

1. Summary of Legal Cycling Rules in France, Italy, Portugal and Spain

The following guidance synthesises key cycling laws and regulations in the four countries covered by the 3Cs project. All participants are expected to comply with local rules while cycling, especially outside urban areas.

1.1 Riding Position and Group Formation

Country	Rules Summary
France	Ride on the right. Group riding two abreast is allowed, but switch to single file at night, when overtaking, or in narrow sections.
Italy	In cities, ride single file if required by conditions. Outside cities, riding two abreast is only allowed if one cyclist is under 10 years old.
Portugal	Riding side by side is allowed (max. 2), except in poor visibility or heavy traffic. Must not obstruct vehicles.
Spain	Two abreast allowed, keeping to the right. Must ride single file in low visibility or dense traffic. Motor vehicles must leave 1.5 m when overtaking.

1.2 Helmet Use

Country	Rules Summary
France	Mandatory up to 12 years old.
Italy	Not mandatory for any age.
Portugal	Not mandatory for any age.
Spain	Mandatory under 16. On interurban roads, helmets are mandatory unless climbing long hills or under extreme heat.

1.3 Lights, Reflectors and Visibility

Country	Requirements
France	At night or in poor visibility outside cities, a high-visibility vest is mandatory. Bikes must have: front white reflector/light, rear red light/reflector, pedal reflectors, bell audible at 50 m.
Italy	At night or in tunnels/outside urban areas, high-visibility vest/braces are mandatory. Bikes must have: front white/yellow light, rear red light/reflector, side and pedal reflectors, bell.
Portugal	No mandatory clothing. Visibility is required outside cities at night. Bikes must have: front white light/reflector, rear red light/reflector, side reflectors.
Spain	Bikes must have: front white light, rear red light. At night or outside urban areas, riders must wear reflectors visible from 150 m.

1.4 Traffic Signals and Priority

Country	Rules Summary
France	Cyclists may pass red lights only when an explicit traffic sign allows it. Must always yield to crossing traffic.
Italy, Portugal, Spain	Cyclists must follow the same traffic light and stop rules as other vehicles.

1.5 Use of Cycle Lanes

Country	Rules Summary
France	Cycle lane use may be mandatory depending on signage. Cyclists must use the right-hand lane if both sides have cycle paths.
Italy	Where cycle paths exist, they must be used unless otherwise specified. Rules apply equally to single and bidirectional lanes.
Portugal	Cycle lanes are not mandatory, but traffic signage may create local obligations.
Spain	Use of cycle lanes is strongly recommended, but not mandatory.

1.6 Final Note and Legal Sources

These rules are based on national legislation valid as of **January 2025**. Participants should verify local updates before travel.

France

Code de la Route

<https://www.securite-routiere.gouv.fr/reglementation-liee-aux-modes-de-deplacements/velo/regles-de-circulation-pour-les-cyclistes>

Fédération Française des Usagers et Usagers de la Bicyclette

<https://www.fub.fr/>

Italy

Codice della Strada

<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:decreto.legislativo:1992-04-30;285!vig=>

Federazione Italiana Ambiente e Bicyclette

<https://fiabitalia.it/>

Portugal

Código da Estrada

<https://diariodarepublica.pt/dr/legislacao-consolidada/lei/2013-116041830>

MUBi – Associação pela Mobilidade Urbana em Bicycleta



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<https://mubi.pt/>

Spain

Código de Tráfico y Seguridad Vial

https://www.boe.es/biblioteca_juridica/codigos/codigo.php?modo=2&id=020_Codigo_de_Trafico_y_Seguridad_Vial

ConBici – Coordinadora en Defensa de la Bici

<https://conbici.org/>



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