



Time trials between Knokke-Heist and Bruges, road races from Antwerp to Leuven

2021 UCI Road World Championships: tailor-made for 'Flandriens'

The 2021 UCI Road World Championships that will be held in Flanders from 18 to 26 September 2021 are revealed in the four host cities. The official visual was launched and the mascots were presented, but most of the focus went to the course of this 100th anniversary edition of the World Championships.

The UCI awarded the organisation of the 2021 Road World Championships to Flanders in Innsbruck in 2018. Exactly 100 years after the very first Road World Championships, the event 'is coming home' to Flanders, the birthplace of road cycling. The 100th anniversary will be the central theme for numerous occasions in the run-up to and during the Championships themselves and will also take pride of place in the campaign images.

Poster containing all the elements of the World Championships in Flanders

The official campaign visuals will be popping up all over the place in the coming year. The design will obviously be dominated by the colours of the rainbow jersey, the colour lines looking like brush strokes and referring to our cities of art. The Flemish accents (of the race) such as the Flandriens and Flandriennes, and the cobblestones have been depicted in the tradition of the Flemish culture of comics. Furthermore, the design pays homage to the idea that typifies the true Flandrien: suffering in the struggle for eternal fame.

The mascots are a sympathetic lion and lioness: Leon and Leontien. In addition to the well-known walking mascot that will be visible in the streets, there will also be a digital, animated version that will be used in films and digital content.

Time trial course for the real time trialists, Flandrien course for the road races

The route that has been set out for the time trials (from Sunday 19th until Wednesday 22nd September) between Knokke-Heist and Bruges is particularly suited to the men and women that can rely on a high power output. They will start from a platform on the beach of Knokke-Heist against the backdrop of the North Sea. The riders will cycle along the seafront, through the centre of Knokke-Heist and will then race through the open plains - where the wind will have free rein – and along the canals and polders. Via Damme they will reach the art city Bruges.

From Friday 24th September, the road races will dominate the programme. That is when the international peloton will discover that true “Flandrien” feeling, with a couple of short steep inclines and our internationally renowned cobblestones. The elite men, women and U23 men will start in the centre of **Antwerp** and finish on the Geldenaaksevest in **Leuven**. The men’s and women’s juniors will complete their competition in its entirety racing down the local loops in and around Leuven.

The elite men, elite women and U23 men will begin their World Championships from the Antwerp **Grote Markt** in the shadow of the Cathedral. The first kilometres will take them past plenty of iconic buildings that dot the Scheldt city: MAS, Port Authority building, Central Station, Palace of Justice,...

After a detour through another city of art, Mechelen, the peloton will continue via the **official World Championships village Keerbergen** in the direction of Leuven. They will take in the local circuit of 15.5km through and around the city already for a first time. Next, the caravan winds its way to the so-called “Flandrien” circuit and continues to Huldenberg, Overijse and **official World Championships village Tervuren**. The elite men will then circuit the bigger loop in the Druivenstreek (grape region), including five nasty climbs, twice. Two of those climbs, the **Moskesstraat** and the **Bekestraat**, are serious cobbled hills and might turn into the executioners of the 2021 UCI Road World Championships. Leuven will see another couple of laps of the local circuit and the slightly uphill finish on the **Geldenaaksevest**. The 2021 UCI Road World Championships finish line was unveiled by ex-World Champions **Eddy Merckx** and **Johan Museeuw**, amongst others.

David Lappartient, President of the **UCI**: “The 2021 UCI Road World Championships is being heralded as an historic moment. We are celebrating the 100th anniversary of the greatest cycling event of the year in Flanders and Belgium, one of the cradles of our sport. The courses that have been revealed confirm that this edition of the Road World Championship is promising to be exceptional.”

[Discover our courses here](#)

Cities and region in the spotlight

The Road World Championships have an enormous media impact, not only for cycling and cyclists, but definitely also for the region that is hosting the event. Thanks to its international acclaim, the 2021 UCI Road World Championships are a gigantic poster boy for Flanders' tourist attractions such as our art cities, our coastline and the cycling tourism on offer.

"Knokke-Heist is delighted that we as hosts of the Road World Championships can showcase our city", says **Mayor Count Leopold Lippens**. "The start of the time trial on the beach is unique and the spectacular images will be beamed around the world. Professional and recreational cycling fits well with the joi de vivre of Knokke-Heist and you can combine it perfectly with our other assets such as art, gastronomy and shopping! Everybody who would like to come and discover our fantastic nature and our exceptional variety, is very welcome here."

