EuroVelo
The European cycle route network

Transnational Route Evaluation Report

EuroVelo 15
Rhine Cycle Route

15

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EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION

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1. Background and report objectives

This document contains the 2024 survey results and evaluation for the sections of EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route in Switzerland, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, and Rhineland-Palatinate. The survey was conducted by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) between August and September 2024.

EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route was the first EuroVelo route to be certified according to the European Certification Standard, a methodology developed by ECF to assess the quality of cycle routes and certify EuroVelo routes. Aiming to be suitable for cyclists of all fitness levels and abilities, EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route runs along one of the longest rivers in Europe from the Swiss Alps to the North Sea. It has a coherent and clear theme based on the proximity and history of the Rhine, passing numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites along the way.

The purpose of this document is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the surveyed route. This snapshot serves as a basis for recommended improvements that have been developed in action plans provided to each regional partner. The ultimate aim of this exercise is to augment the route quality and attract more cycle tourists, which will eventually benefit local and regional SMEs and the regional development as a whole. Taking a transnational approach will enable common challenges (e.g. lack of route infrastructure, missing signing, etc.) to be tackled together.

This report will first explain the project's organisation (chapter 2), define the itinerary of the assessed route (chapter 3) and provide some methodological explanations (chapter 4), before summarising the key findings of the assessment for the route as a whole (chapter 5). Chapter 6 will then provide detailed subchapters on each of the regional surveys, i.e. Switzerland, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, and Rhineland-Palatinate. Chapter 7 will present the conclusions.

2. Organisation

Following the route from the source in Andermatt to the border of Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, the following partners and regions are involved in the survey:

- Stiftung SchweizMobil – representing Switzerland
- Schwarzwald Tourismus GmbH – representing Baden-Württemberg
- Hessisches Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Wohnen – representing Hesse
- Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Verkehr, Landwirtschaft und Weinbau Rheinland-Pfalz, represented by Romantischer Rhein Tourismus GmbH – representing Rhineland-Palatinate

The survey was done by ECF on behalf of these partners. Based on this route survey, ECF prepared a route evaluation report for each of the project partners' regions, describing the status of the route in their respective region or country. This report also details the route deficiencies with recommendations for route improvements, which serve as a basis for the action plans provided by ECF to each partner.

ECF has developed the methodology on which the various route assessments were based and conducted the survey with its own certified EuroVelo Route Inspectors. It is very experienced in evaluating cross-national European cycle routes and has demonstrated this know-how in numerous previous projects. ECF coordinates the EuroVelo network, which is a growing network of 17 long distance cycle routes connecting and uniting the whole European continent at a length of more than 90,000 km. For more information on this, see www.EuroVelo.com.

3. Itinerary

The surveyed itinerary of EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route can be viewed here, while the official GPX tracks for the entire route can be found on EuroVelo.com/ev15, which is also available in French, German and Dutch.

EuroVelo 15 connects the source of the Rhine in Andermatt to its mouth in the Netherlands at a total length of about 2,400 km, including both sides of the river. The total route included in the survey, which runs from the source in Andermatt until the border of Rhineland-Palatinate and North Rhine-Westphalia, with the exception of the French section, numbers about 1,450 km.

As the Rhine meanders a lot, crossing the border between Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg many times between Konstanz and Basel on the right bank, it was necessary to divide the Swiss part into three chapters for analysis purposes. This also affects the Baden-Württemberg analysis, which is covered in two chapters.

Switzerland up to Stein am Rhein (Switzerland 1)	281 km
Switzerland: Stein am Rhein-Basel left bank (Switzerland 2)	127 km
Switzerland/Baden-Württemberg: Konstanz-Basel right bank	176 km
Baden-Württemberg: Basel-Lampertheim	342 km
Hessen	107 km
Rhineland-Palatinate	411 km
TOTAL	**1,444 km**

4. Brief methodological explanations

To ensure a consistent approach to route evaluation, the survey was carried out by fully trained ECF staff who are certified EuroVelo Route Inspectors. The basis of the survey was the European Certification Standard[1], describing in a systematic way different aspects of route quality:

- Infrastructure (continuity, route components, surface and width, gradients, attractiveness, signing and public transport)
- Services (accommodation, food, bicycle and other services)
- Promotion (web and printed materials, information on the route)

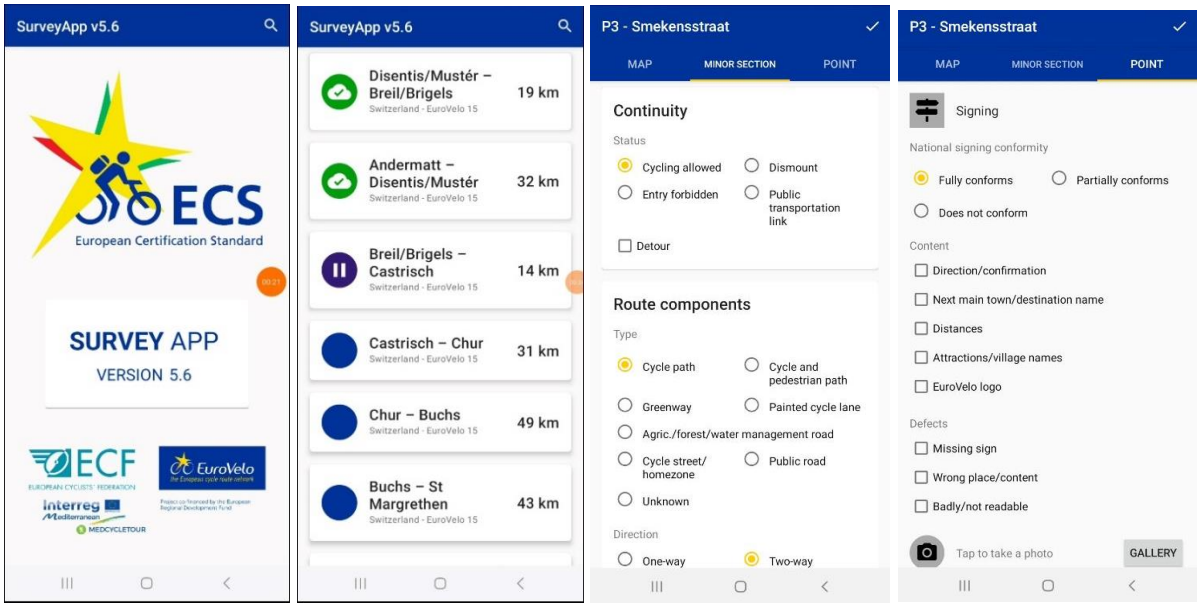
The on-field survey has been complemented by desktop research to collect or verify additional data, e.g. on available public transport connections or services.

The European Certification Standard was applied throughout this report to systematically evaluate the survey findings. The standard defines three different criteria levels:

Essential criteria	Catering to *regular* cycle tourists.	Must be met along the *entire* route for certification.
Important criteria	Catering to *occasional* cycle tourists.	Must be met *along at least 70%* of the route for certification.
Additional criteria	Catering to *demanding* cycle tourists (e.g. families with young children, cyclists with tandems, bike trailers, hand bikes, etc.).	Meeting the criteria is optional and depends on the aspiration level. Can be used for promotion.

For the field work, the EuroVelo Route Inspectors collected the data using the ECS app developed by ECF for this purpose. On each daily section, they stopped each time the characteristics of the route changed, creating a new minor section and entering the data into the app. The data was then uploaded to the ECF server and later analysed. The route inspectors also documented the field work with geolocated photographs.

[1] The standard and relevant manuals are available at: https://pro.eurovelo.com/projects/european-certification-standard.



Snapshots of the ECS app

4.1. Traffic categories methodology

Traffic is categorised as a function of the volume of cars and speed. During the survey, the route inspectors have counted traffic units. The volume of motorised traffic is evaluated in units that reflect the higher impact of bigger vehicles on cyclists' real and perceived safety.

- Each personal car or motorcycle was treated as 1 unit
- Each passenger or delivery van was treated as 2 units
- Each truck or bus was treated as 4 units

When **cycling in mixed traffic** (on a public road, bicycle street, agricultural/forest/water management road), the following table was used to determine the traffic category:

Cycling in mixed traffic	**30 km/h or lower**	**31 to 50 km/h**	**51 to 79 km/h**	**80 km/h or over**
1-500 units/day	very low	very low	very low	low
501-2.000 units/day	very low	low	low	moderate
2.001-4.000 units/day	low	moderate	moderate	high
4.001-10.000 units/day	moderate	high	high	very high
>10.000 units/day	moderate	very high	very high	very high

For **cycle lanes painted on the carriageway or asphalted shoulders**, the following table was used:

Cycling on cycle lanes	30 km/h or lower	31 to 50 km/h	51 to 79 km/h	80 km/h or over
Minimum width / direction	**1.5 m**	**1.5 m**	**2.0 m**	**2.0 m**
1-500 units/day	very low	very low	very low	low
501-2.000 units/day	very low	very low	low	low
2.001-4.000 units/day	very low	very low	low	moderate
4.001-10.000 units/day	very low	low	moderate	high
>10.000 units/day	low	moderate	high	very high

If the cycle lane width is lower than the specified minimum, the lane does not guarantee a safe distance from overtaking cars and therefore the table for mixed traffic was used instead.

4.2. Distinction route survey / certification

EuroVelo routes can be certified to highlight a particularly high level of quality. It is important to note the difference between a route survey and the formal EuroVelo certification:

- Survey is the process of collecting and evaluating route data. A survey is always required for the certification of EuroVelo routes, but it can also be used outside the EuroVelo network or at an early development stage to identify investment needs.
- Certification is an additional process requiring an official application confirming that the route meets at least the minimum criteria set in the ECS. Only EuroVelo routes in their entirety or their major sections (at least 300 km long and with clearly defined origins and destinations) can be certified.

4.3. Overview of the sections

The route was divided into so-called daily sections, i.e. stretches of about 30-60 km in length that can be easily cycled in one day. Daily sections are the basic unit for the analysis and evaluation within the ECS methodology and also serve communication purposes. The following 41 daily sections were surveyed between August and September 2024:

Region	Daily sections	Km	Survey start date	Survey end date
CH 1	9	281	August 2024	August 2024
CH 2	3	127	August 2024	August 2024

CH / Baden-Württemberg	6	176	August 2024	September 2024
Baden-Württemberg	8	342	August 2024	September 2024
Hessen	4	107	September 2024	September 2024
Rhineland-Palatinate	11	411	September 2024	September 2024
TOTAL	**41**	**1,444**	**August 2024**	**September 2024**

The basic units in this report are so-called minor sections, i.e. stretches of 200 m - 5 km, and daily sections, i.e. stretches of about 30-60 km. Surveyors created a new minor section corresponding to each change in route characteristics, e.g. a different route component, speed limit, width, surface quality, or traffic. In cases where characteristics change frequently, such as in city centres, data can be registered together as one minor section, with averages or majority data input. In cases where quality on shorter sections is critically lower, shorter minor sections may be created. Very short critical issues may also be registered as a point or obstacle.

The following daily sections were surveyed:

Order	Riverbank	Start place	End place	Country	Region	Length [in km]	Survey ID
1	L	Andermatt	Disentis/Mustér	CH	N/A	32	549
2	L	Disentis/Mustér	Breil/Brigels	CH	N/A	20	550
3	L	Breil/Brigels	Castrisch	CH	N/A	14	551
4	L	Castrisch	Chur	CH	N/A	31	552
5	L	Chur	Buchs	CH	N/A	49	553
6	L	Buchs	St Margrethen	CH	N/A	43	554
7	L	St Margrethen	Gaißau	AT	N/A	16	555
8	L	Gaißau	Konstanz	CH	N/A	48	556
9	L	Konstanz	Stein am Rhein	CH	N/A	28	557
9	R	Konstanz	Radolfzell	DE	Ba-Wü	20	563
10	R	Radolfzell	Stein am Rhein	DE	Ba-Wü	25	564
11	R	Stein am Rhein	Neuhausen am Rheinfall	CH	N/A for CH / Ba-Wü for DE	22	567
12	L	Neuhausen am Rheinfall	Bad Zurzach	CH	N/A	50	569
12	R	Neuhausen am Rheinfall	Rheinheim	DE	Ba-Wü	35	576
13	L	Bad Zurzach	Rheinfelden	CH	N/A	55	573
13	R	Rheinheim	Rheinfelden	DE	Ba-Wü	58	578
14	L	Rheinfelden	Basel	CH	N/A	22	574
14	R	Rheinfelden	Basel	DE	Ba-Wü	16	579

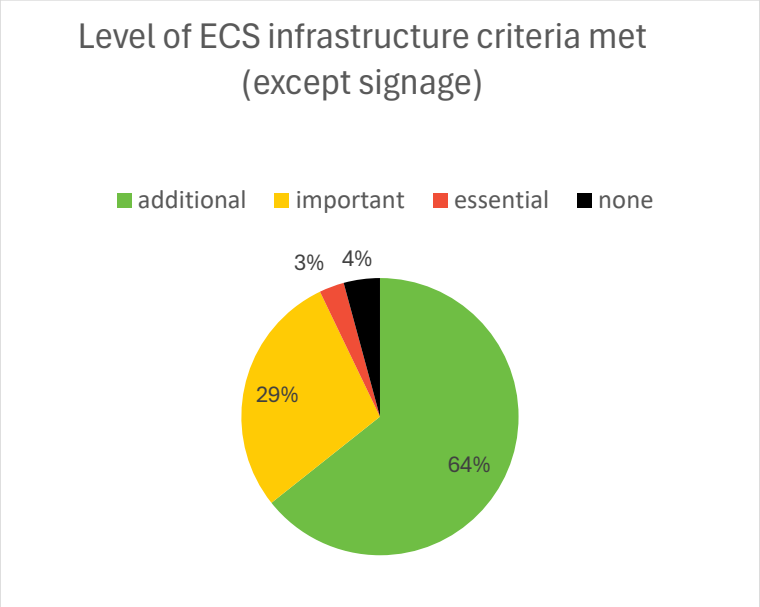
15	R	Basel	Breisach am Rhein	DE	Ba-Wü	65	581
16	R	Breisach am Rhein	Kappel-Grafenhausen	DE	Ba-Wü	46	584
17	R	Kappel-Grafenhausen	Kehl	DE	Ba-Wü	43	585
18	R	Kehl	Rastatt-Plittersdorf	DE	Ba-Wü	53	575
19	L	Lauterbourg	Wörth am Rhein-Maximiliansau	DE	RLP	12	610
19	R	Rastatt-Plittersdorf	Karlsruhe	DE	Ba-Wü	35	577
20	L	Wörth am Rhein-Maximiliansau	Speyer	DE	RLP	50	607
20	R	Karlsruhe	Rheinhausen	DE	Ba-Wü	44	580
21	L	Speyer	Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim	DE	RLP	33	604
21	R	Rheinhausen	Mannheim	DE	Ba-Wü	39	582
22	L	Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim	Eich	DE	RLP	39	605
22	R	Mannheim	Gernsheim	DE	Ba-Wü / Hessen	47	583
23	L	Eich	Mainz	DE	RLP	37	603
23	R	Gernsheim	Mainz	DE	Hessen	45	586
24	L	Mainz	Bingen am Rhein	DE	RLP	33	621
24	R	Mainz	Oestrich-Winkel	DE	Hessen	22	588
25	R	Oestrich-Winkel	Rüdesheim am Rhein	DE	Hessen	9	590
26	L	Bingen am Rhein	Bad Salzig	DE	RLP	39	591
26	R	Kamp-Bornhofen	Koblenz	DE	RLP	27	592
27	L	Bad Salzig	Koblenz	DE	RLP	26	593
28	L	Koblenz	Rolandswerth	DE	RLP	56	598
28	R	Koblenz	Rheinbreitbach	DE	RLP	54	599

5. Key finding for the route as a whole

This chapter will summarise the survey's key findings for the entire route.

5.1. Compatibility with ECS criteria

When assessing the survey data based on the ECS, the results show that the surveyed route already meets the essential criteria at 95.8% of its length in terms of continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness (excluding signing, public transport, services and promotion):



The route is also highly compatible with the important criteria, with 92.9% of the route meeting this range of criteria. 64.3% of the length of the route also meets the needs of the most demanding cyclists (families with children etc.).

In the following chapters, we will look at the route as a whole and examine its level of compliance with the ECS by criteria type.

