

FEMA History

June 25th, 2008



1. The creation of FEMA and institutional developments in Europe

On 25 June 1988, 6 Motorcyclists from national road riding organisations from France (FFMC), Germany (Kuhle Wampe), United Kingdom (MAG UK), Greece (M.O.T.O.E), Austria (MAG Austria) and Luxembourg (LMI) – sat together on the grass in Strasbourg. Out of this meeting came the decision to form a European organisation to defend and promote the interests of riders: **The Federation of European Motorcyclists (FEM) was born.** Having no or only very limited funding (mainly coming from MAG UK), FEM first Secretariat emerged in Charleroi (Belgium) beginning of the 90's, with Frank Pearson as first General Secretary. The Office then moved to Brussels in 1992 under the charismatic and passionate leadership of [Simon MILWARD](#), who became the real driving force of the Federation. From now on, riders would be represented in the heart of the EU legislative process.



Ten years later, on 10 January 1998, the Federation of European Motorcyclists (FEM) and the European Motorcyclist Association (EMA) merged to form the **Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA).**

This event clearly marked a milestone in the history of motorcyclists' representation. Realising they shared common interests, the two associations decided to join their forces to represent road riders in the EU. Despite national boundaries, the new Federation linked riders from all around Europe through their mutual beliefs and values. Today: **FEMA is strong of 24 National Organisations in 19 different countries, and represents nearly 350.000 riders.**



Nowadays, few people know the rich history of FEM-FEMA and why - 20 years ago - the "old generation" founded the Federation. **The creation of FEM was closely linked to the evolution of European Institutions.** With the development of the common market and the drive to create a European Union, new legislations were drafted for the sake of harmonisation. Unfortunately, several new law proposals - drafted by politicians having no or very limited knowledge of motorcycling - directly restricted or attacked riders' basic freedom and rights.



New campaigning associations hence emerged in order to respond to riders' demands and discontent. **This political activism was a real citizen's movement:** Thousands of riders would go down the streets to make their voices heard. On 25 Jun 1988, 5000 motorcyclists demonstrated in Strasbourg. This was the first **EURO DEMO**. Over the years, the number of riders demonstrating, coming from all over Europe, continuously rose to reach 20.000 in Paris (Euro Demo 1994) and 30.000 in Brussels (Euro Demo 1996).

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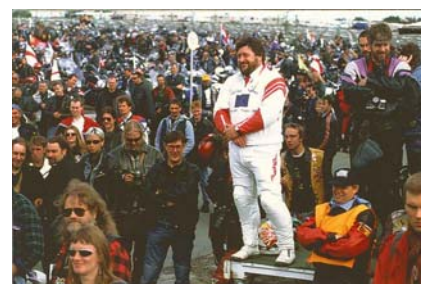
2. The 90's: Maastricht Treaty and FEMA relation with European Institutions

EU politicians started paying attention to motorcyclists and realised a dialogue was necessary. On the other hand, riders became aware they needed to get involved in the legislative process in order to challenge attitudes and decisions. Furthermore, with the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Parliament was conferred new powers. It was now possible for citizen's organization to bring issues to the Parliament and get real support.



During this period, the Federation of European Motorcyclists had to fight against a series of law proposals. Beginning of the 90's, two main issues were on the table: the **100 brake horse power limitation proposal** and the so-called "**multi-directive**", which set up a series of regulations to harmonise vehicles' type approval. Thanks to an active lobby, the 100 bhp proposal was completely dropped: the European Parliament had for the first time used its new power. Substantial changes and improvements to the Multi-Directive were also made to take motorcyclists and their characteristics into account. These victories clearly established FEM credibility as a true citizen's group, set up to defend citizen's rights. The Federation achieved many other successes such as the **rejection of compulsory motorcycle clothing**, and most importantly: the **victory against the incoherent and dangerous leg-protector or airbag proposals**.

Decision makers increasingly listened to motorcyclists and FEM was strengthening links with Members of the European Parliament and Representative from the European Commission. Some MEPs became real friends and supporters of the Federation. This was – among several examples – the case of **Mr. Roger Barton**, who actively worked against the "Multi-Directive". Another supporter was **Mr. Graeme Preston** from the European Commission DG TREN, who actively supported FEM/A on a series of issues, such as the Green Paper on Urban Transport and the inclusion of motorcycles as part of the solution against congestion. Mr. Preston and his wife, both became motorcyclist themselves!



In order to maintain this good relationship with the Parliament and be able to further collaborate in the future, FEM set up the **first MEP Ride (1997)**. This event was a real bikers' event, an informal gathering with Members of the Parliament offering an opportunity to say: "Thank you for your support". The MEP Motorcycle Ride has now been organised every year since its creation.