"Looking at the current class of riders, there is an undeniable chance that we will already be able to laud a first Belgian World Champion on the beach on day 1, the elite men's time trial", comments **Mayor of Bruges Dirk De fauw** looking ahead. "We are used to welcoming international visitors in style in Bruges. We have historic ties with cycling and have strong ambitions with our cycling policy. Today is the start of the run-up to a sporting climax, the 100th anniversary of the UCI Road World Championships. We will work together with our city's inhabitants to make sure we find a fitting way of celebrating the event." The city's Councillor for Sport Franky Demon adds: "We are already getting many enthusiastic reactions from Bruges associations and inhabitants, all offering to help. So, there is a wealth of inspiration to make this a joyous occasion. The city will help to fan and support these initiatives."

Bart De Wever, Antwerp's Mayor: "If you say cycling, you say Flanders. As a thoroughbred cycling city we naturally have quite a bit of experience with road races. Think of the Tour of Flanders, which has been setting off from here for a couple of years now and attracts massive crowds. Or the Tour de France, that touched down here on 6th July 2015 and for which we provided the beautiful backdrop for the start of the third stage. It goes without saying that we in Antwerp, which is celebrating 100 years as an Olympic city in 2020, are eagerly looking forward to being one of the starting locations for the UCI Road World Championships next year, which are celebrating their 100th anniversary in 2021. Another top competition with a lot of history! The race for the rainbow jersey will take off in Antwerp and the city will pull out all the stops to welcome the riders and spectators with open arms and to make it an unforgettable festival of cycling."

"It is Leuven's ambition to become the European City of Sport in 2021. The city welcoming the UCI Road World Championships will give it an enormous boost and will elevate Leuven to a higher level", says **Mayor Mohamed Ridouani**. "Flanders is cycle racing and cycle racing is Leuven. Our city has all the ingredients to create a fantastic apotheosis. We have hills, cobblestones and the best fans in the world. Therefore, we are extremely proud to welcome the 2021 UCI Road World Championships and to bear witness to the crowning of the new champions of tomorrow and to pay homage to the cycling heroes of today".

Flemish Minister for Sport Ben Weyts: "To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the UCI Road World Championships, road racing is coming home to Flanders. We will make sure that nobody forgets about that. It will be a week-long high mass. We are going to show the world that Flanders is the home of road racing."

The Flemish government is extending a hand through **EventFlanders** to the participating cities and the Province of Flemish-Brabant to enable an event of this calibre to run smoothly. EventFlanders is supported by Toerisme Vlaanderen, but is part of cooperation between Toerisme Vlaanderen, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Culture, Youth and Media and Sport Flanders.

Flemish Minister for Tourism Zuhal Demir: “The UCI Road World Championships are our chance to showcase Flanders and to present ourselves to the world as the ‘home of the Flandriens’ and as an attractive cycling region. The World Championships are much more than an event for us, it will also be a catalyst for creating sustainable relationships on several levels, including cycling policy, cycling tourism, sustainability and innovation. And we are ambitious. Flanders wants to host many more top events of an international standing in the future, with the support of EventFlanders.”

For the provincial government of Flemish-Brabant, the 2021 UCI Road World Championships form an ideal opportunity to cement its position and that of its tourist regions – Hageland and Groene Gordel – on a national and international stage. It is the structural support that the tourism sector needs after suffering severely as a result of the corona crisis. “The influx of visitors will help to restore the upward trend in the Flemish-Brabant accommodation numbers that we saw before the crisis,” says **Deputy for Tourism Monique Swinnen**.

Ann Schevenels, Deputy for Events Policy adds: “There is close cooperation with the municipalities along the course. The project will be supported by the grassroots.” The provincial government is also aiming for long-term effects. In addition to the Sven Nys Cycling Center, the Sven Nys, De Brabantse Pijl and Eddy Merckx cycling routes and the virtual cycling challenges, the World Championships are a new building block in the development of a high-quality offering to the active tourists that love sports.



Programme 2021 UCI Road World Championships – Time Trials

SATURDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2021

Official opening

SUNDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2021

Elite Men: Individual time trials Knokke-Heist – Bruges

MONDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2021

U23 Men: Individual time trials Knokke-Heist - Bruges

Elite Women: Individual time trials Knokke-Heist – Bruges

TUESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2021

Men's Juniors: Individual time trials Knokke-Heist - Bruges

Women's Juniors: Individual time trials Knokke-Heist – Bruges

WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

Team Time Trials Mixed Relay Knokke-Heist – Bruges

Programme UCI 2021 Road World Championships – Road Races

THURSDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

Official training road races

UCI Congress - Leuven

FRIDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2021

Women's Juniors: Road race Leuven

U23 Men: Road race Antwerp – Leuven

SATURDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2021

Men's Juniors: Road race Leuven

Elite Women: Road race Antwerp - Leuven

Gala, 100th anniversary of the UCI Road World Championships - Leuven

SUNDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2021

Elite Men: Road race Antwerp - Leuven

Closing event

You can find all information on the brand new website www.flanders2021.com.

The UCI 2021 Road World Championships Flanders-Belgium is an organisation of vzw WK2021, which is a collaboration between Flanders Classics and Golazo, two experienced organisers of cycling competitions and cycling events.

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