5.2. Continuity

The basic aspect for any cycle route is the continuity of the ride. The route should not contain any legal or physical disruptions that make the route illegal or impossible to travel on. All natural (river, cliff etc.) or artificial (railway, motorway etc.) barriers should be crossed with adequate cycling infrastructure (bridge, ferry, subway etc.)

The legal disruptions identified on the route include:

- 5 cases where entry with a bike is forbidden, or cyclists are obliged to dismount for distances longer than 200 m;
- 34 cases where cyclists must dismount and push their bikes for distances below 200 m;
- 2 cases of difficult stairs;

- 39 chicanes with a clearance of less than 1.30 m, which makes it difficult for cyclists with trailers or tandems to pass.

Continuity disruptions by region

Region	Daily sections	km	Entry forbidden	Dismount	Stairs - difficult	Stairs - easy	Chicanes <1.3m
CH1	9	281	0	0	0	4	1
CH2	3	127	1	2	0	1	6
BW/CH	6	176	2	5	0	3	2
BW	8	342	0	6	0	3	16
HE	4	107	0	3	0	1	3
RLP	11	411	2	13	0	2	14

= Does not meet essential criteria = Does not meet important criteria = Does not meet additional criteria

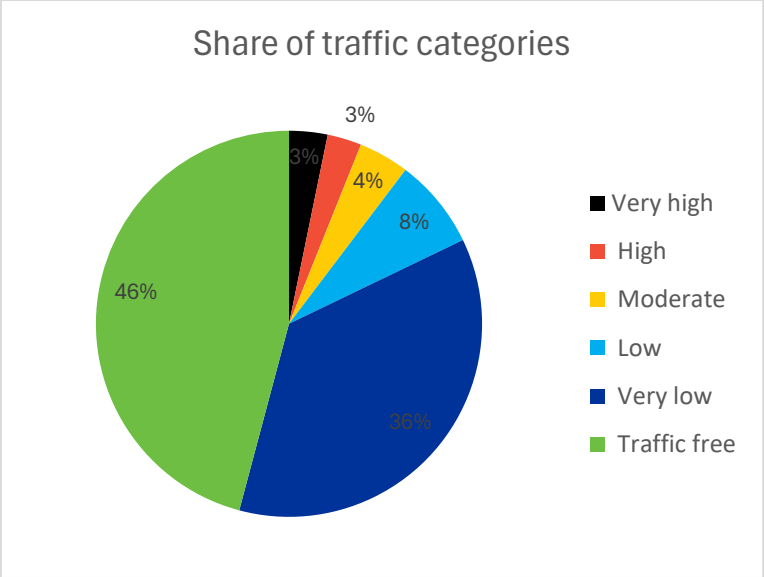
Many of the disruptions encountered resulted from temporary road or path closures (e.g. because of roadworks) and there is room for improvement in terms of preparation of detour routes in such cases. Overall, requests to dismount seem to be applied as a universal safety measure, more often than necessary.

A chicane of 1 m, preventing easy passage for cyclists with trailers.

A sign requiring cyclists to dismount.

5.3. Route components, traffic volume and speed

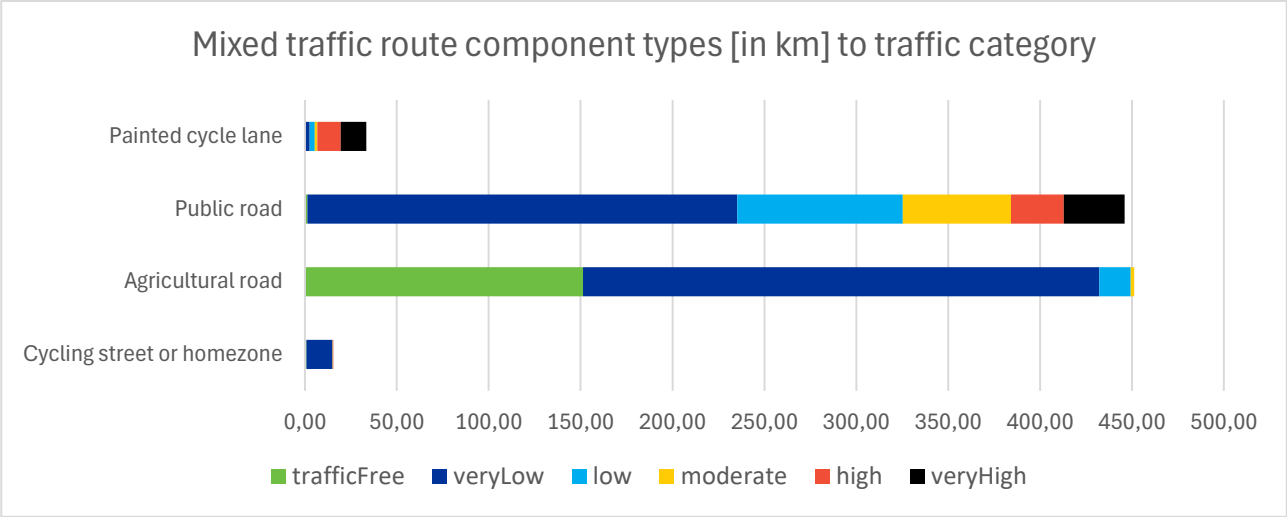
Different kinds of infrastructure components can be combined and integrated to form a continuous EuroVelo route. The survey process has been designed to monitor the share of different components on the route under assessment and to give veritable evidence of whether the chosen course is suitable for the assumed groups of users (again related to the three different levels of experience). Hence the occurrence of varying types of infrastructure components (e.g. public roads, cycle lanes, cycle paths) and relevant parameters (width, volume and speed of motorised traffic) that have been monitored down to the scale of an individual minor section. In addition, safety on crossings was evaluated as well. Note that the route components criterion focuses on the risk of collision with motorised vehicles. Other elements of road safety are included in the Continuity, Surface and Width criteria, while social safety is considered as part of the Attractiveness criteria.



Almost half of the surveyed distance (46%) comprises dedicated cycle paths or greenways without any traffic. Another 44% leads over public or agricultural/forest/water management roads with very low to low traffic, also perfectly usable for cycle tourism. The focus in action planning should be on sections with very high (3%) or high traffic (3%). The highest share of those sections was identified in Switzerland.

Traffic is categorised as a function of the volume of cars and speed. During the survey, ECF has counted traffic units, i.e. four units for trucks and large busses, two units for vans and one unit per car or motorcycle.

The following graph shows the amount of each route component which falls into each traffic category. The overwhelming majority of instances of high and very high traffic occur on public roads or painted cycle lanes, most of which are not wide enough to safely separate cyclists from traffic. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black).



In addition, one very dangerous and 15 dangerous crossings were identified by the route inspectors. Common challenges and safety hazards for cyclists on crossings included high speeds at crossings, conflicts with heavy traffic, or limitations of visibility.

Route components, traffic and crossings per country/region (in km)

Region	Traffic free	Very low traffic	Low traffic	Moderate traffic	High traffic	Very high traffic	Dangerous crossing	Very dangerous crossing
CH1	88,0	95,8	26,2	25,4	17,6	26,8	6	0
CH2	25,7	65,6	10,6	8,7	7,7	12,0	2	0
BW/CH	89,1	56,9	16,6	2,9	5,8	4,6	3	1
BW	190,6	111,6	38,2	9,4	0,9	3,4	1	0
HE	52,9	44,8	1,3	4,1	2,7	1,7	0	0
RLP	219,2	154,9	17,6	11,6	7,7	1,0	2	0

= Does not meet essential criteria = Does not meet important criteria = Does not meet additional criteria

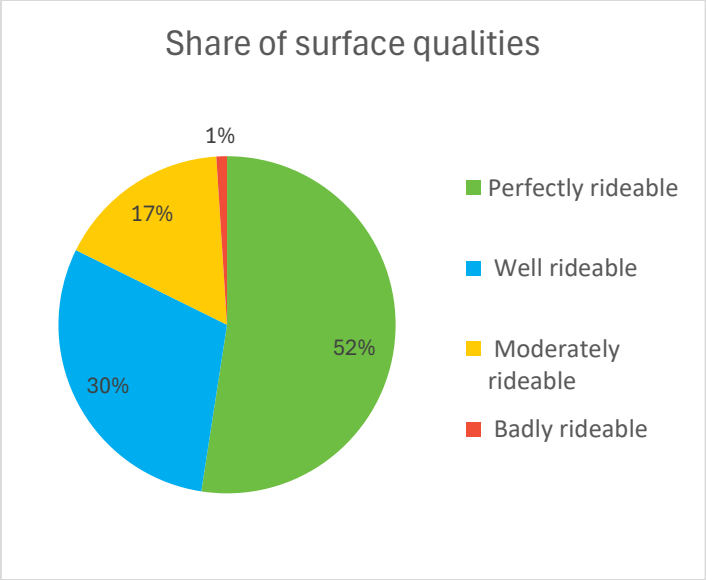
Painted cycle lane. For ECS purposes, this was treated as cycling in mixed traffic, as the cycle lane does not reach the minimum effective width.

The only very dangerous crossing found during the survey. Cyclists must cross a busy road with high-speed traffic while oncoming drivers have bad visibility due to a dip in the road.

5.4. Surface

Road surfaces of EuroVelo routes under assessment have to be built according to the relevant (national / regional) technical standards and prescriptions. Considering that EuroVelo routes should play a major role within national cycle networks, certified EuroVelo routes should provide consolidated, high-quality surfaces. 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 resistant material. In exceptional circumstances, loose material may be used but must be consolidated.

On each minor section of the surveyed route, both surface material and quality were noted by the route inspectors.



About 82% of the route runs on perfectly (52%) or well rideable (30%) surfaces. 17% were classified as moderately rideable, and therefore acceptable for experienced users of touring bikes in most weather conditions but challenging for less experienced users, those with special needs, or in specific very dry or wet weather.

The focus in action planning should be placed on sections that are badly rideable (1%) or not rideable at all (0.5%). These were found mostly in Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg. In parallel, several longer stretches of moderately rideable surface should also be addressed, in particular:

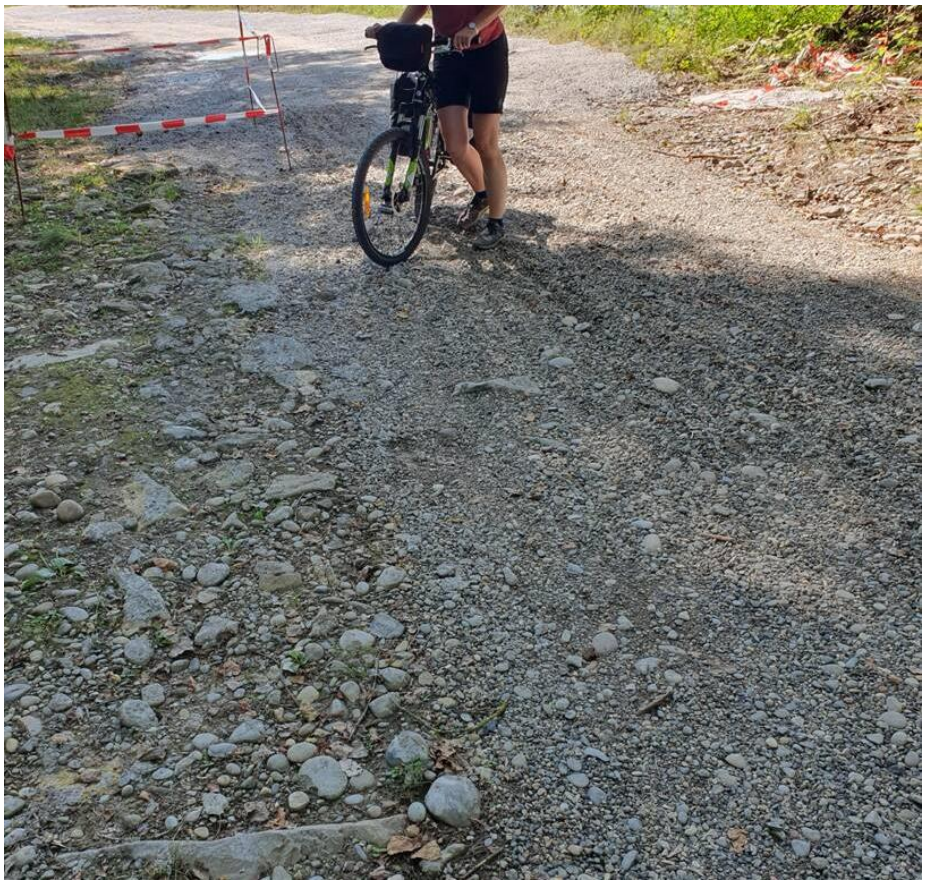
- not completely traffic-free stabilised gravel sections (mostly Baden-Württemberg), where car traffic is speeding up the degradation of the surface quality;
- old concrete plates with growing gaps in between.

Surface quality per country/region (in km)

Region	Daily sections	km	Perfectly rideable	Well rideable	Moderately rideable	Badly rideable	Not rideable
CH1	9	281	209,1	42,2	21,3	7,3	0,0
CH2	3	127	75,4	32,0	20,6	2,3	0,0
BW/CH	6	176	89,4	64,6	21,8	0,0	0,1
BW	8	342	140,1	63,6	142,2	8,0	0,0
HE	4	107	52,9	44,6	10,0	0,0	0,0
RLP	11	411	196,8	189,5	25,35	0,2	0,0

= Does not meet essential criteria = Does not meet important criteria = Does not meet additional criteria

A well rideable agricultural road, representative of much of the route.



Badly rideable loose gravel.

5.5. Gradients

It is much harder to ascend vertically or to go uphill than to cycle on flat sections. The cumulative elevation gain or loss on any daily section should therefore not exceed 1,000 m, and in most sections, it should not exceed 500 m. No slopes should be too steep to ride for the target groups. While the rest of the route is relatively flat, a few short sections can be too steep for some of the demanding users, e.g. families with children.

There is one daily section where elevation gain or less exceeds 1,000 m, the very first daily section from Andermatt to Disentis/Muster. The daily section from Castrisch to Chur exceeds 1,000 m according to the official GPX tracks, but not according to the elevation registered during the survey. There are two further daily sections where cumulative elevation gain or loss exceeds 500 m according to official GPX data.

While it is not always possible to avoid “ups and downs”, this can be compensated with adequate service density, allowing cyclists to split the route into shorter daily sections, therefore making it feasible for a wider range of users.

5.6. Attractiveness

EuroVelo routes should offer a pleasant and interesting cycling experience. They should lead through attractive landscapes, connect important cultural and natural attractions, provide satisfactory social safety and not be exposed to nuisances such as excessive noise.

The Rhine Cycle Route leads through very attractive areas and has therefore a high potential for cycle tourism. Attractions on the route include 6 UNESCO World Heritage Sites directly located on (or close to) the surveyed route:

- Reichenau Monastery Island, Lake Constance
- Speyer Cathedral
- Upper Middle Rhine Valley between Bingen/Rüdesheim and Koblenz
- Obergermanisch-Rätischer Limes: Beginning of the Limes with Watchtower No. 1 in Rheinbrohl (Middle Rhine Valley)
- Niedergermanischer Limes
- Prehistoric pile dwellings around the Alps (e.g. in Constance)

Moreover, there are numerous protected natural areas along the Rhine Cycle Route. The river provides for stunning views on long stretches of the route, most notably in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley and on the Swiss-German border. It also visits pleasant historical cities and towns along the way, providing an enticing variety of scenery.

23.1% of the route was classified as highly attractive and 71.4% as attractive. Only 6.3% of the route was considered monotonous or unattractive.

Environmental nuisances (noise, dust or unpleasant smell) were encountered on 6.4% of the route.
An important aspect of attractiveness is social safety. Along the entire route, four stretches totalling 1 km with social safety challenges was identified, mostly in Rhineland-Palatinate.

Breathtaking views abound in the Upper Middle Rhine Valley.

Switzerland too provides quaint views.

5.7. Signing

EuroVelo routes should be signed in line with national standards (if they exist) and EuroVelo guidelines (obligatory). No signs should be missing at major crossings or turning points. Ideally, there should be regular confirmation and distance signs.

It is mostly possible to follow the route just by following the signs, but there were also significant parts where signs were missing at major crossings. Various signs were also misleading or not in line with the national/regional standards. Almost 200 missing or wrongly placed signs were identified during the route survey. Common issues across different regions included:

- Missing / not updated signs in the areas of roadworks or temporary closures;
- Placing “straight” confirmation signs on forks in the road (confusing especially when the sign is placed “in the middle”, between the arms of the junctions);

- Using signs with no route identification (just bicycle pictogram and arrow) in areas where multiple cycle routes are present.

