



Utrecht, the Netherlands:

Utrecht: Bike Capital of the World

The Utrecht region (city as well as province of the same name) is very successful as destination for national and international knowledge events. In March of this year, in order to even further this success, the Economic Board Utrecht (EBU) announced that it grants an investment package to the amount of 1.3 million euros.

Part of this package is a promotion fund, intended especially for organizers of knowledge events in the province of Utrecht to promote it as destination. International congresses and meetings that relate to the spearhead objectives of green, health and clever,

can jointly count on a contribution in the costs for a congress to a maximum of one hundred thousand euros a year. This is perfectly in line with the intended profile of Utrecht as Bike Capital of the World.

In Utrecht, the use of the bike is in the city's DNA. Between 7 A.M. and 7 P.M. more than 100,000 citizens and commuters cycle in the city centre. In order to promote the use of the bike even more, the municipality of Utrecht has constructed various cyclist-friendly routes, and the world's largest bicycle store, which can accommodate 12,500 bicycles, is realized next to the central railway station. There was even a special bicycle manager appointed who will further optimize the routing through the city.

Grand Départ

This profile is of Bike Capital of the World was ultimately confirmed by the fact that in and around Utrecht, stages of no



The advantages of Utrecht

- Central location in the Netherlands
- 30 minutes from Schiphol Airport
- Excellent congress locations and hotels
- Venues in the city centre in walking distance
- Favourably priced compared to other European cities
- Lively university city with an authentic and friendly atmosphere
- Citizens with the highest education level in the Netherlands
- Ideal mix of history and modern culture
- Politically stable country and city

less than two major cycling events were held. During the Giro d'Italia in 2010, one of the stages ran around the city and the finish was right in the city centre. This year, for the sixth time, the Netherlands are also the location for the Grand Départ, the festive start of the Tour de France. For the first time, the start will take place in Utrecht. After the team presentations in the Lepelenburg park on 2 July, the first stage, an individual time trial, will start on 4 July. During the second stage on 5 July the cyclists will tour the Dom cathedral and leave the province of Utrecht to finish at Neeltje Jans in the province of Zeeland. The Business Peleton Utrecht (BPU) is still working hard organizing the Grand Départ, but is already focussing on the organization of the start of the Vuelta a España in 2019. When the BPU succeeds in this objective, the city of Utrecht will be the first city worldwide to have hosted these three major cycling events.

Focus on cycling

In the field of congress organization, this focus on cycling has been quite profitable for Utrecht. This year the 'Domstad' (named after the famous cathedral tower) will host no less than three large conventions focused on cycling. On 18 June the Nationaal Fietscongres (national cycling convention) will take place in the Beatrix building of the Jaarbeurs Convention Centre. At this congress the aspects of the bicycle as a means of transport will be discussed, with topics like health, accessibility, livability and safety. On the eve of the Grand Départ the seminar 'Cycling & Society' is organized. At this seminar the four Utrecht knowledge institutions will discuss with politicians, policy

makers and interested citizens on the meaning of cycling for society in general and an event like the Tour de France in particular. On 1 and 2 July, in connection with this, the international congress 'Science & Cycling' will be held in collaboration with the UMC medical centre. Experts from the professional cycling world and scientists share their most recent research results and experiences with an interested audience of researchers, doctors, food experts, cycling unions, trainers and, of course, cyclists, triathletes and players from other sports disciplines.

Independent advice

Economic Board Utrecht hopes to attract even more appropriate international knowledge events to Utrecht in the future. Utrecht Convention Bureau (UCB) endorses this and

promotes Utrecht as congress capital where green, healthy and clever developments take place. Knowledge institutions like the Utrecht University, the UMC Utrecht, Hogeschool van Utrecht, the Utrecht Science Park and Stichting Hotel Overleg Utrecht (HOST) are important partners in this. The UCB is keen to help organizers in the realization of their congress. This organization offers independent and free advice and can take care of various organizational elements like choice of venue, transportation, hotel arrangements, marketing and promotion and the compiling of social programmes. They can also help to get access to the stimulation fund.

www.utrechtconventionbureau.com
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