

EuroVelo 13

Iron Curtain Trail

Transnational Communication
and Promotion Strategy





Background

For almost half a century, Europe was forcibly divided into East and West by the 'Iron Curtain', a border stretching from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. The international cycle route known as the Iron Curtain Trail invites people to retrace and experience this important part of the continent's history by following the former border.

A unique biosphere developed along the border due to its unique history in the twentieth century and in many places along the route, cyclists can enjoy the European Greenbelt.

Since 2011, the route has formed part of EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, as EuroVelo route number 13.

Goals and expectations

The purpose of this Transnational Communication and Promotion Strategy is to define the key messages and actions for the successful communication and promotion of the entire EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail (EV13 – ICT) over the short to medium term (3-5 years) after which time it should be reviewed. It is to be used by professionals working on communicating and promoting the route and should be supplemented with similar strategies on a national and/or regional level.

The Strategy is based on best practise in this field although it has been adapted to take into account the current characteristics of the EV13 – ICT (e.g. some relatively underdeveloped route sections compared to some other transnational cycle routes, no National EuroVelo Coordination Centres or Coordinators in some countries etc.).

The Strategy should be read in conjunction with the other documents in the ECF EuroVelo publication series available from: www.EuroVelo.org



EuroVelo communication and promotion principles

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The general principles of communicating and promoting EuroVelo routes are:

- Every marketing and promotional activity should be in line with the EuroVelo and national corporate design and web guidelines.
- Overview information must be communicated at the European / transnational (EuroVelo route) level with detailed information available on the national and regional level.
- The route must be integrated into existing national and regional offers and promotional tools.
- Temporary problems with route conditions should be communicated via signs as well as in promotional tools, clearly explaining the challenges (for example bad surface, steep gradients or speed and level of motorised traffic, lack of services, ferry order etc).
- In exceptional circumstances, parallel sections can be allowed by the ECF (for example on both sides of a river). Where they exist, it should be clearly communicated, expressing the differences between attractions, route conditions etc.
- Sections of route can only be communicated as 'car free' if there are no more than 50 motor vehicles per day.
- Connecting routes, which are not part of the EuroVelo Network, cannot be communicated as EuroVelo routes on signs or in promotional materials.



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Taking into account the location of EV13 – ICT (generally slightly ‘off the beaten track’ in terms of traditional tourist attractions) and the current status of the infrastructure, it is considered that on a transnational level the route will generally appeal to:

- Cyclists on cycling holidays – people that specifically come to spend time cycling a section of the ICT over several days or weeks; and
- Cyclists on day trips for leisure – for obvious reasons this will cover the populations living within a few hundred kilometres of the route.

These target markets will form a good basis for the development of EV13 – ICT as a successful tourism product and in time the route can also start to attract other types of cycle tourist in significant numbers as well.

Of course there will be small sections where other target markets are already relevant (e.g. around Bratislava the route is also used for daily commuting as well as day trips for leisure). This should be reflected in communication and promotion activities developed at a local, regional or even national level.



The focus of the communication and promotion related to the project should be the history of the border and the unique biodiversity of the European GreenBelt, as these are its unique selling propositions.

The key messages that need to be communicated are:

- The route of EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail follows the border of the Iron Curtain and by cycling it you can learn about our shared European history and culture. It also acts as a pertinent reminder of a once divided Europe.
- Due to its unusual history, the route of the former Iron Curtain has become an internationally significant Greenbelt and an important area for biodiversity.
- The Iron Curtain Trail forms part of EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, which aims to connect the continent through a network of long distance cycle routes.
- Cycling the Iron Curtain Trail is an extremely sustainable form of tourism and/or mobility, particularly if combined with public transport.

In addition to these key messages on a transnational level, additional points can be added to reflect important aspects of EV13 – ICT at a national or regional level.



Main communication and promotional tools

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Set out below are the main instruments that have or will be used on a transnational level to reach the target groups. Most of them can also be applied on a national or regional level too. They have been split into three categories, according to their specific objective:

- A. Awareness raising
- B. Creating and maintaining visual identity
- C. Establishing and maintaining media relations

A. Awareness raising

The main purpose of these tools is to raise awareness about EV13 – ICT. The tools should always be tailored towards the specific target groups (see page 7):

- Events – an extremely important communication tool due to their interactive character and the media opportunities that they can provide (e.g. ITB Berlin).
- Promotional materials – distributing physical promotional materials remains an important means of informing potential customers about the EV13 – ICT. There are many different types of promotional materials that can be used, including:
 - flyers,
 - brochures,
 - maps,
 - guides,
 - newsletters,
 - posters,
 - ‘giveaways’ (e.g. cycle repair kits, pens, USB Stick, t-shirts etc.)

All materials should be produced following consistent visual design (see Visual identity tools below) and language style and should be available for download in electronic format (if relevant). Priority should be given to materials that can be made available online wherever possible, as they are generally more accessible and can be more easily updated.

- Website and apps – the transnational website www.EuroVelo13.com is an important tool for promoting key messages and as a source of up-to-date information. The new EuroVelo 13 App will be used not only to communicate information to users cycling the route but also as a tool for promotion and building social groups.
- Social media – An existing transnational EuroVelo 13 Facebook account helps to raise awareness by communicating the latest news about the route and is also used to help build an online community. In the future, other social media platforms may also be used on the transnational level.

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B. Creating and maintaining visual identity

It is important to create a strong visual identity to ensure that people are aware that EV13 – ICT is an international route that forms part of the EuroVelo network.

In order to make the most of the benefits of developing the network, the EuroVelo routes should be communicated in a uniform and coordinated manner as widely as possible.

To achieve this goal, ECF has defined the different graphic features which can be used by partners (National EuroVelo Coordination Centres and Coordinators, touristic organisations, editors, service providers etc.) to communicate EuroVelo or EuroVelo routes in a document entitled EuroVelo Corporate design, guidance for partners, which is available to view on: www.EuroVelo.org.

Using these graphic features allows the partners to enjoy the benefits of the growing awareness of EuroVelo across the continent and in turn, helps to increase it further. The guidance for partners document details the recommended use of the main EuroVelo graphic features. It has been designed so that these elements can be used in the frame of other corporate design requirements.

The main EuroVelo graphic features that are to be considered are:

- Route information panels
- Schematic diagram
- Colours – as used in the schematic diagram
- EuroVelo logo



Main communication and promotional tools

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C. Establishing and maintaining media relations

One of the best ways of bringing EV13 – ICT to people’s attention along the route and beyond is to attract media interest. It is therefore important to:

- Establish links with European and national media representatives;
- Continue regular contact with the media representatives
- Supply the media with high-quality news material

Proposed actions on the transnational level, include:

- Establish a database of journalists that should be constantly updated
- Issue press releases and press kits;
- Invite journalists to attend study tours / events organised at a national or regional level.

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ICTE Project Partners:

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