Longer stretches with systematic signing issues were identified on eleven daily sections. This included cases, for instance, where EuroVelo and national signs had been removed after a route reconstruction. These cases will be discussed in detail in the regional chapters.

International co-operation between Baden-Württemberg and Switzerland will be necessary to clarify the itinerary and signing of the right-bank variant between Konstanz and Basel. The report also recommends adding EuroVelo signs in Konstanz, to connect both variants.

A typical sign in Switzerland, featuring the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 logo.

Typical signage on a crossroad in Rhineland-Palatinate: direction signs indicate next towns and distances, route information panels attached to arms that point in the directions followed by the routes.

5.8. Public transport

It should be possible to access the route by public transport carrying bicycles. The route survey included the evaluation of:

- how often it is possible in terms of distance,
- how many connections are available in different locations,
- what is their capacity in terms of the number of bicycles transported,
- and what kinds of bicycles can be transported (e.g. tandems, handbikes, trailers…)

As it might be difficult to carry a touring bicycle with luggage up or down the stairs, the accessibility of public transport stops and stations was also considered (e.g. whether a platform on a train station is accessible only by stairs or also by ramps or lifts).

Almost all of the many regional train connections along the Rhine provide suitable services for cycle tourists, in some cases without extra charge. Transporting bikes to a specific location in long-distance trains is also possible, but limits apply more often in this case. This is one area where major improvements were noted compared to previous surveys. Transporting bicycles on international trains is a systematic problem: Connections do not appear in search engines, are much longer than without bike transport, or tickets are not available online etc. There are also long-distance bus providers offering bike transport. More detailed information on public-transport options is available in the regional chapters.

5.9. Planned route infrastructure / Diversions

Several construction sites have led to diversions of the route. The details are mentioned in the country/region chapters. Some of these diversions are linked to current cycle route improvements. The data collected on these stretches represents the temporary detour (official or – if not signed – the best/most obvious alternative itinerary identifiable in the field) and not the official EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route path. This should be kept in mind when looking at the GPX tracks and potential route improvements.

5.10. Services

There is a rich variety of food and accommodation options for cyclists along the Rhine Cycle Route. Almost all daily sections meet all the essential and important criteria. Accommodation providers are accustomed to hosting cycling tourists, whether they are certified cycling friendly or not, and can often provide secure bike storage facilities.

Bike services are also generally abundant along the route, although in some areas cyclists must leave the route to access these. The same is true for food and drink options, as well as access to toilets and drinking water.

More detailed information on services along the route is provided in the regional chapters.

Tourist information centre containing bicycle services.

Certified cycling friendly accommodation also offering (e-)bike rental.

5.11. Marketing / Promotion

There is a very good offer of promotional material on the route as a whole.
In addition to the various regional/national websites mentioned in the country/region chapters, the following websites provide general information about the route (this is just a selection and by no means exhaustive):

- www.EuroVelo.com, with subsites on the Rhine Cycle Route in four languages, including a dynamic map with POIs, stage and country pages.
- A presentation of the Rhine Cycle Route on Wikipedia in five stages in German. Smaller pages on the route are also available in English, French, Spanish, Dutch, Icelandic, Italian and Russian.
- A presentation of the Rhine Cycle Route in 24 stages by cycle-tourism-app provider komoot. The app Outdooractive also offers hundreds of routes on the Rhine Cycle Route. RideWithGPS also provides an overview of the entire route with downloadable GPX tracks.
- Map-providing websites such as Open Street Map.
- Websites of cycle-tour providers, such as https://rhein-radweg-etappen.com/.
- Various individual websites from users and cyclists.

The available printed material includes, among others:

- Welcome to the Rhine Cycle Route handbook, available in four languages from Romantischer Rhein or ECF, published by the partners of the EuroVelo 15 Route Partnership.
- "Rhein-Radweg", parts 1-4, by Esterbauer (Bikeline), 2022-2023.
- "The Rhine Cycle Route – Cycle touring EuroVelo 15 through six countries", by Cicerone, 2022.
- "KOMPASS Radreiseführer Rheinradweg", Basel-Mainz and Mainz-Duisburg, 2022.
- "ADFC-Radreiseführer Rheinradweg", Süd, Mitte, Nord, by BVA BikeMedia GmbH, 2013-2015.
- Maps by Leporello, parts 1-5, 2017-2019.
- Various books by individual authors.

An overview is also available at http://en.eurovelo.com/ev15, "Maps & Guides".

For country-specific information on promotion and marketing, please refer to the following country and regional chapters. These chapters also cover information boards along the route.

Example information board.

A handbook found in a tourist information centre on the route.

6. Survey results per region

6.1. Switzerland part 1: from Andermatt to Stein am Rhein

The first part of the route in Switzerland is characterised by stunning views on the mountains and the Rhine Gorges. After a first daily section mainly on public road with mixed traffic and particularly challenging elevation, EuroVelo 15 joins quieter gravel routes alternating with public road sections.

Very good, segregated cycle paths are to be found along the Alpenrhein Radweg and the shores of Lake Constance. Improvements are primarily recommended for the traffic volume and cycling infrastructure of the first four sections. The surface quality could be improved for some gravel routes but overall, the route does not present many obstacles except for the first sections.

Note that the section St-Margrethen-Gaißau is included in this chapter as it was part of the agreed itinerary to be surveyed.

6.1.1. Itinerary changes – deviations

For most of the route, the GPX tracks agreed on before the survey were very accurate and aligned with the signed route. The differences spotted between the GPX tracks and the surveyed route are small imprecisions – one missing street at the beginning of the itinerary in Andermatt – or due to construction works. In the case of construction works, a signed detour was indicated but the signs were missing the recommended EuroVelo logo.

Therefore, the route surveyed differed from the GPX tracks in the following locations:

- The departure point of the route differed slightly from the GPX tracks sent. Indeed, EuroVelo 15 in Andermatt starts in the middle of the street Bahnhofstrasse, part of a home zone. The GPX tracks sent indicate that EuroVelo 15 starts on Gotthardstrasse. This is a tiny difference in terms of distance, but it is a good point that the route starts in a quieter home zone – where you can find the first EuroVelo signs and an information board – compared to the busy public road of Gotthardstrasse.

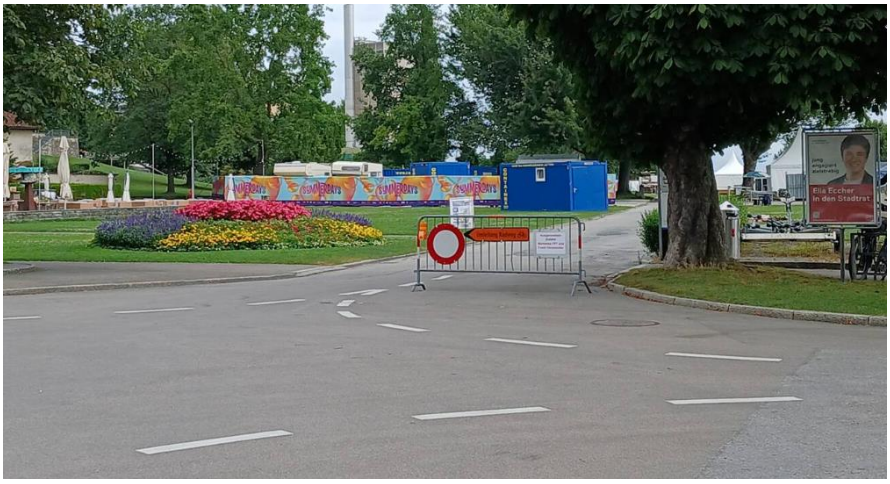
EuroVelo 15 in Andermatt starts in front of one of the entrances of the train station in a home zone. Cycling tourists would miss this information board (left picture) if they would directly go to the main street that we can see on the right picture.

- Signing differed slightly from the GPS track in Grabs, when arriving on Hasenbüntstrasse. Th signing indicates to cross the bridge which is closed **due to construction works** to follow the path on the other side of the pond. The GPX tracks do not match the signing as they follow the Dammweg to join the signed itinerary. This is a minor issue and the GPX tracks have been maybe updated to reflect these construction works.

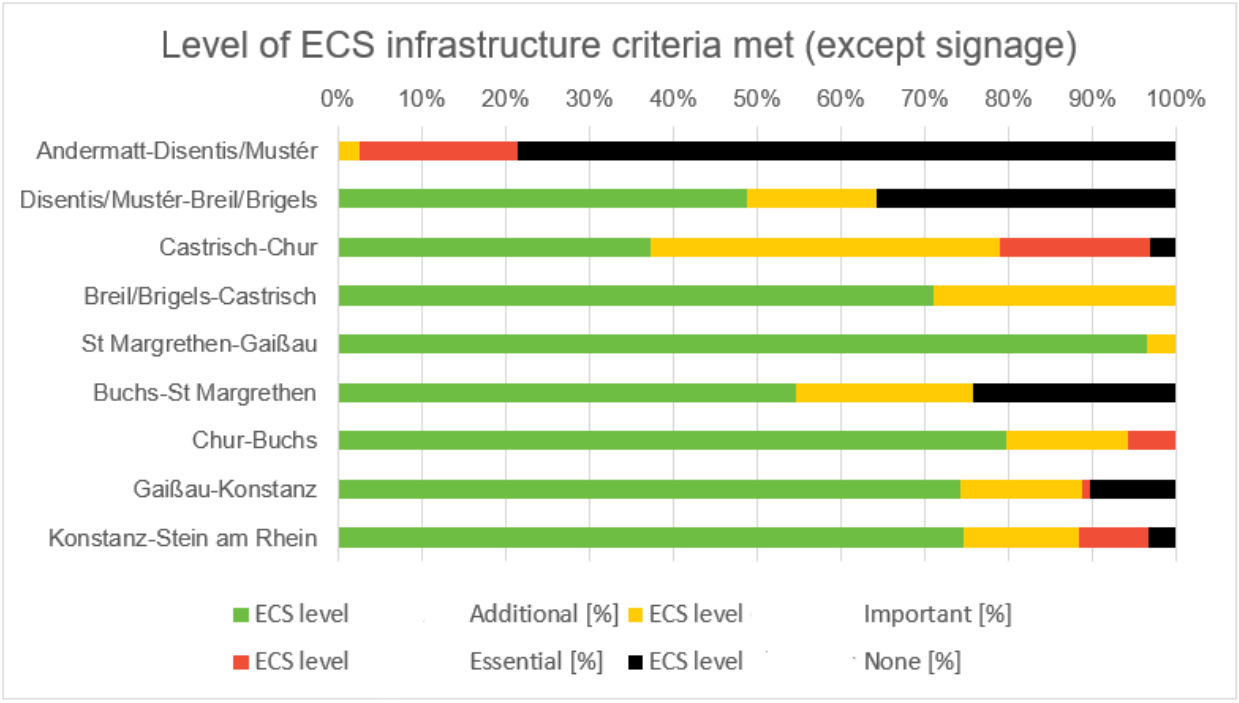
Works blocking the access to the bridge to cross the canal and follow the other pond bank

- Due to construction works nearby Buchs, a deviation is put into place for approximately 1 km. This **signed deviation route** was surveyed and differed from the GPX tracks. However, the signage could have been clearer at some spots and was missing the EuroVelo logo:

- Due to construction works in Arbon, a deviation is put into place for approximately 500m. This **signed deviation route** leaves the bank of the lake to enter the beautiful city centre of Arbon. It has an added value as it allows to come across a few museums and a tourism office centre. This deviation surveyed differed from the GPX tracks. However, the signage was missing the EuroVelo logo:



6.1.2. Basic infrastructure – traffic, width, elevation, surface, obstacles and attractiveness



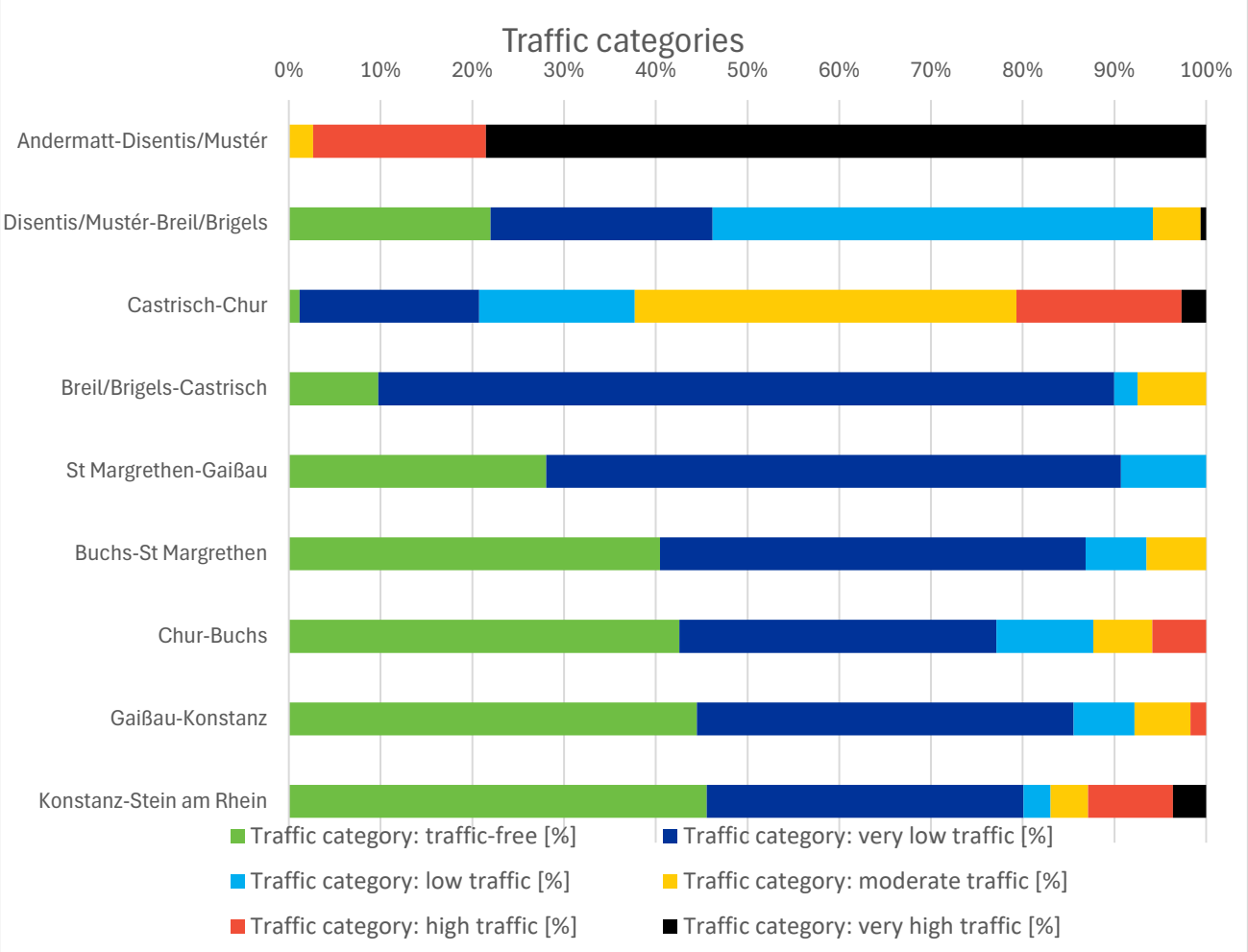
This chart shows the shares of the nine daily sections defined in Switzerland between Andermatt and Stein am Rhein that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, traffic category, surface quality and width. It allows to easily spot which sections have critical issues regarding one of those four main infrastructure criteria.

