

# The Iron Curtain Trail as a EuroVelo route – strengths and weaknesses



## Results from the EuroVelo study

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The Iron Curtain Trail

Awareness-raising Workshop for

Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Norway

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# EuroVelo study



- A study by the Institute of Transport and Tourism, University of Central Lancashire (UK) & NHTV CSTT (NL)
- Requested and funded by the EP's Committee on Transport and Tourism
- Key aims:
  1. Determine the current scale and scope of cycle tourism in Europe
  2. Evaluate the extent to which EuroVelo can be developed as a sustainable tourism network
  3. Investigate the potential of the Iron Curtain Trail



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THE EUROPEAN CYCLE ROUTE NETWORK - EUROVELO



THE EUROPEAN CYCLE  
ROUTE NETWORK  
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STUDY

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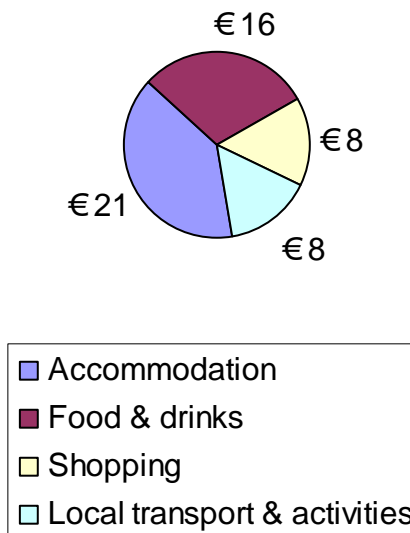


# Estimating demand and economic impact



- Demand model: number of cycle tourists dependent on bed density in NUTS 3 regions; number of day cyclists dependent on population density in NUTS 3 regions
- Economic impact estimated by using weighted averages of (daily) spending (12 national & regional studies)
- Cycle tourists spend €53 per day on average, divided over →
- Cycle tourists spend €353 per trip on average
- Day excursion cyclists spend almost €16 per day on average
  - 60-75% on food & drinks

Daily spending cycle tourists



# European cycle tourism



- European cycle tourism estimates (per year):
  - 2.8 billion cycle tourism trips in Europe
  - 25,6 million overnight trips = 3% of total tourist trips by EU population
  - Total economic impact of €54 billion
- EuroVelo potential – if network is developed:
  - Estimated 12.5 million holiday trips per year
  - Estimated 33.3 million day excursions per year
  - Potential total direct revenue of almost €5 billion per year



# Potential Iron Curtain Trail



- If developed as a part of the EuroVelo network:
  - 849,000 holiday trips per year
  - 3,3 million day excursions per year
  - €355 million in direct revenues per year
- Uneven distribution due to:
  - Distance of ICT per country
  - Large variations in touristic infrastructure (bed density) & population density
- Not possible to estimate the source markets for the ICT, but main cycle tourism markets (D, NL, DK) will be important



# Potential ICT per country



Country	Dist	Holiday trips		Day excursion		Total	
		Km	Trips	Rev. (mill. €)	Trips	Rev. (mill. €)	Trip days
Norway	125	1.000	0	1.000	0	7.000	0
Finland	1.050	14.000	5	34.000	1	125.000	5
Estonia	580	27.000	10	130.000	2	311.000	12
Lithuania	453	24.000	9	276.000	5	435.000	13
Latvia	80	5.000	2	27.000	0	60.000	2
Poland	569	192.000	68	1.145.000	19	2.414.000	87



# Strengths & Opportunities

- Cycle tourism can be an ideal form of slow travel with a minimal ecological impact, while retaining local economic impacts
- ICT can generate additional tourism in underdeveloped regional economies
- Strong historic, cultural and natural appeal with insight into both East and West → unique cycle route worldwide
- Large settlements along the route provide cyclists, heritage and good rail, coach and ferry connections (exception: far North)
- As part of the EuroVelo network the ICT can benefit from managerial experience of route development
- Support by European Parliament!
- Positive effects on local quality of life – additional opportunity for physical recreation and better health





# Weaknesses & Threats



- Northern and southern extremes of the ICT have a low population density, so demand will be unevenly distributed
- Uneven tourism infrastructure along the route
- Currently no management framework for the project
- Lack of cooperation between various ICT projects would be a threat
- Financial resources and investments may be small
- Marketing long-haul markets (e.g. to remote areas) can eliminate the positive ecological advantage of cycle tourism due to high air travel emissions
- Many competing sustainable tourism projects in Europe



# Generating added value

- Stakeholder involvement = more than tourism: integrating interfacing sectors like tourism, sport, transport & local economy increases visibility and functioning
- Encourage both local and cross-border cooperation → profit from local and cross-cultural knowledge
- Strong ties with local communities can substantially increase local use of the route and increase both economic impacts and local well-being
- Develop other sustainable tourism opportunities along the ICT (e.g. cultural heritage & nature conservation)
- Encourage cycle tourists that prefer local food and accommodation - it stimulates local supply chains
- Northern section could be marketed as wilderness tourism
- ➔ Make use of best-practice cases (e.g. in EuroVelo report) – no need to re-invent the wheel





The author in the Harz mountains, 1988

**Thank you for your attention!**

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