2006 this item was still under development, but first information about the state level is given (cf. figure 9): At first, the German National Cycling Plan can be downloaded in German, English, Russian, French and Spanish (go to [www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/eu-bund-laender/bund/](http://www.nationaler-radverkehrsplan.de/eu-bund-laender/bund/)). A tool to find appropriate funding sources according to state and topic, the “Förderfibel”, was well received by our users. It is at present the second most viewed content category. It is intended to provide a German planning law database, which is one of the results of another projects, in a similar interactive way.

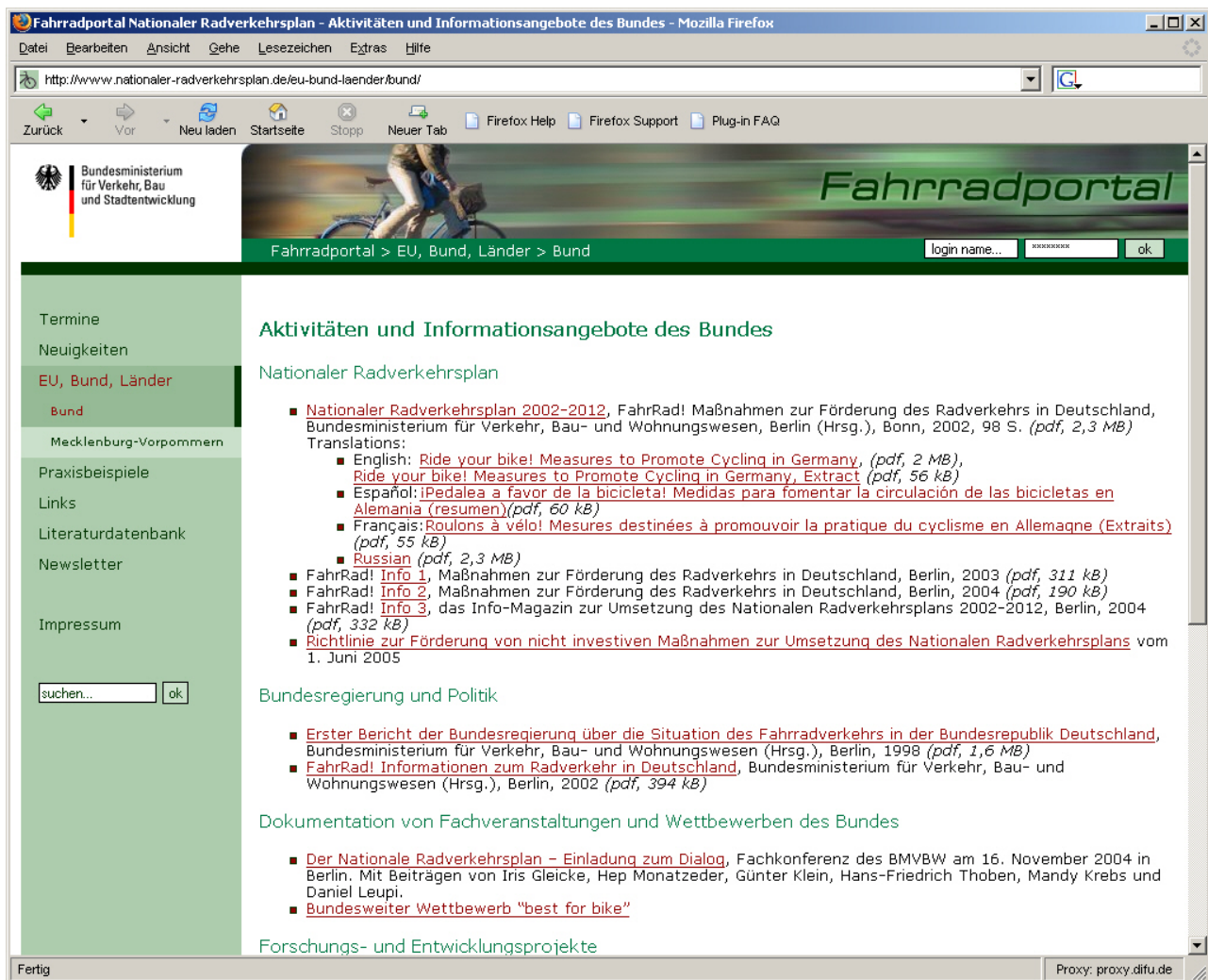


Figure 8: Bicycle Activities and Publications of the Federal Administration

Additionally, information on activities, conferences, public contests and research fostered by the Federal Ministry is available with full text download.

### 3.2.8 CONTENT DEVELOPMENT 2004-2005

The supply features of the website are monitored continuously. The list of table 3 shows how the input has developed between December 2004 and October 2005.

<i>Table 3: Content development of www.nrvp.de</i>				
<b>Item</b>	<b>December 2004</b>	<b>May 2005</b>	<b>October 2005</b>	<b>February 2006</b>
Documents and directories (password protected area for working groups)	?	?	416	423
Events	25	48	77	121
News	0	106	200	303
Practice examples	0	0	17	28
Links	163	178	194	200
Literature database	16	83	199	313
- including full text download	16	20	40	65
Registered users	82	103	109	112
Subscription of public newsletter	0	0	338	454

#### **4. ACCEPTANCE AND USER TRAFFIC**

Since the start in September 2004, statistics show increasing interest on the contents of the website. In October 2005 about 18,000 pageviews had been registered by about 2200 users (cf. table 4).

<i>Table 4: Summary of Website Traffic on Selected Pages of www.nrvp.de</i>				
<b>Pages</b>	<b>December 2004</b>	<b>May 2005</b>	<b>October 2005</b>	<b>February 2006</b>
Homepage (main entry page)	1,335	2,080	2,543	2,126
Documents (password protected area for working groups)	1,146	949	1,656	808
Discussion forums (password protected area for working groups)	439	61	507	128
Events	1,147	1,943	2,282	3,344
News	1,113	2,540	5,302	9,600
EU, Bund, Länder	116	2,262	2,589	5,733
Practice examples	--	--	2,223	3,562
Links	309	668	572	578
Literature database	--	21	478	775

#### **5. PERSPECTIVE AND WORK PROGRAM 2006-2012**

The focus on Difu as a central other information service point has been well established. The Difu working group holds close contact to the group in charge within the department of transport and all working groups, supplies them with information and stimulates information exchange between groups as well as between experts and the public. One instrument fostering this aim are the electronic newsletters (cf. chapter 3.2.1), which can be produced and delivered cheaply and efficient, and which are a modern strategy in terms of push communication: Important information is preselected and supplied directly to satisfy informational needs. Cyclist's organizations start to realize that www.nrvp.de is complementary and not a competitive to its own websites, as target groups and access to contents are different.

It is planned that during the period of the German National Cycling Plan until 2012, the portal will report about its implementation, about regulations, research reports, important literature, statistics, good practice, financing, planning law and guidelines, activities on state and federal level, activities of expert and interest groups, events, and so on. The basics for the website had been established, the content will be expanded continuously, and the portal will be widened through new items developed together with the Federal Ministry, expert working groups and the public.

Germany's new website now provides lots of useful information, examples and sources free of charge which may also help to encourage bicycle promotion and encourage bicycle use in other parts of the world.

## **6. CONTACT**

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