For instance, the section Breil/Brigels-Castrisch meets the essential and important criteria on 100% of its length, while 71% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

6.1.2.1. Traffic and route components

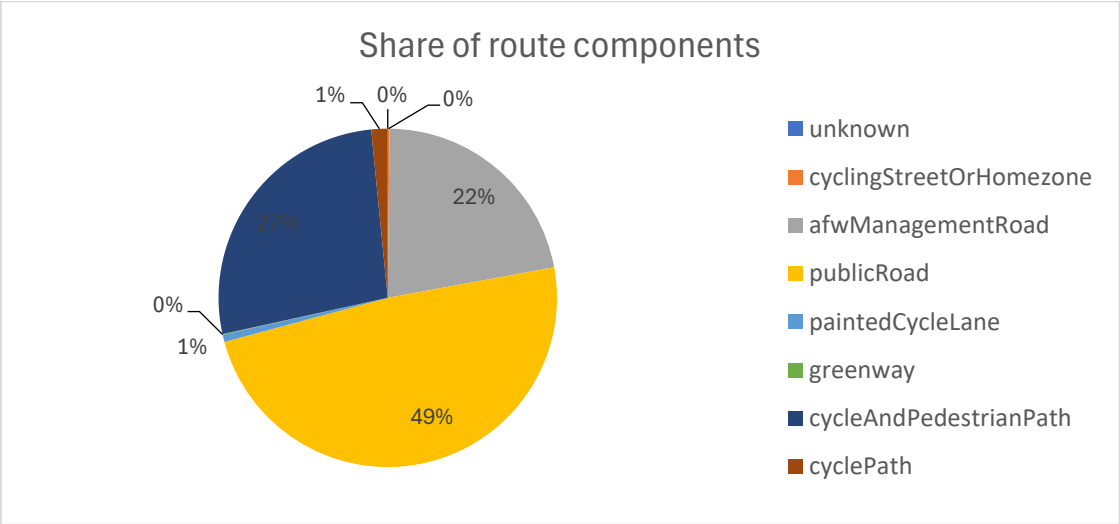
The main issue regarding the infrastructure concerns the traffic as the route goes regularly on public road. Indeed, very high traffic stretches were observed for each daily section with black-coloured parts. As the survey was done in August, the counting done by the Inspector should be cross checked with official traffic route data to have a better overview of the traffic throughout the local cycling season.

Overview of the traffic categories share per daily section:



About one fourth of the route is composed of segregated cycle and pedestrian paths or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 22% of the route is following agricultural or forest/water management routes with very low motorised traffic. About half of the route is along public road with mixed traffic which has a strong impact on the evaluation of the route categories (please see 1.1 Traffic categories methodology).

Overview of the route components share for the Swiss(-Austrian) section from Andermatt to Stein-am-Rhein:



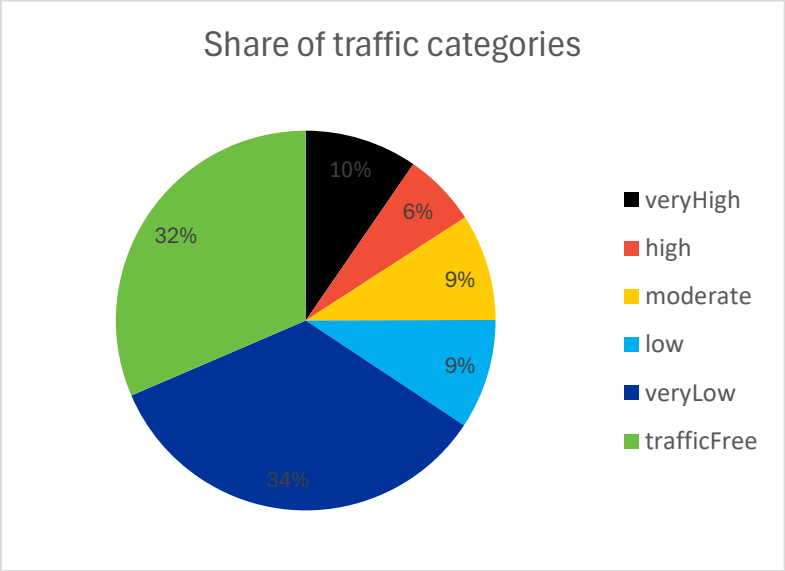
Therefore, 10% of this part of the route were identified as having very high traffic and do not fulfil the minimum requirements. These correspond primarily to the first daily section Andermatt – Disentis/Mustér with a majority of stretches with very high or high traffic. The section does not have painted cycle lane or segregated cycle path for each direction and the speed limit is mostly of 60 or 80 km/h. The section Disentis/Mustér – Breil/Brigels also has a short stretch with very high traffic. Indeed, the route goes on Via Principala in Trun for a few metres and this regional route has a high traffic volume with a speed limit of 80 km/h.

Before reaching Reichenau (Bonaduz), EuroVelo 15 follows also for a few metres the Italienische strasse where a traffic of +4,000 units a day was estimated with a speed limit of 80 km/h. On the same daily section, there is also a stretch at the entrance of Chur, with a volume of traffic above 10,000 units/day and a too narrow cycle lane (<1.5 m).

On the section Konstanz – Stein am Rhein, two stretches along Seestrasse at the entrance of Steckborn are also affected by high traffic with one stretch being composed of a narrow painted cycle lane with a 80+ km/h speed limit and above 10,000 units/day and another stretch after the roundabout being on public road with a comparable traffic volume.

Those prevent meeting the Essential criteria in regard to traffic.

Overview of the traffic categories share for the sections from Andermatt to Stein-am-Rhein:
The traffic category depends on the different levels of traffic volume and speed and range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):



TRAFFIC CATEGORY TOTALS

traffic_category	Total [km]	Total [%]
veryHigh	26,84	10%
high	17,55	6%
moderate	25,42	9%
low	26,18	9%
veryLow	95,78	34%
trafficFree	88,04	32%
Total	279,81	100%

6.1.2.2. Elevation profile

In mountainous areas, daily sections are recommended to be shorter to take into account the additional effort needed – that is an important element to be considered when deciding on the daily section structure and it also explains the shorter first four sections (see table below).

The gradients were extracted from the surveyed tracks to evaluate the elevation profile as well as from the official GPX tracks to offer a comparison. Indeed, the vertical accuracy depends on the GPS chip of the mobile device used. As it was difficult to assess the accuracy of the GPS chip used by the EuroVelo Route Inspector's mobile device, it would be recommended to cross-check these values with a third source of information as the information was sometimes very different and affecting the criteria met or not in several cases: daily sections 4, 5, 6 and 8.

Indeed, the cumulative elevation gain or loss on a daily section must not exceed 1000 m to meet the essential criterion and 500 m for the important criteria. The additional criterion considers very steep slopes over 1 km (no excess of 60m elevation gain or loss). This later case is covered by the obstacles section of this report.

The only daily section not meeting any ECS criteria for both sources of information in regard to the gradients is the section Andermatt-Disentis/Mustér. For other daily sections, further research is required.

A different structure of the daily sections could help reach the elevation criteria by shortening the problematic sections (2, 4 and 5) and making the other sections with less gradients longer.

Order	Start place	End place	Length (in km) – based on official GPX tracks	Elevation (in metres) – according to official GPX tracks	Elevation (in metres) – registered during the survey	ECS criteria met – taking into consideration the official GPX tracks
1	Andermatt	Disentis/Mustér	32	+1165 -1460	+1035 -1275	None
2	Disentis/Mustér	Breil/Brigels	20	+420 -765	+530 -890	Essential
3	Breil/Brigels	Castrisch	14	+315 -390	+365 -440	Additional
4	Castrisch	Chur	31	+1170 -1330	+800 -970	None or Essential if considering the survey – to be cross-checked
5	Chur	Buchs	49	+400 -511	+865 -975	Essential
6	Buchs	St Margrethen	43	+161 -210	+535 -575	Additional
7	St Margrethen	Gaißau	16	+55 -55	+230 -245	Additional
8	Gaißau	Konstanz	48	+345 -345	+1065 -1065	Additional
9	Konstanz	Stein am Rhein	28	+290 -290	+485 -480	Additional

6.1.2.3. Surfaces

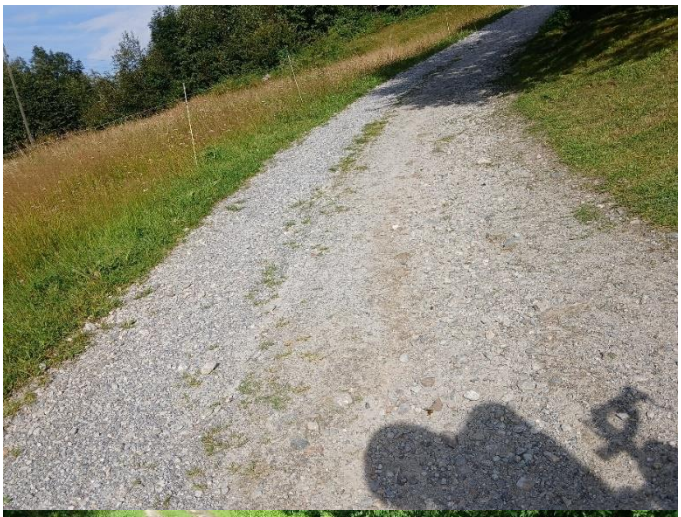
Most of the route (90%) comprises **perfectly rideable or well rideable surfaces**. 7% was classified as moderately rideable – mostly on gravel and dirt roads with some loose stones, and occasional potholes. **3%** was categorised as **badly rideable** representing eleven minor sections, either because of particularly big stones making the route difficult to ride or of countryside roads creating a lot of dust when tractors pass and made muddy after rain.

On the first daily section, a minor section of 300m on Via Alpsu was categorised as badly rideable due to the presence of construction works making the route muddy with big rocks for a dozen of metres (see picture below). However, we can assume that this will be fixed soon, and it should be checked.

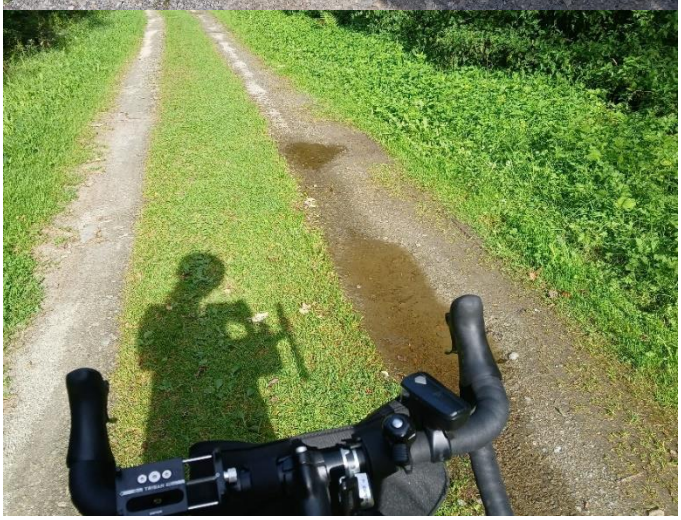
Daily section 1, Via Alpsu

On the section Disentis/Mustéer-Breil Brigels, some dirt routes have stretches badly rideable due to many big stones and bumps, in particular between Pardomat and Cumpadials. All cyclists met along the way were equipped with e-mountain bikes with wide tyres.

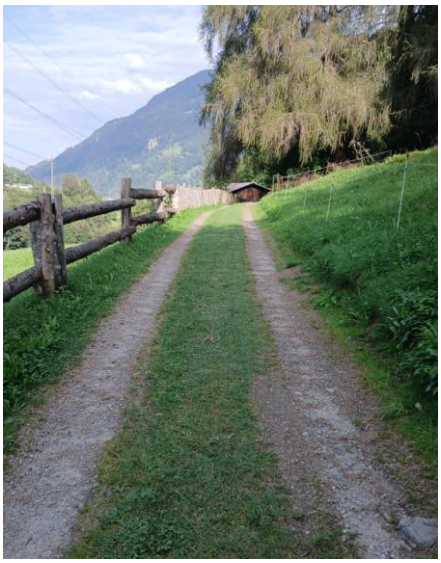
Daily section 2, gravel route between Pardomat and Cumpadias



Surface material: gravel/dirt ; quality: badly rideable because of numerous loose stones and many bumps



Surface material: gravel/dirt ; quality: badly rideable – becoming muddy in case of rain

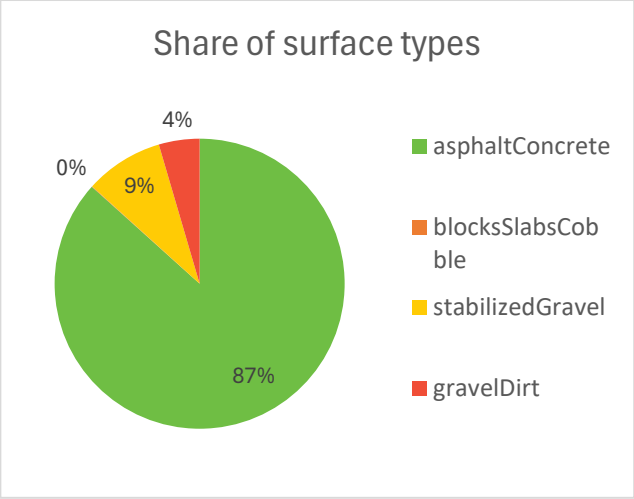


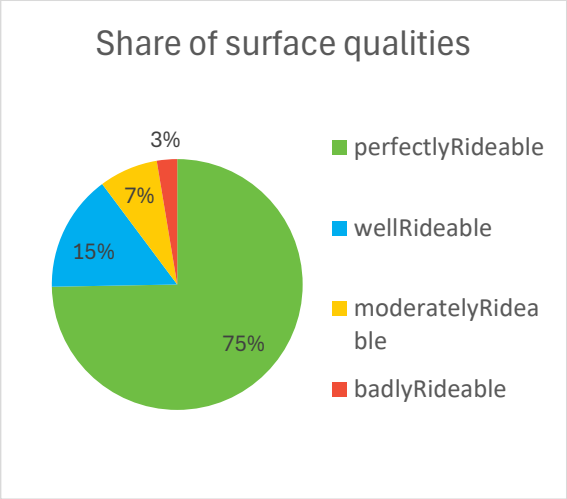
Finally, on the section Castrich – Chur, a minor section with big uneven cobblestones was categorised as badly rideable in Reichenau.

Improvement compared to the 2019 survey:
On a positive note, the issue with the minor section close to Kriessern classified as not rideable and requiring dismounting, identified during the 2019 survey, was solved. The huge water puddle is still present but the non-rideability was fixed by creating a parallel alternative stretch one metre away. This is actually an easy and good example of infrastructure improvement:

2024 survey – alternative way built to avoid the flooded area

2019 survey





6.1.2.4. Obstacles: crossings, steep slopes, insufficient width and tunnels

Five dangerous crossings have been spotted:

1. In Felsberg, there is a relatively dangerous crossing as cyclists have to turn left to follow the route and reach the train station but there is no dedicated cycling infrastructure, and it is a road with a lot of traffic and a speed limit of 60 km/h.

An improvement would be to add painting indicating that there are cyclists crossing and mostly reduce the speed limit.

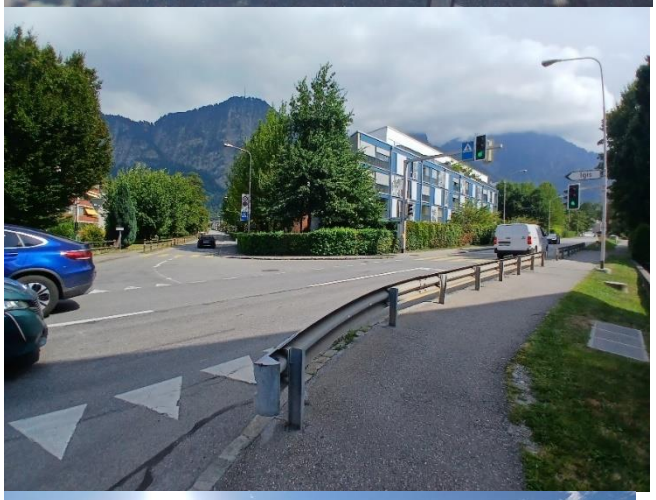
2. In Buchs, there is also a relatively dangerous crossing on St Gallerstrasse as cars are accelerating to get out of the city – even if it is a 50 km/h section – and there is no indication that cyclists might cross.

Painting could be added to clearly indicate that there might be cyclists crossing as well as traffic calming elements to make sure drivers slow down.

3. On the section Chur-Buchs, there is a dangerous crossing after the bridge between Haldenstein and Masans over the Rhine as cyclists must turn left and there is limited visibility.

The speed limit is 60 km/h and the traffic volume is above 3,000 units a day. It would be preferrable to lower the speed limit and add painting to indicate potential crossing of cyclists.

4. On the same daily section, it is necessary to cross Kantonstrasse, a public road with high traffic volume, to stay on Stationstrasse in Igis, and there is no cycling infrastructure to facilitate the crossing for cycling tourists.



