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New station-less bike sharing system comes to Florence (Italy)

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Country:

Italy

Topic:

Urban mobility planning

Walking and cycling

Transportation in Florence has become a lot smarter and more inclusive. On 2 August, an extensive bike sharing programme was launched that will see 8,000 bikes made available.

The programme does not require fixed bike stations or docks (in which users pick up and drop off bikes). Instead, an app identifies the nearest bike available through GPS and allows users to reserve them. Once reserved, the bike can be used for as long as desired. When finished, riders need only leave it in the nearest designated area, ensuring it is locked.

The system's management and maintenance costs are a fraction of those incurred in a fixed station model. The entire process of renting, paying for and returning the bike is managed through a dedicated smartphone app. The service, which will be available 24 hours a day throughout the year, will at first cover the municipal territory of Florence, but will be gradually extended to the metropolitan area.

"Florence has made a definitive choice towards sustainable mobility, a choice that began with electric cars and taxis and that now sees Florence become the first city in Italy to offer an innovative free-flow bike-share programme," said Mayor Dario Nardella. "Florence is a bike-friendly city: from now on choosing to cycle around Florence is going to be easier and faster."

To ensure safety and proper maintenance, rider behaviour is monitored and tariffs are modified accordingly, encouraging proper and responsible use. None of the bicycles' components are reusable on other bicycles, discouraging damage, and all bicycles are traceable by GPS, discouraging theft. Other anti-theft devices have also been installed, such as the brakes not working if the bike is not activated through the app.

To find out more, visit comune.fi.it (in Italian).

Image credit: Città Metropolitana di Firenze