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3. Work at the United Nations and creation of the International Coalition

In the 90s, FEM was clearly recognised as the organisation representing the “voice of the riders”. However, the Federation was facing new challenges: **increasingly, regulations and agreements were now decided at the UN level.** In order to continue its active work and to influence decision-making, FEM decided to get involved at the international level. The Federation hence extended its activity out of the European framework. **FEM’s political work took on a global dimension.**

In 1996, FEM received the Consultation Status at the United Nations and was represented in Geneva by its charismatic General Secretary, Simon Milward. The role of the Federation as International stakeholder was thus formalised and FEM was in a position to participate as an **official stakeholder in the UN legislative process.**

Yet, attending the many different meetings created a massive financial burden that the Federation could hardly bear. Furthermore, being a European Federation, FEM could not speak on behalf of the entire international motorcycle community. The **need to create a stable financial base and to extend motorcyclists’ representation at the UN** became increasingly felt, especially at the beginning of the 21st century: issues which had been discussed at the European level in the 90s were now back on the UN agenda and demanded a great amount of work and resources.

In the years 2000-2001, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), the Motorcycle Riders' Foundation (MRF), the Federation of European Motorcyclists' Associations (FEMA) and the Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) decided to set up an **International Co-operation Fund** with the objective of ensuring an efficient representation of motorcyclists at the United Nations, where Worldwide Standards for Bikes and road safety measures were developed. The so-called **“International Coalition”** was born. Thanks to this international collaboration, great achievements have been made throughout the years. Among many examples, great successes were achieved in the field of **World Motorcycle Test Cycles** (the Coalition managed to establish WMTC as a Global Technical Regulation without limit values, defeated moves to block cheaper imports, and correlated WMTC to existing method limit values), **World Motorcycle Brake Regulation** (defeated moves for GTR to effectively require ABS, ensured ABS test compares systems working and disabled, opposed options for governments within GTR) and **Motorcycle Noise Regulation Review** (contested demand for a roadside rolling test and pushed for riders’ rights within enforcement provisions). The work obviously goes on!



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4. FEMA's involvement in EU Research projects

Aware of the challenges and the general trend to either include motorcycles in what is being designed for 4-wheelers or to develop new technologies that do not take motorcycle characteristics and motorcyclists' needs into account, FEMA decided that it was of crucial importance to be part of as many motorcycle-related research projects as possible. The purpose of this involvement is for FEMA to provide researchers with in-depth knowledge of motorcycling from the end-users' point of view and to ensure that the research and outcomes of the projects are for the benefit of motorcyclists and motorcycling.

With the financial support of the European Commission (DG TREN), FEMA initially undertook two major pieces of research in the field of motorcyclist protective guardrails and initial rider training. The **Motorcyclists & Crash Barrier project** (2000) aimed at investigating the effects of crash barriers on motorcyclists, identify ways to reduce severity of motorcycle accidents against metal crash barrier and make recommendations for road traffic authorities to reduce injuries in collision with crash barriers. In addition to this report, FEMA published the **Road to Success**, the aims of which were to provide an overview of the projects that have been successfully carried out in a number of European countries, describe the difficulties and obstacles that motorcyclist organisations encounter; and list conclusions and recommendations to assist politicians, road authorities and motorcyclist organizations to implement successful policies to improving the safety of motorcyclists.

The **Initial Rider Training Project** (IRT) 2007 – the logical continuation of the **Young Rider of the Year project** (2002) - has created a European initial rider training programme which includes a modular approach to initial rider training, the essential elements and aspects for initial rider training, a method and approach to support initial rider training, and a comprehensive manual for use in a range of situations. It has also evaluated the potential of e-Coaching, reviewed recent rider and driver training research, and surveyed national training and testing arrangements.



FEMA then embarked on a series of new projects within the **6th and 7th European Research Framework Programme** (FP6 and FP7). Framework programmes are major milestones in EU policies as they define priorities to the research sector according to the various objectives the EU tries to reach. As far as transport is concerned, the EU is financing more and more research towards intelligent systems which is believed will help to fight congestion, improve road safety and reduce all environmental costs.



Within the 6th Framework, FEMA became partner in **APROSYS** (the Integrated Projects on Advanced Protection Systems), and **MYMOSA** (Towards Integrated Safety for Powered Two Wheelers). FEMA is now taking part to several projects of the 7th European Research Framework Programme (FP7), which was launched early



February 2007. With this framework, the EU gives new guidelines for the research work to be undertaken by the whole research community – comprising not only research institutes and academics, but also the private sector and civil society organizations, such as FEMA. FEMA's participates to **SAFERIDER**, which focuses on on-Board Technology (ICT), **2BeSafe**, which aims to design and implement a broad ranging research programme to produce knowledge of PTW rider performance, behaviour and safety, alone or when interacting with other road users, and **Smart RRS** (Crash Barriers).

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FEMA responded to proposals submitted to the European Commission on Research and Development on May 7th 2008, such as **NeMiSSIS** (Near Miss Accident study) and **SAMOTO** (Research Coordination) which aims to constitute a pan European platform in which all countries, regions and stakeholders can discuss, share, coordinate and disseminate different initiatives such as policies, standards or just simply best practices. SAMOTO will build this open discussion forum in order to ease this exchange and spread of recognised best practices.