5. On the last daily section Konstanze – Stein am Rhine, there is a confusing crossing on the Konstanzerstrasse, after the intersection with the Badistrasse.

Cyclists have to cross the route to join the cycle pedestrian path but the GPX tracks indicate to cross before reaching the infrastructure set up to help cyclists to cross, making it quite dangerous to cross this high traffic route (+7,000 units a day and 60 km/h speed limit) in a curve.

Four very steep stretches were identified on the section Disentis/Mustér – Breil/Brigels as potential obstacles as they might require for cycling tourists with heavy bikes to dismount and push their bikes – one nearby Cumpadias, one on the gravel route between Surrein and Trun and two after exiting Trun:

Very steep incline on a gravel route.

Very steep passage when exiting Trun at the beginning of Via Mangur.

Another very steep passage that might be challenging for cyclists with heavy loaded bikes when arriving on the forest management road, after Trun.

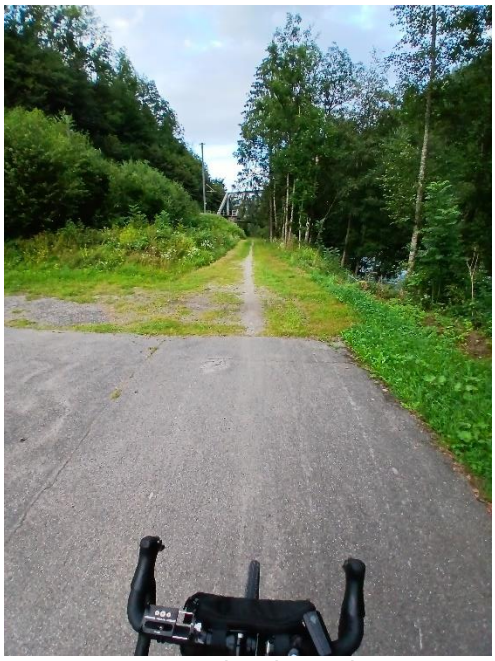
Improvement compared to 2019 survey:
The chicane leaving only 1 m of width, identified during the 2019 survey, on a bridge in Malans, was removed.

Picture from 2019

Width
15 minor sections were categorised with insufficient width, mostly on gravel/dirt paths due to very narrow lanes bordered by grass, or due to narrow cycle and pedestrian paths taking into consideration the presence of both pedestrians and cyclists, sometimes in both directions. There were also painted cycle lanes of less than 1 m identified in Chur, Horn and Steckborn.

Additionally, on the second daily section, some public roads in mixed traffic, as on Versammerstrasse nearby the Rhine Gorges, can be qualified as dangerous as there are stretches with reduced width – the cars cannot cross one another anymore – and there are a lot of turns making it quite unsafe for cycling tourists (see last picture below).

Cycle and pedestrian path after Surrein (daily section 2)



Very narrow gravel path nearby Tavanasa (daily section 2)

Cycle lane of less than 1 m on the Rossbodenstrasse in Chur (daily section 4)

Very narrow cycle and pedestrian path (less than 1 m) nearby Igis (daily section 5)

Narrow cycle and pedestrian path for both directions going in a tunnel under Buchs station (daily section 5)

Narrow public road with a lot of turns after Versam (daily section 2)

Tunnels

There are seven tunnels along the two first daily sections of the Rhine Cycle Route missing adapted cycling infrastructure which are problematic. The speed limit should be lowered and dedicated segregated space for cyclists should be created. If not allowed due to the width of the tunnel, another itinerary should be discussed or the creation of a parallel path in some cases. At a minimum, advertisement should be put into place with panels indicating the potential presence of cyclists on the road and push-button for cyclists to signal their presence to drivers arriving in the tunnel after.

The four first tunnels are the most critical ones. The ones listed after on Versammerstrasse are shorter which make them less critical even if the route is quite narrow.

Precise information about the presence of those tunnels should be provided on the concerned websites to make sure that cycling tourists make an acute decision if they ride those sections.

First tunnel *(daily section 1) arriving after a curve making it even more dangerous as it lowers the visibility of the cyclists for the direction Andermatt > Disentis/Mustér*

First tunnel *(daily section 1) – a cyclist was seen taking this narrow dirt road on the side to avoid the tunnel. This path could be developed to make it less steep and equipped with barriers to prevent cyclists falling.*

First tunnel *(daily section 1) – traffic speed of 60 km/h and hermetic tunnel making the traffic noise very important*

Second tunnel *(daily section 1) – thanks to its straight trajectory, this tunnel offers better visibility but it still misses specific cycling infrastructure.*

Third tunnel *(daily section 1) – 170 m – there is no dedicated cycling infrastructure but a narrow emergency walkway allows for cyclists to ride or walk more safely through the tunnel.*

Third tunnel *(daily section 1) – an alternative road on the side could maybe be developed in a safe segregated cycle path. The speed limit should be reduced as well as it is by default of 80 km/h.*

***Two consecutive tunnels** on Versammerstrasse (daily section 2) of 150m with no adapted cycling infrastructure*

First tunnel (daily section 2)

End of second consecutive tunnel (daily section 2)

A third shorter tunnel on Versammerstrasse a bit further (daily section 2)

A fourth shorter tunnel on Versammerstrasse (daily section 2) – less critical thanks to good visibility

6.1.2.5 Attractiveness

The route leads most of the time through very attractive landscapes, from the mountains of Graubünden to the peaceful shores of Lake Constance. Only between Buchs and St Margrethen, the route is a bit monotonous at times, continuing straight without many changes in the landscape.

Two long stretches were leading through areas with a lot of noise because of the cars: from Oberriet to Chur, and on the Alpenrheinradweg when approaching Buchs (segregated cycle paths with a view on the motorway and noise from the fast cars).

The stunning Rhine Gorges (daily section 2)

Stunning mountainous landscape on daily section 2

Unattractive industrial area after the city of Trimmis (daily section 4)

Industrial area before reaching Ilanz (daily section 3)

Noisy stretch as cyclists go over a highway before reaching Felsberg (daily section 4)

Long section on a cycle and pedestrian path with the noisy highway in parallel, from the surroundings of Oberriet (daily section 4) to Chur (daily section 5)

6.1.3 Signing

The rules for cycle-route signage are covered in the document “Strassensignale/Signaux Routiers” – “640 829a Swiss standard” by the Swiss Association of Road and Transportation Experts (2006). Switzerland Mobility has also produced additional guidelines available on their website: “Manuel -Signalisation de direction pour vélos, VTT et engins assimilés à des véhicules” (2010) and the Manual “Balisage pour les vélos, oui ou non? » (2017) in collaboration with Conférence vélo Suisse.

In practice, from the point of view of a cycle tourist, EuroVelo signs in the frame version are combined with signs of the Swiss National Route no. 2, with which EuroVelo 15 has a common itinerary. These route signs are used in the main towns, at crossings and as direction confirmation signs. According to the rules for cycle-route signage, signs mentioning destinations and distances are installed at the start and end points of itineraries, at the interfaces with public transport, next to information boards, at route intersections and crossings, in all destinations named at least once and in the centre of localities.

Example of a direction confirmation sign with the frame version of the EuroVelo sign combined with the national sign and indication on next main towns and distances

Example of a direction confirmation sign with the frame version of the EuroVelo sign combined with the national sign

Swiss direction confirmation sign with the EuroVelo sign included on Austrian route panels in the Austrian part of the route (daily section 7)

In many cases, only the generic signs for bicycle routes, which are brown or red with a white bicycle pictogram, are used as direction confirmation signs. In some cases, this is confusing, and a route identification should be added to the sign.

Example of the generic bike confirmation sign without the framed EuroVelo route information panel

Missing signage
During the survey, a lack of signage was noted in several locations (besides some signs that were unclear in other locations):

- A sign at a main junction is missing when exiting Disentis on via Cavardiras.

- There should be also another sign to indicate which route to follow after crossing the bridge on via Cavardiras and before entering the village.

- After exiting Cavardiras and when entering Pardomat, we arrive at a main junction and there is only a bike sign to indicate to turn right. It would be better to have a clear indication that this bike sign indicates the way for National Route 2 and EuroVelo 15:

- When reaching Tavanasa, the signage could be improved and integrate a EuroVelo logo when leaving the traffic-free path:


- At the entrance of Chur, EuroVelo signs are missing after a main roundabout. There are other cycling signs pointing in directions that are not EuroVelo 15, so cyclists can easily get lost.

- In the industrial area of Chur, at the very beginning of the daily section Chur – Buchs, there are some construction works and the route to take is unclear due to missing signage. It would be useful to add a clear sign indicating to keep the left direction:


- When exiting Buchs at the roundabout of St Gallerstrasse, the signage was unclear for one of the directions. The GPX indicate to turn right but in order to see the signage, it is needed to take the roundabout in the opposite direction on the cycle-pedestrian path. A sign should be installed to indicate to follow the right rather than having to turn around the whole roundabout as the cycle-pedestrian path allows to go in both directions.

- When exiting Trimmis, right before the hotel SportCenter Fünf-Dörfer, there is a missing sign in the opposite direction to the one surveyed.

- In the industrial area of Zizers, there is an important missing sign to indicate to go right at a crossing. A cyclist met there was confused about the itinerary.

Wrong place/content
Wrong signage has been identified on a few occasions, in particular:

- After entering Austria, in the town of Fußach, a EuroVelo 15 / national route number 2 indicates to turn right - when the GPX tracks indicate to continue straight after leaving a segregated cycle path on Seestraße. This is misleading as the itinerary route goes straight.

Badly rideable signage

Damaged confirmation sign on one side as there are stickers on the national route and EuroVelo sign and missing confirmation sign in the other direction at the Oberalppass (daily section 1).

The EuroVelo frame is not rideable on this panel located on Bahnhoffsträssli, nearby Trimmis (daily section 5).

6.1.4. Public Transport

The entire route between Andermatt and Stein-am-Rhein offers good connections with public transport. Below are some details on the train and bus connections along the route, both to reach the route from other countries and to travel along the route with a bicycle.

6.1.4.1. Trains

International connections to the start of the route
Andermatt, situated in the middle of the Alps, can be easily accessed by train from all directions.
From Bern, the capital of Switzerland, it is easy to get to Andermatt with a bicycle. Cyclists first have to take a fast train from Bern to Brig, then the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn railway line, very scenic and with spaces for 10-12 bikes, to Andermatt.

The Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn runs from Zermatt in the canton of Valais to Disentis in the Grisons via Andermatt in the canton of Uri. Tandems, recumbent bicycles, tricycles, cargo bicycles and other bicycles over 2 metres in length can be transported on this train line at the normal bike rate, provided there is enough space. Bike reservation is not necessary for this line. More information can be found here.

It is also possible to reach Andermatt from Basel by taking regional trains with changes in Arth-Goldau and Göschenen – where you can take the Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn.

There is also a 2h train from Zurich to Andermatt, and if coming from Italy, a 3h30 train from Milan to Andermatt (with a change in Bellinzona and Göschenen). Bicycles are also accepted in the train from Italy.

Train connections along the route
There are railway tracks along the 7 daily sections of the route from Andermatt to Konstanz. A narrow-gauge line connects most towns between Andermatt and Chur and towards the border with Liechtenstein with hourly connections, and a standard line owned by SBB connects most towns between Bad Ragaz and Kreuzlingen (Konstanz), with connections every hour or 30 minutes. Bicycle wagons are clearly indicated with a bike pictogram on the door.

Bicycles tickets
For carrying bicycles in the train, a good option is the Bike Day Pass, which costs CHF 15. Then, cyclists can use this pass to take their bike on most public transport in the area (PostAuto, Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn, intercity trains, regional trains). SBB also proposes a Bike Multiple Day Pass (six freely selectable days) for CHF 90. Alternatively, it is also possible to buy point-to-point tickets for bicycles with 2nd class train tickets, for which the price depends on the distance.

It is usually possible to carry special bikes or a trailer by paying twice the transport fare.
From 21 March to 31 October, a bike space reservation for any bike is needed on InterCity (IC) trains. More information can be found on SBB website.

Accessibility of train stations
Most train stations along the Rhine Cycle Route in Switzerland are very well equipped with large, inclined ramps that allow all types of bikes to be easily transported from one platform to another. In less good cases, there are elevators available. Many small stations along the route have only two platforms that can be easily crossed without the need to go underground which is also a good point for the accessibility.

Bicycle wagon in a Swiss train.

Bicycle transportation in the train between Arth-Goldau and Göschenen.

Train station of Andermatt with very good accessibility thanks to its large inclined ramps without stairs.

Bicycle transportation in the train between Basel and Arth-Goldau.

6.1.4.2. Busses

International connections to the start of the route

Flixbus offers connections from abroad to Bern, Basel or Zurich, from where it is possible to travel by train to Andermatt (see above). Flixbus busses generally offer the purchase of a bicycle ticket for €12 (2024 prices), and bicycles are carried in a bike rack at the back of the bus.

The Flixbus line Brussels – Basel connects Belgium to Switzerland through Strasbourg (France) and is a good option for cycle tourists from different countries to reach the start of EuroVelo 15. However, previous experiences of traveling with Flixbus showed that the booking of bicycle tickets is not always taken into account and it is better to take contact directly with Flixbus to ensure that bike racks are installed.

Bus connections along the route
In the Graubünden region, corresponding approximately to daily sections 1 to 4 of the Rhine Cycle Route, busses run by PostBus are equipped with bicycle racks or special bike porters for 5 – 6 bikes (with limitation to two e-bikes) during the summer season (from May to October). An online reservation is sometimes needed for carrying bicycles and specific information on the possibility to carry bicycles on different bus routes can be checked on this website. It is advisable to check for the possibility of bicycle transport by checking the notes in the timetable.

The Bike Day Pass and the annual bike pass offered by Swiss transport companies is also valid on the PostBus network. Tickets can be bought directly from Postbus drivers.

Outside of the Graubünden region, bikes can be transported at any time of year in the luggage area or passenger compartment of the vehicle.

Postbus with back rack for bicycles in Disentis

6.1.5. Services

There is a good selection of services along the route. Drinking water is regularly available along the route, there is a variety of accommodation providers and regular restaurants and shops. There are also a bike repair shop per daily section and regular rest areas.

During the survey, the following services were identified directly on or signposted on the route (if the services identified during the field work do not meet the certification criteria, a number of services identified through desktop research is given in parenthesis).

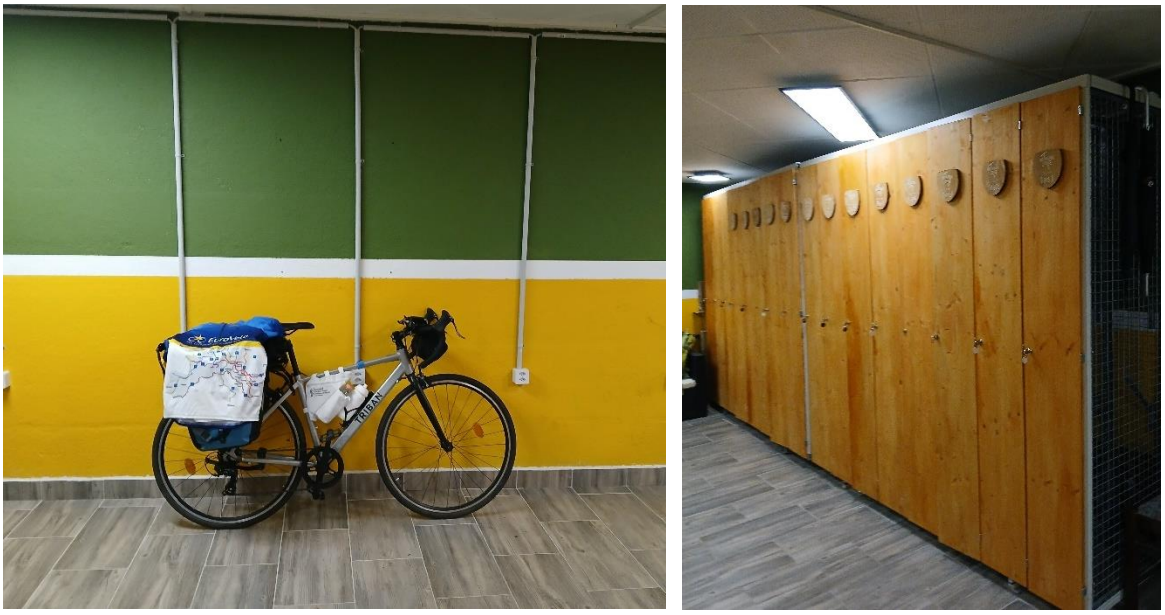
	ACCOMODATION					FOOD		BIKE SERVICES		
Daily section	luxury	standard	budget	camping	cyclist-friendly	food	food/rest every 15 km	repair shops	spare parts/self-service	e-bike charging
1	1	6	2	1	2	16	Yes	1	1	1
2	0	2	1	1	2	8	Yes	1	2	2
3	1	3	1	1	2	3	Yes	2	3	1
4	0	3	1	1	0	11	Yes	2	3	1
5	1	3	1	1	0	7	Yes	1	2	0
6	0	2	2	1	0	5	No (Yes)	0 (1)	1	0
7	0	3	2	1	0	6	Yes	0 (1)	1	0
8	2	2	1	2	0	4	No (Yes)	0 (1)	1	0
9	0	2	0	1	0	2	No (Yes)	0 (1)	1	0

= Does not meet essential criteria = Does not meet important criteria = Does not meet additional criteria

6.1.5.1. Accommodation

In Switzerland, most accommodations are cycling-friendly even if not certified by a specific label. In the Graubünden region, the ski storage room is sometimes transformed in a cycling storage room. Sedrun Disentis Tourismus has set up a cycling-friendly service scheme in the region listing accommodations providing at least a bicycle storage room, an area for cleaning the bikes, tools for small repairs and cycling maps of the region. The ten accommodations listed are all nearby EuroVelo 15.

