

## Proposed Helmet Law Defeated in Poland: Science beats Superstition!

By: Amanda Winter, ECF Communication Assistant with information from Adam Łączek, member of Inicjatywa Kraków Miastem Rowerów

1 July 2011 -- This spring a compulsory helmet law for cyclists under 15 was voted down in the Senate, providing a victory for the cycling world in the Republic of Poland. Adam Łączek, a member of a local organization [Inicjatywa Kraków Miastem Rowerów](#) (Krakow: City of The Bicycles Initiative) which is a part of a growing Polish network [Miasta dla Rowerów](#) (Cities for Bicycles), boasts “Science won against superstition!”

Łączek argues that policy makers are making decisions regarding helmet laws without sufficient knowledge of the subject. For example during an infrastructure committee meeting, Director Jacek Zalewski claimed that “in countries with more mature democracy” most people choose to wear helmets for their safety but have no such legal obligation. Perhaps Zalewski is unaware of the latest statistics on helmet use in western European countries, such as the [Netherlands](#), where less than 5% of cyclists actually wear helmets, says Łączek .

When Łączek learned of the proposed law, he took the initiative to inform the Ministry about the overall effects of compulsory helmet laws. As the fight against the media, pro helmet lobby and ill informed politicians may be never ending, he acknowledges this is not an ultimate victory, but certainly this battle was won. He sent articles and research studies to the Ministers, urging them to reconsider. Some compelling [data](#) he used regarding cyclists and helmets includes:

- 🚲 Intracranial injury in road accidents occurs more often with pedestrians.
- 🚲 Superficial injuries of the head occurs more often with users of cars.
- 🚲 Open head wounds occur more often with truck and car drivers.
- 🚲 The most likely injury/fracture for cyclists occurs in the facial skeleton, arm, collar bone, forearm and hand, areas the bicycle helmet fails to protect.
- 🚲 In the event of an accident, pedestrians (26%) and drivers (24%) are more prone to head injuries than cyclists (17%).
- 🚲 [European Cyclists' Federation materials](#) and Mikael Colville Andersen's [TedX talk](#) on Why We Shouldn't Bike with a Helmet

Dr. Piotr Kuropatwinski, Vice President of the [Pomeranian Association Common Europe](#) (PSWE) and board member of the European Cyclists' Federation, supports the overturn of this proposed law and does not believe a helmet law is necessary for safety.

More news on cycling in Poland and articles written by Adam Łączek can be found at [www.ibikekrakow.com](http://www.ibikekrakow.com).