

EuroVelo

the European cycle route network

European Certification Standard



July 2013



Goals, definition and contents

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Goals of the European Certification Standard:

- Improve the quality of EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, by identifying critical deficiencies in the network and motivating decision makers to invest in solutions to the identified problems.
- Motivate different target groups with varying levels of experience to use the certified trans-national routes by providing quality control.

Definitions:

- EuroVelo - the European cycle route network - was initiated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) to develop a network of high-quality cycling routes linking all countries in Europe. It can be used by long-distance cycle tourists, as well as by local people making daily journeys.
- Only the 14 EuroVelo routes in their entirety or their major cross-border sections (at least 1.000 km long, crossing at least 2 countries and with clearly defined origins and destinations (e.g. major cities or attractions)) can be certified. The certification is valid for 5 years.
- The basic units of data collection for the certification are 'Daily Sections' (usually between 30 -90 km) and 'Minor Sections' (minimum of 1km).

Contents of the certification:

- Each route, or its major sections, should fulfil the needs of all the target groups. However, a differentiation has been made with the criteria based on the fitness level, skills/experiences and bicycle of the users:
 - ESSENTIAL CRITERIA - cover the needs of regular cyclists, who use bicycle as a main mode of daily transportation and/or frequently for leisure and tourism purposes. All the essential criteria must be met along the entire route.
 - IMPORTANT CRITERIA - meet the needs of occasional cyclists with little experience and average skills and fitness levels, who use the bicycle regularly for daily transportation and/or have already made several leisure trips. At least 70% of the length of the route should fulfil all the important criteria.
 - ADDITIONAL CRITERIA - cover the needs of more 'demanding' or 'inexperienced' cyclists and/or cyclists with special bikes (e.g. road cyclists, small children on trailers, tandems, hand bikers etc.).
 - Further criteria which are evaluated positively or negatively.
- During the certification process each route will be evaluated against these criteria and given a score. The whole route can be described as being generally safe, comfortable and attractive if at least 50% of the maximum possible score has been reached on every daily section and the whole route reaches at least 60% of the weighted average of all criteria.
- All criteria fall under the following categories: route infrastructure, services, marketing - promotion

Contents of this document:

- Criteria by route elements: Route infrastructure, services, marketing and promotion
- Methodology for data collection and evaluation
- Certification process and the communication of the results

¹ See the different target groups in the EuroVelo, Guidance on the Route Development Process manual (Page 5).



Certification criteria – route infrastructure

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Continuity:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** The route should not contain any physical disruptions that make the route impossible to ride. All natural (river, cliff etc.) or artificial (railway, motorway etc.) barriers should be crossed with adequate infrastructure (bridge, ferry, subway etc.). Furthermore, there should be no legal disruptions (i. e. sections where cycling or crossing by bike or generally entering is forbidden or subject to permission being granted.)
- **ADDITIONAL CRITERION:** All sections of EuroVelo routes shall be free of any physical disruptions (e. g. stairs leading to bridges, non-accessible sections for tandems etc.) for more “demanding” groups of cyclists (e. g. families with trailers, people with reduced mobility etc.).

Route infrastructure components:

- All route infrastructure components set out in the ‘EuroVelo Guidance on the route development process manual’ are acceptable, but high quality, traffic free or very low traffic components are preferred and will be evaluated more positively.
- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** Certified routes should not make use of public roads with high levels and speeds of motorised traffic to a degree of more than 50% of a daily section and/or 25% of the whole certified route in total. The route does not contain any daily sections that include more than 10% of their length on public roads with very high levels and speeds of motorized traffic (over 10.000 vehicles per day if the speed limit exceeds 30km/h) without (at least) having asphalted shoulders or bike lanes.
- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** Certified routes should not contain more than 10% of the length of any daily section with high levels and speeds of motorized traffic (over 4.000 vehicles per day if the speed limit exceeds 30km/h) without (at least) asphalted shoulders or bike lanes.
- **ADDITIONAL CRITERION:** A section of a certified EuroVelo route cannot be recommended as fulfilling the needs of special target groups if there are any dangerous junctions on this section.

Surface and width:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** The surface should be suitable for use by cyclists with any type of trekking or touring bike in normal weather conditions during the local cycling season. It should be smooth and solid enough to ride, so it should either be asphalted or paved with another material. In exceptional circumstances loose material may be used but must be consolidated.
- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** At least 50% of any daily section should be as rideable as a good asphalted surface.
- **ADDITIONAL CRITERION:** The surface should preferably be suitable for road bikes, children’s bikes, bikes with trailers or other types of multitrack bicycles. It should be as rideable as a high quality asphalted surface.