There are also accommodation options along EuroVelo 15 mapped on the SwitzerlandMobility website. Most satisfy criteria as the possibility of using a bicycle storage room, of booking a room for only one-night, substantial breakfast, but the list of cycling-friendly services provided by those accommodation is not available. It would be a suggested improvement.

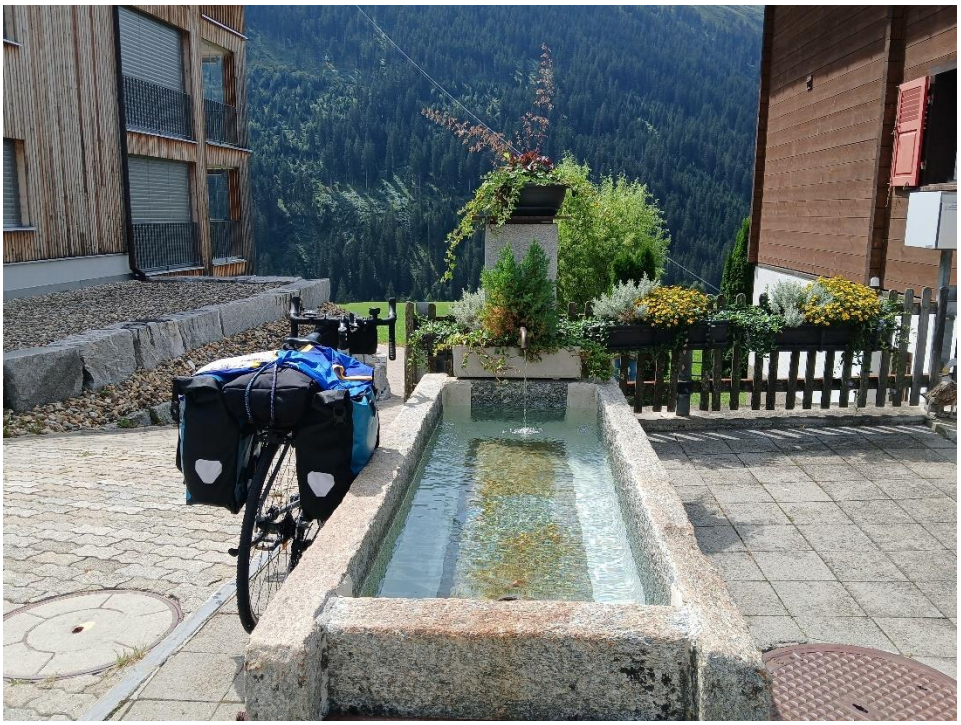


The ski/cycle storage room in the Bed & Breakfast Casa La Val in Sedrun

The labelled "bike friendly" café/bar Nangijala in Disentis

6.1.5.2. Food, rest areas and drinking water

Restaurants and supermarkets are regularly available along the route. High-quality rest areas are also present with some remarkable services available. There are very often fountains along the route – even if not marked as drinkable water specifically.



Drinking water in Camischolas.

Another fountain before reaching Surrein.

A high-quality rest area in Trun with water, a playground area, benches and picnic tables, toilets and a trashcan. The only weak point is the quality of the bicycle stands.

Example of a good practice – the rest area "Pausa Curtin d'uaul" in Surrein

This rest area located in Surrein along the route is a great example of a useful and well-equipped rest area in a suited location. There are bicycle stands – even though they might not be adapted to all types of cycles and do not allow to lock the bikes easily. However, it is possible to keep an eye on the cycles from both the bench and the picnic table. Water is available, and toilets are equipped with disinfectant and toilet paper. There is shadow thanks to the trees, and it can also act as a natural rain shelter. Another addition is the presence of a barbecue free to use with wood and a trashcan. Finally, the landscape is stunning with almost no traffic at proximity.

6.1.5.3. Bike services (repair, rental, e-bike charging stations)

Repair shops and bike rental shops are present regularly along the route.
Multiple e-bike charging stations are also at disposal for cycling tourists at proximity of rest areas or nearby services in village centres.

E-bike station in Camischolas.

E-bike charging station at Disentis train station.

Self-service repair station in front of a repair shop in Chur.

Intersport rental shop with spare parts in Curschellas – Sedrun

La Bikeria – repair shop in Surrein.

6.1.6. Marketing / Promotion

6.1.6.1. Online marketing and promotion

The main website to promote the route is the SwitzerlandMobility website, available in English, French and German: https://www.schweizmobil.ch/en/cycling-in-switzerland/route-02.html. It contains information on every stage of the route, public transport connections, travel reports from other cycling tourists, bookable offers, available accommodation, places of interest and main cities, bike rental and bike services, maps and guides, etc. It also integrates an interactive map with plenty of information, the route track etc.
An app is also available: https://www.schweizmobil.ch/en/switzerlandmobility-app-e.html

- **Potential improvements**

On signing, information about the frame version of the EuroVelo sign could be included as a potential improvement.

The description text above the link to the EuroVelo website could be improved to remove the mentions "EV15 and 3EV6" and change add a capital "v" to "Eurovelo". The link could also be put in a more visible location as it is currently under the Arrival/getting around.

Eurovelo International (E15+E6)

This route is a part of the EuroVelo-Route 15 Rhine and of the EuroVelo-Route 6 Atlantic–Black Sea (section Stein a. Rhein to Basel).

↗ **eurovelo.com**

Screenshot from the SwitzerlandMobility website.

Moreover, it would be useful to include information about services guaranteed in the accommodation options that are promoted on the website by default of having an official cycling friendly service scheme in Switzerland at the national level.

Existing promotional tools (all web tools provided on the SwitzerlandMobility website):

Category	Promotional tool			
Web	National/regional website, including information on:	Information on the route, including a detailed map	X	
		Info on signing	X	
		Info on accommodation	X	
		Info on PT connections	X	
		Interactive maps	X	
		POIs	X	
		Accommodation online databases	X	
		PT timetables		Not integrated, but several links to the relevant websites.
		GPS track downloads	X	
	Overview info about the route on eurovelo.com		X	
Print	Guidebook		X	Numerous books available.
	Detailed printed map		X	
Other	Information boards / centres on every daily section		X	

= Essential criteria = Important criteria

Marketing and promotion along the route

The following **tourist information centres and panels** were identified directly on the route during the survey:

Daily section	info centre	info panel
1	2	2
2	0	2
3	0	1
4	0	1
5	0	1
6	1	3
7	0	4

8	2	8
9	1	1

The information boards are consistent and frequent along EuroVelo 15. They display most of the time a schematic map of the Rhine Cycle Route and other national and regional routes, as well as information on the rules of signage. A QR code redirects to the website to SwitzerlandMobility with the online map which has information on services and POIs.

Information board in Andermatt

Some information boards are older and missing the EuroVelo 15 information panel and could be updated. In particular, one information board was spotted in a location outside of the GPX tracks which may be confusing as the signage is also not very clear when crossing the Rhine between Hadelstein and Masans (see location of number 3):

The information board was probably set here some time ago and the GPX tracks of EuroVelo 15 were updated in the meantime. Note that the location of the panel is also not ideal because of the parking lot.

6.1.7. Deficiencies

6.1.7.1. Critical deficiencies

The critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) are addressed in the different previous chapters:

- High/very high traffic with no cycling infrastructure were observed on all daily sections except 4, 5 and 6.
- Badly rideable surfaces were observed on 7% of the route and should be improved.
- Several important signing issues are listed in the “Signing” section and should be resolved to reach the essential and important criteria. In total, 16 missing signs, one wrong sign and two badly readable signs were reported.

Suggestions for improvements are included in the different sections.

6.1.7.2. Other issues

Issues concerning reduced width, moderate traffic and moderately rideable surfaces are not critical but could be addressed for the route to meet the additional criteria as well.

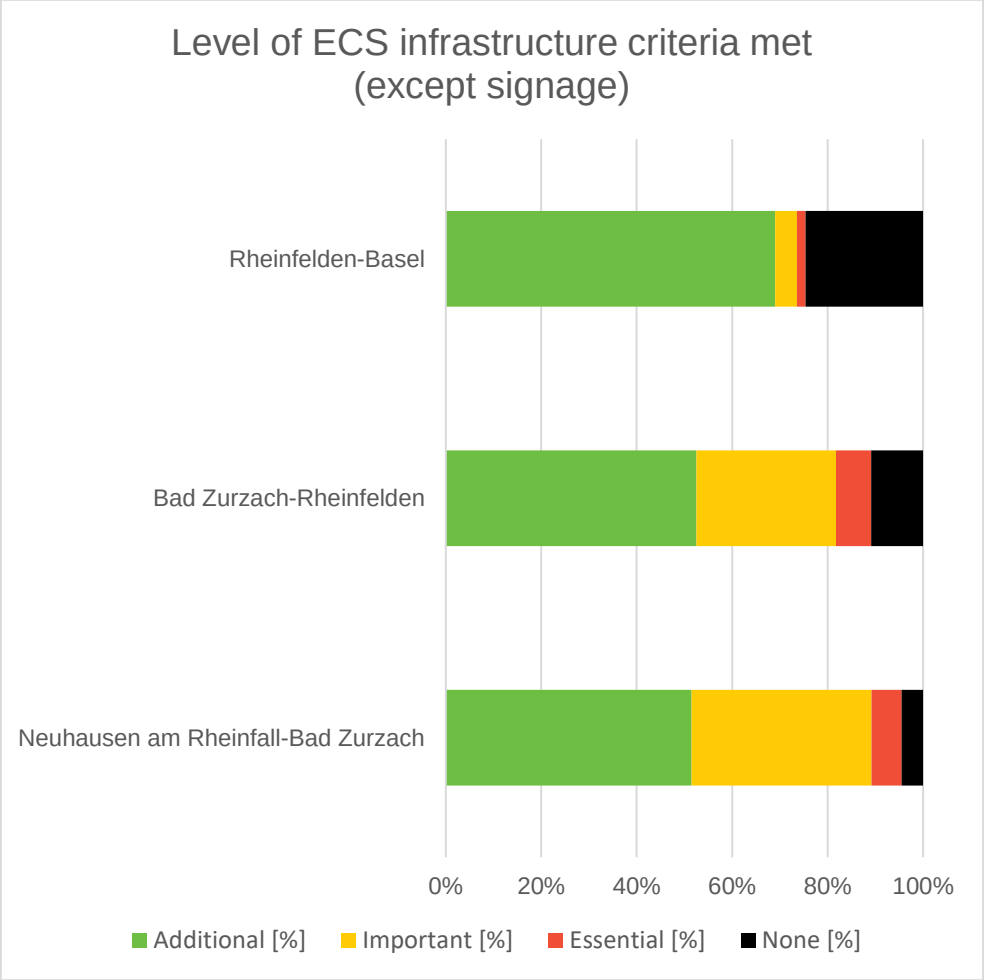
6.2. Switzerland, part 2: Left bank between Neuhausen am Rheinfall and Basel

6.2.1. Itinerary changes

The surveyed route differed from the GPX track agreed to follow before the survey in the following locations:

- In Kaiserstuhl, signs along Hauptstrasse 7 were followed instead of the track on Bachweg, Rhihofweg, Bahnweg, Bahnhofplatz.
- In Rümikon, signs along Alte Bahnhofsstrasse were mistakenly followed instead of the track on Hauptstrasse 7.
- In Mellikon, signs along Kraftwerkstrasse were followed instead of the track on a path parallel to it.
- In Rheinfelden, a minor signed detour on a parking lot next to the road was followed due to construction.

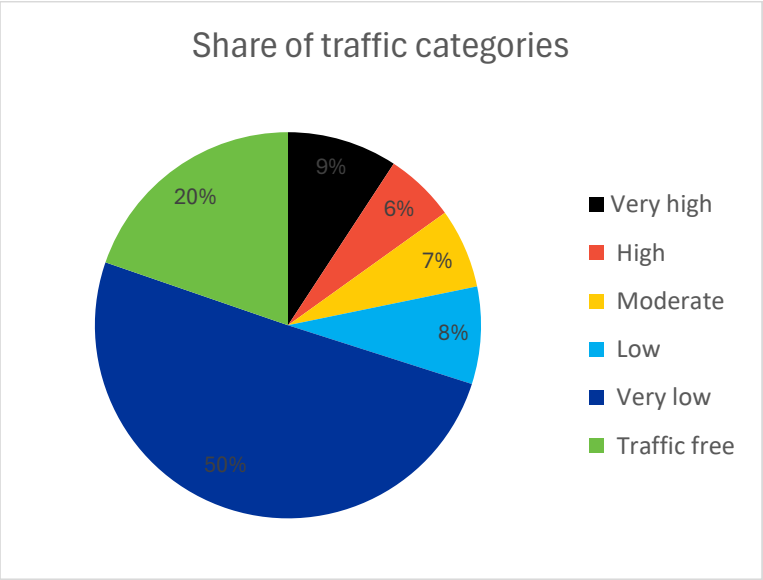
6.2.2. Basic infrastructure



This chart shows the shares of the three daily sections included in the chapter that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness.

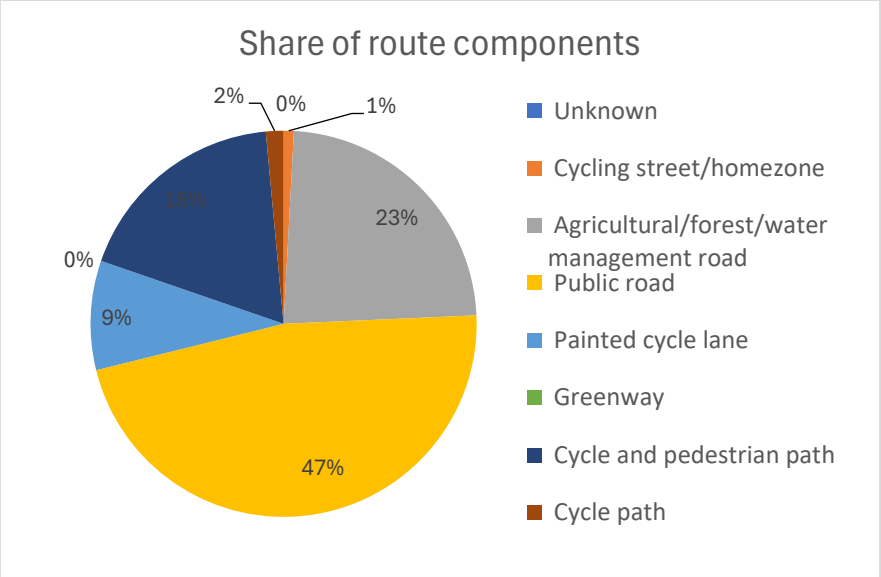
For instance, the section Neuhausen am Rheinfall – Bad Zurzach meets just the essential criteria on 6.3% of its length, while 37.7% meet the essential and the important criteria and still 51.5% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

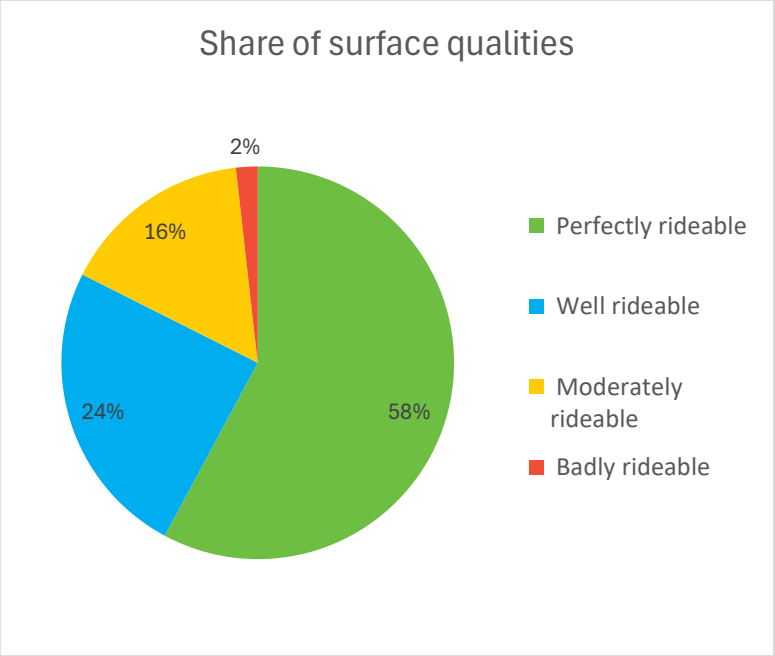
The following table shows which shares of the route fall in which traffic category, depending on the different levels of traffic volume and speed. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):



20% of the route is composed of segregated cycle paths, greenways, or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 50% comprise roads with very low motorised traffic, and 8% roads with low traffic. 7% were classified as featuring moderate traffic and 6% as including high traffic. 9% of minor sections were classified as containing very high traffic.

