

Pedal4Progress 7th Edition

Maastricht - Brussels – Ostend – Manifiesta

Ride plan and itinerary

Brief background to Pedal4Progress and the 7th Edition cycling Challenge. We originally set up our challenges back in 2013 as a way to help raise funds and boost circulation for the Morning Star newspaper.

We are a loose collective of CPB members and progressive trade unionists and have widened our aim of building funds for the Morning Star to developing practical international solidarity and links with comrades from our sister Party's and the Morning Stars sister publications.

To date we have undertaken 6 challenges both national and international, including a special trip the Baltic Sea Peace Conference last November, each edition takes on a specific theme and over the past few years we have remained focused on our stand against NATO aggression. This year (7th Edition) is **Forward Left - No to NATO** and is reflected in the route we will be riding. We plan to engage with comrades informally on our bikes during the day and though socially in the evenings. Sharing experience, ideas and identifying potential activities we can develop in the future. Since our inception we have always carried the slogan 'Using the bicycle as a revolutionary tool for Socialism!' We are working on the potential of some simple political activities during our stay in both Maastricht and Brussels.

This year the Pedal4Progress team will arrive in Maastricht around mid-afternoon on **Wednesday 18th Sept**. We have a ride team of 6 riders of mixed ability supported but two vehicles and drivers. The itinerary for the challenge then looks like this.

Check in to **Hotel de la Bourse** (18/09/19) Markt 37 Maastricht City Centre 6211 CK Maastricht Netherlands Phone +31433218112

Please note *International participants are asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation.* We will then organise a central location for social drinks and getting to know all the participants

On **Thursday 19th Sept** we will gather outside our Hotel at 08.30 for the ride briefing and a sharp roll out at 09.00 to ride the following route.

Morning Section <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29444867>

This 60km route takes us to Gussenhoven where we will stop for lunch. During the morning at around the 30km mark we will regroup with the logistics team for a quick coffee and to check everyone is alright. We usually find a nominal place to regroup and the logistics support team scope out a suitable place to eat / drink. This will be decided during the ride itself.

Afternoon section <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29462620>

This 60km section will follow the same morning format with a pit stop around the mid-way point and riding directly to our overnight accommodation.

We will be staying at the **Generation Europe Youth Hostel** Ruedel'Elephant 4 Sint-Jans-Molenbeek 1080 Brussels Belgium +32 24 10 38 58

Please note *International participants are asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation.*

During the evening we intend to plan some political activity to show our opposition to the growth in NATO and EU aggression. We are still in the planning stages and will update participants once we have a more details.

On **Friday 20th Sept** we with all gather at the Youth Hostel at 08.30 for the ride briefing and roll out at 09.00 on the following route

Morning Section <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29463114>

As with the previous day this 62km ride to Lovendegem will include a coffee and pit stop around the 30km point and then some lunch before we set off on the final part of the ride.

Afternoon Section <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29463502>

This is another 62km ride so will again feature a coffee stop along the route to our overnight accommodation

We have reservations for two nights at the **Leopold Hotel Ostend** Van Iseghemlaan 110 Ostend Centre 8400 Ostend Belgium +32 59 70 08 06

Please note *International participants are asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation.*

On arrival in Ostend we will be greeted with a traditional shot of Havana Club from the logistics core and after we settle into of hotels we will all gather for a celebratory meal, drinks and final briefing, We expect to meet up with other comrades / supporters of the ride and participants of the festival who will help us mark the occasion. Further details on final arrangements will be notified in due course.

During the ride our two support vehicles will be following us in close proximity throughout the 240km journey should anyone get into difficulty there will always be the option to catch a ride for a few kilometres and join the group along the road. Our logistics support team will take your personal belongings in the vans on to the next destination and will be dropped off at our central hotel at the end of each day.

On **Saturday 21st** our final day for riding, we intend to ride the short 8km journey to the festival site

Start time to be confirmed <https://ridewithgps.com/routes/29463766>

We are expected to be joined by volunteers working at Manifiesta who will lead us to the festival grounds. We will need to have some level of flexibility for the short route as we will be liaising with the organisers of the festival on arrival times and arrival point. Participants will therefore be advised nearer the time once final arrangements have been made.

Some extra point of information

(based on my responses Mario Franssen Director of Manifiesta)

Is there a limited number of participants?

There is no limit to the number of ride participants, we have organised rides of 20 or more in the past. Should the size of the group exceed 20 we will ask for assistance from other more experienced riders to help out with keeping the group(s) together and with navigation where necessary? I would welcome offers of any support with those who have any such experience. I am currently working on a ride team of around 12 (To be confirmed) from UK Holland and Germany

Could the average speed be reduced when the group becomes too big?

The average speed will be set at a steady 24km per hour. If the group became too big at any time we would simply look to split the pack into smaller groups with a minute or two gap between them to keep things moving smoothly. This helps ensure we do not become a problem for other road users and that riders would still feel comfortable and safe in the pack. I usually check all riders are OK every 15km and work up and down the line; we build in pit stops every 30km for coffee, lunch, to take on water or spare jackets etc. so riders are never usually more than 20 minutes away from the logistics core to deal with any specific issues. Emergency contacts are required and we issue key contact numbers in the unlikely event anyone becomes detached from the group.

What are the deadlines to join the bike ride?

There are no deadlines to join, as soon as you can confirm numbers the easier it will be to anticipate ride plans. I hope we can know the total number of participants but early August at the latest. Riders would be obliged to find their own accommodation if joining from the start of the ride but we will be able to carry all kit and belongings in one of the support vehicles. I should also state that should anyone fall into any difficulty they will always have the option to sit out one of the sections and travel in the support vehicle should they fell the need.

Basic ride food such as fruit light snacks and water will be provided and we would ask participants to make a small contribution to top these up once we run out. Main meals and drinks etc. are covered by individual riders.

Who is this challenge for?

This is an ideal sporting challenge for progressives and communists who want to show international solidarity in support of the struggles of the working class and who express opposition to EU and NATO aggression all done in a social, sporting and political environment.

This challenge should be achievable by anyone with a general level of fitness, it is not a race and we can take as long as we need to arrive at our overnight stops. Should the group dynamic allow we may decide to split the pack at times to allow riders to go at a higher tempo.

What bike is best?

I would strongly recommend the use of roads bikes or hybrid bikes with road tires. They should be road worthy and able to carry you through the three days of riding. Bikes should be recently serviced, riders should bring basic tools and inner tubes etc as we do not have a trained mechanic with us and any repairs will need to be made on the road or taken to a local bike repair shop should there be more serious issues.

What about kit?

Lycra is not compulsory but it is a lot more comfortable. Bring lightweight gear, a rain jacket, gilet and a wind jacket to anticipate all circumstances. Lights should also be considered in case we get caught out late or during changeable weather conditions. We also strongly recommend wearing a crash helmet regardless of legal standards or riding environment. For off the bike kit again pack light and casual.

Who is the key contact?

I am the key contact for **Pedal4Progress** and can be contacted at lesdoc44@hotmail.com or should you wish to speak in person on +447733266307

If you have any questions, comments or queries please get in touch. We are very excited to be joined by even more international riders this year. We have set up a 'WhatsApp' group and as participants sign up they will be added to the group to keep abreast of planning and developments.

In comradeship
Les Doherty