Gradients:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** Daily sections do not include elevations of more than 1,000 m.
- **ADDITIONAL CRITERION:** There are no minor sections longer than 5 km with a gradient of more than 6%.



Certification criteria – attractiveness, signing and public transport

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Attractiveness:

- Sections in attractive natural and cultural environments are preferred and evaluated positively. Areas with social safety and/or environmental challenges are evaluated negatively. Safety challenges could include fear of crime in urban areas or dangerous situations caused by animals. Environmental challenges could include noise, dust or odour pollution.
- **ADDITIONAL CRITERION:** no more than 50% of the length of a daily section should be classified as having monotonous surroundings. The whole section should fulfil the needs of special target groups regarding social safety issues.

Signing:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** The signing should be complete and in line with the relevant national standards (if they exist) and the EuroVelo guidelines (mandatory).
- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** No signing is missing at main junctions.
- National signing standards, bi-directional signing, information boards, confirmation signs and additional road markings are evaluated more positively.

Public transport:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** Carrying bikes on public transport to access the route is legally and physically possible at least every 150 km.
- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** Carrying bikes on public transport to access the route is legally and physically possible at least every 75 km.
- The following will be evaluated more positively: high frequency connections, adequate bike carriage capacity, comfort and safety, reliable and fair conditions, online booking, safe bike storage, parking capacity in public transport interchanges and more frequent access to public transport along the route.
- Public transport connections play a major role for the evaluation due to another reason: If one (or more) of the essential criteria listed in this manual will not be fulfilled, but the affected section can be substituted by the use of public transport, the route still can be certified if it is clearly communicated. This exceptional rule is limited to a total amount of 10% of all daily sections of the EuroVelo route under assessment.



Accommodation:

- ESSENTIAL CRITERION: Daily sections should have at least basic accommodation (simple hotel or home stay or camping etc.).
- IMPORTANT CRITERION: The range of standards is not limited to one extreme category (e.g. very basic or luxury only) within a daily section.
- Daily sections with a wide range of standards of accommodation or with some certified as cycling friendly will be evaluated more positively.

Food, drink and rest areas:

- ESSENTIAL CRITERION: There should be at least basic food and drink (e.g. pub, shop or restaurant) or rest stations in every daily section.
- ADDITIONAL CRITERION: There should be at least basic food and drink (e.g. pub, shop or restaurant) or rest stations every 15 km.
- Daily sections supplying a wide range of standards of restaurants, pubs or shops or with some certified as cycling friendly will be evaluated more positively. High quality rest areas (e.g. including toilets, running water etc.) will be evaluated more positively.

Bike repair and bike shops:

- ESSENTIAL CRITERION: There should be bike repair workshops / bike shops every 150 km or self service repair-stations every 50km.
- IMPORTANT CRITERION: Bike repair workshops or bike shops should be present on every daily section.

Other services:

- ADDITIONAL CRITERION: Pedelec charging stations on every daily section.
- Helplines, bike and pedelec rental stations and bicycle centers with complex services will be evaluated more positively.

Bookable offers:

- ESSENTIAL CRITERION: Availability of at least one trans-national offer.



Certification criteria – marketing, promotion

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Web communication:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** It is obligatory to provide detailed information about the national and/or regional sections on the national and/or regional level, connected with overview info about the whole route on www.eurovelo.com. The content of any national / regional website should be at least information on: the route (including a detailed map), signing, accommodation and public transport connections.
- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** It is necessary to provide detailed information about the national and / or regional sections on the national and / or regional level, such as interactive maps, points of interests, accommodation online-databases, integration of public transport timetables, downloads of GPS-tracks.
- Social media and online-marketing campaigns, smartphone applications, will be evaluated more positively.

Print communication:

- **ESSENTIAL CRITERION:** At least one guidebook or a detailed printed map should be available on the whole route (in one or more publication). The map should be detailed enough to provide proper support for orientation.
- Further printed promotion and information tools (leaflets, print advertisements etc.) are evaluated positively.

Other promotion and information tools:

- **IMPORTANT CRITERION:** information boards and/or stands, centres along the route on every daily section.
- PR campaigns, events, branded merchandising products, study trips, audio guides will be evaluated more positively.

