WALKING AND BIKING. GOOD PRETTY AND CHEAP

Posted on 12/05/2015 by Naider

In a previous reflection about the elections, I asked people who want to lead our cities in the coming years, about what they would do to move from urban spaces in which the car is the lord and master to others in which walking and cycling are options that citizens can choose naturally to move around our cities.

-You will be naive! With which you are falling, and worrying about this "nonsense". Well, no! It is not a minor issue and we are not making decisive progress precisely because our society does not understand why this is really relevant. Here are three arguments that do convince me.

The first argument is that it is good for health. Walking and riding a bike helps to maintain a moderate physical exercise routine that contributes to maintaining a balanced weight, reducing the risks of suffering from a multitude of diseases, particularly cardiovascular disease, and keeping us active, happy and living longer (You can find proven evidence of all this here). For this alone, it would be worthwhile for our mayors to get to work to facilitate the requested transformation, but it is also that, if it is possible to increase the number of people who do not use the car to get around, this will have important implications for in terms of public health: firstly, by reducing the emissions of dangerous polluting gases that contribute to a wide range of diseases including various types of cancer, respiratory ailments and heart failure that particularly affect children and the elderly. And secondly, due to the reduction in road accidents that would result from the lower number of cars on the road.

The second argument has to do with the economy. Walking and cycling are much cheaper means of transport than the car. Of course, they are for the one who uses them; If you have to travel 5 kilometers to go to work and instead of going by car, you do it by bike, you would save no less than 250 Euros a year, to which you would surely have to add the saving of time since for these distances the bike is usually faster than the car. But, in addition, it is also cheaper for society as a whole, not only because of the aggregation of individual savings but also because of how burdensome road traffic is for public coffers (construction and maintenance of road infrastructures) and because of the externalities that are generated in terms of loss of human life, extraordinary health expenses, noise, loss of time due to congestion on the roads, etc. (An assessment of transport externalities can be found at External Costs of Transport in Europe. CE Delft, Infras and Fraunhofer, 2011< /a>).

Last but not least, walking and riding a bike is, without a doubt, the most intelligent and cost-effective instrument that mayors have to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and jointly join the fight against climate change. A major global challenge that, if not remedied, will have serious consequences for the planet (see conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; IPCC) and to which all countries and regions that want to be relevant in the world must boldly and decisively join.

Well, nice and cheap at the same time. What more do we want to get down to work.

The photo accompanying the article is taken from Wikipedia

There are no comments yet.