Most of the route (82%) leads over perfectly ridable or well rideable surfaces. 16% was classified as moderately rideable. The lower surface quality is mostly encountered on agricultural or forest roads with gravel surfacing (either not compacted enough or damaged). 2% the route was classified as badly rideable, while no part of the route was classified as not rideable. On 14.7 km, the effective width of the cycle infrastructure was evaluated as not allowing to safely pass cyclists coming from the opposite direction.


Share of route components
2%
0%
1%
23%
18%
0%
9%
47%
Unknown
Cycling street/homezone
Agricultural/forest/water management road
Public road
Painted cycle lane
Greenway
Cycle and pedestrian path
Cycle path


Share of surface qualities
2%
16%
24%
58%
Perfectly rideable
Well rideable
Moderately rideable
Badly rideable

Examples of various types of route components and surface quality encountered along the route

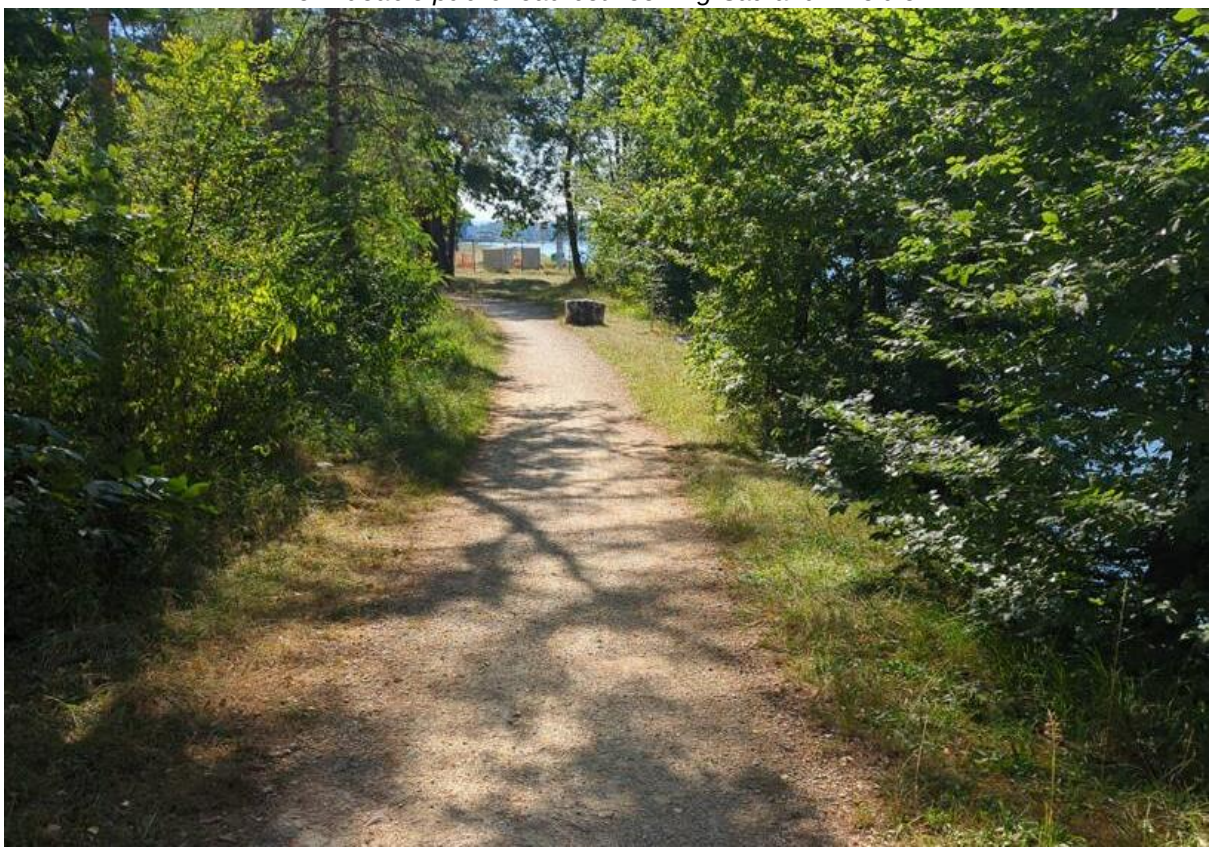
Perfectly rideable, low-traffic public road in Eglisau.

Perfectly rideable home zone in Kaisten.

Perfectly rideable cycle and pedestrian path between Rietheim and Koblenz.

Perfectly rideable painted cycle lane in Basel. For ECS purposes, this was treated as cycling in mixed traffic, as the cycle lane does not reach the minimum effective width.

Well rideable public road between Eglisau and Zweidlen.



Moderately rideable gravel forest management road between Full and Leibstadt.

Badly rideable section of cycle and pedestrian path on the way to Schloss Laufen. The steep terrain and loose gravel required the touring bicycle to be pushed for stretches.

6.2.3. Signing

Please refer to the chapter on Switzerland between Andermatt and Konstanz for general information about bicycle route signing guidelines in Switzerland.

The route is generally signed with the frame version of the EuroVelo route information panel, integrated into the national route number 2 signs. EuroVelo 15 and national route 2 share the same itinerary until Basel, where national route 2 goes to Basel SBB train station, while EuroVelo 15 crosses Wettsteinbrücke to the right bank of the Rhine and continues from there into Germany.

National, regional and local route signs with next main towns and distances to them. Below, a SwissMobility information board.

A direction confirmation sign featuring the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 logo with the National route 2 logo embedded.

A direction confirmation sign obscured by trees.

6.2.4. Public Transport

Please refer to the chapter on Switzerland between Andermatt and Konstanz for general information about combining bike and public transport.

There are frequent train connections in the bigger settlements along this stretch of the route. Stations are generally accessible, featuring ramps, elevators, or platforms at street level. The map by SwitzerlandMobility shows the many public transport options available.

The start of the section in Neuhausen am Rheinfall can be accessed by taking a number of national and international trains from e.g. Basel Badischer Bahnhof, Zürich, Stuttgart, Friedrichshafen, and connecting to a local train to Schaffhausen Kreuz or cycling from Schaffhausen station, which is located close to the right bank route of EuroVelo 15.

The end of the section in Basel is home to the biggest border train station in Europe, Bahnhof Basel SBB. Assembled bicycles can be taken here on ICE's originating in Berlin and Hamburg-Altona/Kiel, and in EC's originating in Frankfurt and Milan. There is also an ICE connection to Amsterdam and a TGV connection to Paris, however assembled bicycles cannot be carried on these. Furthermore, there are NightJet connections to Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam on which assembled bicycles can be carried.

6.2.5. Services

There is a good selection of services on the route, in all the analysed aspects – accommodation, food, bike services. The SwitzerlandMobility website lists 36 cycling friendly accommodations, which range from campgrounds to luxury hotels. Bookable offers covering each daily section can be found there too.

Public water fountains are a common sight along this part of the route, although in some case it was not clear whether the water is safe to drink. Desk research showed that water from these fountains is generally safe to drink unless otherwise stated, however this may not be clear to the general cycling tourist.

A board proposing e-bike charging. bike repair services and accomodation.

6.2.6. Marketing / Promotion

Please refer to the Switzerland chapter for the stretch between Andermatt and Stein am Rhein for more detailed information on promotion.

Information panels are standardised and include a map of cycle and other active-mobility routes, as well as QR codes linking to up-to-date lists of services and attractions.

A typical SwitzerlandMobility information board.

6.2.7. Deficiencies

The following critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) were observed along the route:

- 1.5 km of very high traffic on Poststrasse towards Rheinau.
- 700 m of badly rideable forest management road near Tösseg/Waldheim.
- 900 m of very high traffic leading out of Koblenz.
- 3.5 km of very high traffic on Haupstrasse 7 between Schwaderloch and Etzgen.
- 650 m of high traffic on Unterhalden in Kaisten.
- 300 m of high traffic on Laufenburgerstrasse crossing the A3.
- 1.3 km of high traffic on Zürcherstrasse in Stein.
- 1.6 km of very high traffic on Baslerstrasse/Hauptstrasse 7 between Stein and Mumpf.
- 1.3 km of high traffic on Hauptstrasse 7 in Mumpf.
- 1.3 km of badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path between Augarten and Kaiseraugst.
- 2.5 km of very high traffic on Oberemattstrasse and Muttenzerstrasse in Pratteln.
- 1.9 km of very high traffic on Birsstrasse in Basel.

Badly rideable forest management road near Tösseg/Waldheim.

Crossing onto national road 3/7 with very high traffic in Stein.

Badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path between Augarten and Kaiseraugust. The steep gradient and loose gravel make it difficult to cycle on a regular touring bike.

Other issues:

- Shorter instances of badly rideable cycle path on the way to Schloss Laufen.
- 8.7 km of moderate traffic.
- 19.8 km of moderately rideable surface, mostly on forest management roads.
- 14.7 km of insufficient width (cycle tracks used bidirectionally with effective width below 2.0 m).
- 2 locations (crossings, pedestrian bridges, roadworks), where cyclists have to dismount and walk their bicycles.
- 6 chicanes or other obstacles making it difficult to travel with non-standard bicycles, such as tandems, bikes with trailers etc.
- 2 dangerous crossings.

6.2.8. Planned route improvements

ECF is not aware of any planned route improvements at this time.

6.2.9. Proposed actions

For several sections we propose to consider changing the itinerary. Please note that the alternative itineraries are suggested on basis of analysis of map data, and they have not been surveyed in field and verified in terms of compliance with the ECS criteria.

- Improve the badly rideable parts of the cycle and pedestrian path leading towards Schloss Laufen by paving or stabilising ideally the whole stretch, but at least the steep inclines with loose gravel.
- Build 1.5 km of segregated cycle path on Poststrasse towards Rheinau to alleviate the issue of cycling in very high mixed traffic. If this is not feasible, reduce the speed limit to 60 kph. The main issue in this segment is the high speed of traffic, rather than the volume.
- Improve the 700 m of badly rideable forest management road near Tösseg/Waldheim.
- Build 900 m of segregated cycle path along national road 7 in Koblenz. Alternative locations: directly on the riverbank or along the railroad line.
- Build 3.5 km of cycle path along national road 7 between Schwaderloch and Etzgen. Alternative locations: directly on the riverbank or along the railroad line.
- Build 650 m of cycle path along Unterhalden in Kaisten. If this is not feasible, reduce the speed limit on the road to 30 kph.
- Convert the pedestrian path that runs alongside Laufenburgstrasse as it crosses the A3 into a cycle and pedestrian path.
- Build 4 km of cycle path along national roads 7 and 3 between Stein and Mumpf. Alternative locations: directly on the riverbank (pedestrian path already existing?) or along the railroad line. In parts of Stein and Mumpf, it seems also possible to follow parallel local roads.
- Improve the 1.3 km of badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path between Augarten and Kaiseraugst, alternatively change the route to stay on the left side of the train tracks until the underpasses at Mühlengasse or Salinenstrasse and link up with the current route there.
- Change the route in Pratteln to follow one of the parallel streets to Oberemattstrasse and Muttenzerstrasse, in order to avoid the very high traffic.
- Create 1.9 km of cycle path along Birsstrasse in Basel, either by permitting cycling on the pedestrian path next to the road or constructing a cycle path where the existing pedestrian path directly on the riverbank is. If this is not feasible, change the route to avoid Birsstrasse, and particularly the dangerous intersections with Redingstrasse and national road 3/7. If there is less traffic on Gellertrasse, turning left at the stadium and following this road could be an option.
- Replace missing, misleading, or badly readable signs.
- Remove or widen the 6 chicanes or other obstacles which cause difficulties for non-standard bicycles.

6.3. Baden-Württemberg / Switzerland: Right bank between Konstanz and Basel

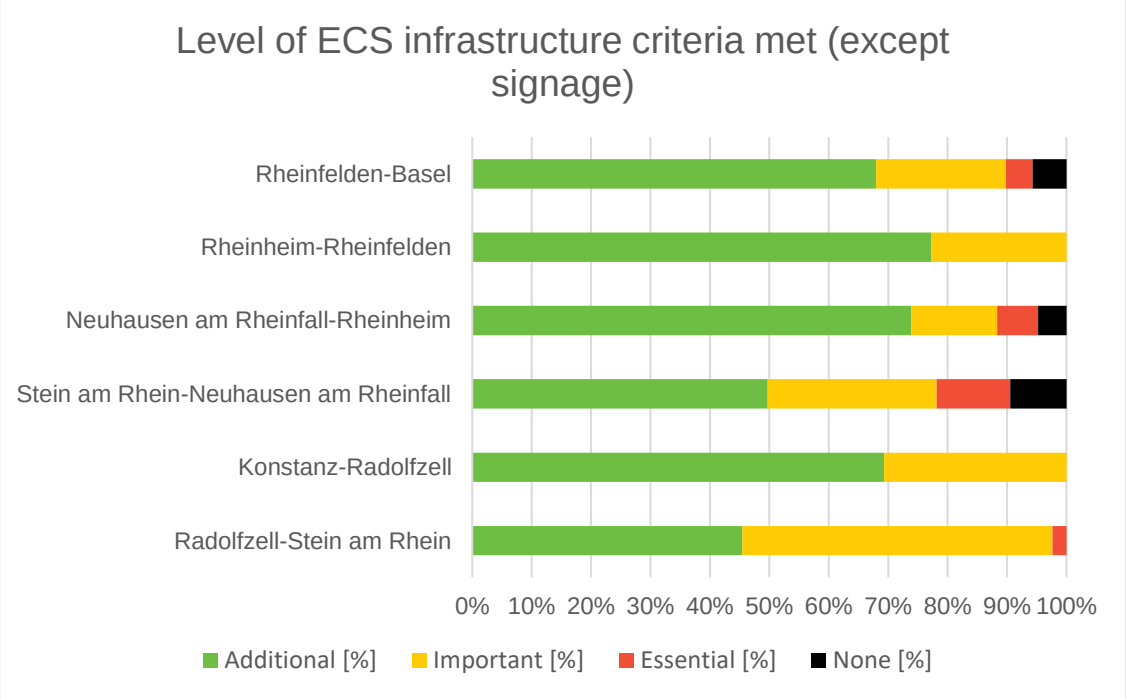
This chapter covers the part of the route on the right bank of the Rhine between Konstanz and Basel, covering daily sections 9R, 10R, 11R, 12R, 13R and 14R. Although the route crosses the Swiss-German border multiple times, this segment is reported in one chapter, as the identified deficiencies, not least around the border crossings, may need a co-ordinated approach by partners in Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg.