Overview Evaluation Grid:

Main criteria / elements	Sub criteria	Weight
ROUTE INFRASTRUCTURE	Continuity Route infrastructure components Surface and width Gradients Attractiveness Signing Public transport	65%
SERVICES	Accommodation Food, drink and rest areas Bike repair and bike shops Other services Bookable offers	20%
PROMOTION	Web communication Print communication Other promotion and information tools	15%

The complete evaluation grid is to be found on EuroVelo.org

Steps of the certification:

- The evaluation and certification should be based on field surveys and performed by authorised and trained experts traveling by bicycle and documenting the findings. The authorisation, the training and the updated list of experts will be provided by the ECF.
- The experts should only make use of publically available resources (websites, public databases, printed documents etc.) in order to complete information not being monitored in the field.
- The main aspects of the collected information should be stored in the EuroVelo.org database. More detailed information (if it is collected) should be made available for the relevant stakeholders. The certification report will be published on EuroVelo.org webportal.
- The evaluation of the findings and the certification should follow the current guidelines and the latest version of the annually updated handbook, published on EuroVelo.org.

Evaluation of the components and calculation of the results:

- The calculation of the results should follow the evaluation grid (see page 12). The maximum available score is 100% but the scoring will not be communicated - it is for internal use only.
- The final score is calculated based on a weighted average. At first a score will be calculated for all assessed criteria. Depending on its weight, the assigned score per category will contribute to the overall score. Weighting depends on the length of the section and the importance of the criterion.
- The final certification score will automatically be disregarded and dropped to zero points if:
 - One of the essential criteria is not met anywhere ; or
 - A daily section does not reach at least 50% of the maximum possible score; or
 - The whole route does not reach at least 60% of the maximum possible score.
- If one (or more) of the essential criteria is not fulfilled but the affected section can be substituted by an alternative itinerary or by using public transport, the route is still acceptable and can be certified but it will only be recommended for experienced users. Those daily sections that do not fulfil one or more of the important criteria but can be substituted by an alternative itinerary or by using public transport have to be clearly communicated and will be recommended for regular and occasional cyclists only.



Certification process and communication of the results

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Process and roles:

- The certification can only be initiated by a consortium of the relevant partners along the route (National EuroVelo Coordination Centers or Coordinators and their regional / national partners). The request should clearly indicate the itinerary and partners should provide the financing resources.
- The ECF should be informed about the certification process before it commences.
- The certification can only be performed by trained experts authorised by the ECF. A list of authorised experts will be made available on the EuroVelo.org website.
- After data collection and the evaluation is finished the leader of the consortium should submit a request (including all relevant information) to the ECF for the issuing of the official certificate.
- The ECF will issue the certificate either for the whole route or limited to the major cross-border section. It has to be clearly communicated for which section the label will be applied.
- The validity for any certification is 5 years. Within this period the members of the above mentioned consortium are responsible for updating information relevant on the trans-national level in the EuroVelo.org database. After 5 years the field work should be repeated.

Communication:

- The certification should clearly communicate the geographical coverage of the route or major cross-border section.
- All the stakeholders along the route can refer in their communication to the route or major cross-border section in the following way:
"The EuroVelo [Number] - [Official name] is a certified high-quality route within the European cycle route network" or "The EuroVelo [Number] - [Official name] between [Start] and [Stop] is a certified high-quality route within the European cycle route network".
- The certification should clearly communicate the conditions and the restrictions regarding target groups and indicate if there are any limitations regarding the recommended age, fitness level or bicycle needed to ride the route (i.e. "The section between [name start] and [name stop] is recommended for all kind of cyclists." / "The section between [name start] and [name stop] is recommended for occasional and regular cyclists." / "The section between [name start] and [name stop] is recommended for regular cyclists only."). These restrictions should be communicated per daily section.
- The ECF aims to have a regularly updated overview map on the EuroVelo.com website showing which parts of the network are certified.



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English version. This manual is also available in German, French and Dutch.

This publication is part of the ECF EuroVelo publication series.

It should be read in conjunction with following publications:

- EuroVelo, the European cycle route network
- EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, Development Strategy 2012-2020
- EuroVelo, National Coordination Centres, guidance on application process
- EuroVelo, Guidance on the route development process
- EuroVelo, Signing of EuroVelo cycle routes
- EuroVelo, Corporate design of EuroVelo cycle routes (planned)
- EuroVelo, Web solutions for EuroVelo cycle routes (planned)
- Additional guidelines over time