The route is mostly highly attractive, visiting picturesque towns such as Laufenburg and Bad Säckingen. Konstanz, with its beautiful lakeside views and charming character makes for an attractive start point of this section of EuroVelo 15. Following this, the Rhine Falls at Neuhausen am Rheinfall are a natural highlight. After the Rhine Falls there are some nice panoramic views of the Rhine, before the route leaves the river for the next 50 km. It only returns to the riverside at Hohentengen and more or less stays there all the way to Basel. There are some minor sections passing through industrial or commercial estates, but the overall character of the route is more than sufficiently attractive.

6.3.1. Itinerary changes

- A very short (100 m) well-signed detour around a one-way street in the centre of Neuhausen where the GPX follows the one-way street in the other direction.
- Roadworks in Wil. Detour (1.5 km) to Hüntwangen. No useful signage.
- A well-signposted 1 km detour in Schwörstadt because of roadworks.

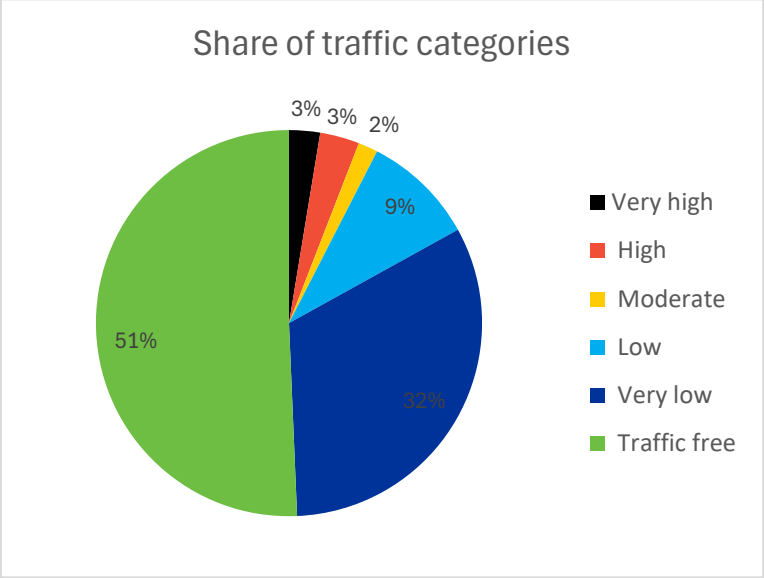
6.3.2. Basic infrastructure



This chart shows the shares of the 6 daily sections defined on this part of the route that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness.

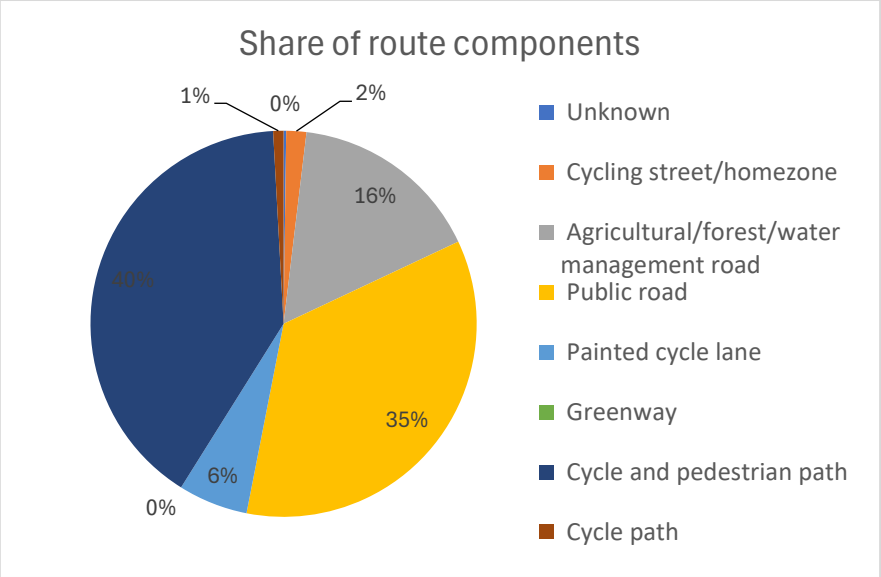
For instance, the daily section from Neuhausen am Rheinfall to Rheinheim meets just the essential criteria on 6.9% of its length, while 14.4% meet the essential and the important criteria and 73.9% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

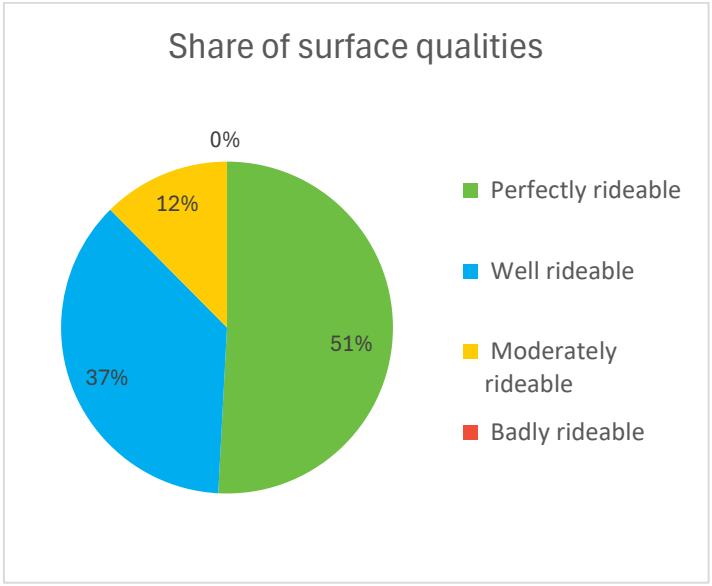
The following table shows which shares of the route fall into which traffic category, depending on the different levels of traffic volume and speed. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):



51% of the route is composed of segregated cycle paths, greenways, or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 32% comprise roads with very low motorised traffic, and 9% roads with low traffic. 2% were classified as featuring moderate traffic and 3% as including high traffic. 3% of minor sections were classified as containing very high traffic.

Most of the route (88%) leads over perfectly rideable or well rideable surfaces. 12% was classified as moderately rideable. There were no parts of the route that were classified as not rideable. On 22.1%, the effective width of the cycling infrastructure was evaluated as not allowing to safely pass cyclists coming from the opposite direction.





Examples of various types of route components

Public road.

Agricultural road.

Cycle and pedestrian path.

Painted cycle lane. For ECS purposes, this was treated as cycling in mixed-use traffic, as the cycle lane does not reach the minimum effective width.

Some examples of surface quality encountered along the route

Perfectly rideable asphalted agricultural road.

Well rideable cobbled public road.

Moderately rideable stabilised gravel cycle and pedestrian path.

6.3.3. Signing

More information on general signage practices in Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg is provided in the respective chapters.

On the German sections, the route is consistently signed in line with regional guidelines. There are some minor deficiencies and wrongly placed signs, but the overall quality of signage is high.

Daily section 11R from Stein am Rhein to Neuhausen am Rheinfall is consistently signed with the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 sign, however in upstream direction it only references the left bank variant, with EuroVelo 15 signs pointing towards Kreuzlingen, while signs pointing towards Radolfzell contain only the EuroVelo 6 logo.

A similar situation presents itself on daily section 12R, where route information boards only contain the EuroVelo logo in reference to the left bank variant, and signage itself is generally deficient. EuroVelo logos are either absent entirely, very small, or unclear. In Neuhausen, there is a panel showing that 'Route 77' signs need to be followed instead of EuroVelo 15 signs on this section (see pictures below), but this panel is unclear for non-German speakers. A clear explanation in English should be provided.

On daily section 14R, signage is missing from the Swiss-German border at Grenzach-Wyhlen to downtown Basel (end of the section on Unterer Rheinweg). At some points this makes it difficult to take the correct turn at crossings, in particular where EuroVelo 15 leaves the Grenzacherstraße at the western end of the football fields.

Typical signs indicating next main towns and distances, with the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 logo.

Route confirmation sign with the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 logo.

Sign indicating Route 77 signs must be followed in place of EuroVelo 15 signs.

6.3.4. Public Transport

More information on bicycle carriage in public transport in Switzerland, Baden-Württemberg, and on the international connections to/from the area, is provided in the respective chapters.

There are good train connections on the right side of the Rhine between Konstanz, Schaffhausen and Basel, with frequent connections (every 30 minutes on weekdays). A bicycle ticket is **not** necessary for carrying a bike in the regional trains. Tickets can easily be bought through the DB app.

Between the major stations of Schaffhausen and Basel (DB), there are many train stations along this section at relatively short intervals as the regional railroad (BWegt) runs along EV 15. The vast majority of stations have excellent wheelchair access, which can also be used by most types of bicycles. On many smaller stations the access is directly from the road on to the platform through wide and convenient ramps. Sometimes there are stairs and the occasional lift.

One of many accessible train stations on the route. The platforms can be reached by elevator, and there is practical bicycle parking available.

6.3.5. Services

There is a good selection of services along the route. Some information boards placed along the route also list accommodation options for cyclists which are not directly on the route. In some cases, e.g. at Rheinheim, there are more services available on the other side of the river (at Bad Zurzach).

There is a good selection of accommodation that has been certified cycling-friendly by the Bett+Bike label along the route – some of this is advertised directly on the route. Even Hotels and AirBnB hosts that have not been certified are generally used to welcoming cyclists and often offer additional services, such as safe bike

parking in a garage and e-bike charging facilities. There are occasional information panels presenting different accommodation options.

Just outside Rheinheim, there is a tourist information centre (closed when surveyed) directly on the route which proposes all services to cyclists: rest area, e-bike charging station, self-service repair, and e-bike and pedelec rental. There is another bike service station at Waldshut.

There are a few rest areas, but they do not provide water or toilets. Except for some public fountains, there are few modern water points.

Information panel suggesting different accommodations.

Tourist information centre containing bicycle services.

6.3.6. Marketing / Promotion

More information on the promotion of EuroVelo 15 in Switzerland and Baden-Württemberg is provided in the respective chapters. Listed here are some issues related specifically to the promotion of this section, as well as relevant observations from the field survey.

The website of SwitzerlandMobility contains useful information regarding EuroVelo 15, elaborated in the previous chapter, but makes no reference to the right bank variant. This is a shame, as the website is generally very informative and of high quality.

There are many information boards of varying age, origin, and content along the route. However, these often lack reference to EuroVelo 15. Particularly on the German sections of the route, there is little in the way of standardised route information panels. The most frequently encountered information boards were the 3Welten-Radweg boards, which show EuroVelo 15 until Schaffhausen, but no further. The boards also lack information relating to relevant services along the route.

Tourist information points are abundant, however these generally have quite restrictive opening hours, reducing their utility for cyclists.

On the Swiss sections, the SwitzerlandMobility information boards are generally of very high quality, containing useful QR codes leading to all types of services and attractions, which can be kept much more up to date than a regular information board. These boards, however, much like the SwitzerlandMobility website, do not show the right bank variant of EuroVelo 15.

Typical SwitzerlandMobility information board.

Typical 3Welten-Radweg information board.

6.3.7. Deficiencies

The following critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) were observed along the route:

- 600 m of high traffic and a very dangerous crossing, on Rheinhalde on the outskirts of Gailingen am Hochrhein.
- 1.6 km of very high traffic on Junkerstrasse and Schaffhauser Strasse in Büsingen am Hochrhein.
- 2 km of high traffic on Schaffhauser Strasse and Rheinhaldenstrasse between Im Stemmer and Schaffhausen.

- 250 m where cyclists have to dismount on the promenade along Rheinfall (this is compensated for by the quality of the view).
- 600 m of very high traffic on the Waldshuterstraße in Jestetten.
- 1 km of very high traffic and 500 m of high traffic on Badener Landstrasse between Wasterkingen and Günzgen.
- 1.3 km of high traffic on Haupstrasse in Hohentengen.
- 700 m of high traffic on Rheintalstrasse in Lienheim.
- Unclear and possibly unsafe traffic situation in Bad Säckingen at crossing of Wernergasse and Austraße. The entire passage through the centre of Bad Säckingen is suboptimal and could be reconsidered (see below).
- 750 m of high traffic and narrow cycle lane on Hörnle on the German side of the border.
- 900 m of very high traffic on Grenzacherstraße on the Swiss side of the border.

Very dangerous crossing in Gailingen. Cyclists must cross a busy road with high-speed traffic while oncoming drivers have bad visibility due to a dip in the road.

High traffic and narrow cycle lanes on Hörnle.

Other issues:

- 2.9 km of moderate traffic.
- 21.8 km of moderately rideable surface.
- 28.6 km of insufficient width (cycle tracks used bidirectionally with effective width below 2.0 m).
- 5 locations (crossings, pedestrian bridges, roadworks), where cyclists have to dismount and walk their bicycles.
- 3 chicanes or other obstacles making it difficult to travel with non-standard bicycles, such as tandems, bikes with trailers etc.
- 4 dangerous crossings.
- Deficient signage on the Swiss parts of the right-side route in Neuhausen, between Rafz and Günzen and between Grenzach-Wyhlen and Basel.

A dangerous crossing (signposted as such) in Kattenhorn.

A dismount requirement in Rheinheim.

6.3.8. Planned route improvements

ECF is not aware of any planned route improvements at this moment in time.

6.3.9. Proposed actions

For several sections we propose to consider changing the itinerary. Please note that the alternative itineraries are suggested on basis of analysis of map data, and they have not been surveyed in field and verified in terms of compliance with the ECS criteria.

- Extending the route in Konstanz to Kreuzlingen, in order to connect with the route on the left side on the Rhine. Example itinerary: starting from pedestrian and cycling border crossing on the corner of Seestrasse and Freiestrasse in Kreuzlingen, along Hafenstrasse and Konzilstraße in Konstanz (passing by the train station and old town) to the present start of the right-bank variant.
- An information board with a map explaining the difference between the two variants (e.g. lengths, signs used) would be very useful at the connection point. Such boards should also be added in other locations where the two variants meet (e.g. Stein am Rhein, Neuhausen).
- If not extending the route to Kreuzlingen, a more logical start point should be found. The current start point at the bottom of a pedestrian/cycling underpass is less than ideal. On the current route, Rheintorturm or Pulverturm may make sense as starting points, otherwise Stadtgarten could be considered too. The starting point should also contain a route information board indicating that this is the beginning of this variant of EuroVelo 15.
- Adding a cycle path on the southern side of Rheinhalde in Gailingen where space is sufficient and/or lowering the speed limit to 30 km/h on the sections where mixed traffic is necessary.
- Add a sign warning drivers in direction of Gailingen of crossing cyclists, as the cyclists must cross directly underneath a dip in the road with limited visibility for drivers.
- Expand the cycle lanes and/or lower the speed limit to 30 on Junkerstrasse in Büsingen to mitigate the very high traffic.
- Finding an alternative route through Büsingen am Hochrhein and further on to Schaffhausen on one of the parallel roads, e.g. Höhenstraße or Alte Schaffhauserstraße (alternative routes not surveyed – gradients might be an issue). Alternatively, prolonging the cycle path along Rheinhaldenstrasse.
- Clarify the signage in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, beginning at the railway station.
- Redirect the route out of Jestetten to avoid the very high traffic stretch; maybe Schwarzwaldstraße is a good option.
- Improve signage when leaving Jestetten in the south-west.
- Clarify the signage/GPX situation between Wil and Hüntwangen.
- Widen cycle path between Günzgen and Hohentengen.
- See if an alternative route with lower traffic can be found through Hohentengen.
- Same through Lienheim (perhaps Sportplatzweg?).
- Reposition sign outside Kadelburg.
- Reconsider route through Bad Säckingen.

  - avoiding pedestrian streets
  - avoiding gravel and cobbles
  - allowing better signing
  - allowing a view of the famous wooden bridge
- Widen cycle path between Bad Säckingen and Wallbach (Baden).
- Increasing the width of the painted cycle lane on Hörnle between Grenzach-Wyhlen and the border (min. 1.5 m, not including a 0.5 m separation from passing cars).
- Adding missing signs in Switzerland between the border at Grenzach-Wyhlen and Basel.
- Harmonising the information boards along the route and displaying more clearly EuroVelo 15 on them.
- Signing the Swiss parts of the right-bank route with EuroVelo signs.
- Including the right-side route on the SwitzerlandMobility website, even if the whole route does not stay in Switzerland. The SwitzerlandMobility website should still include information on the right-side option.
- Including the right-side route in a consistent manner in the Baden-Württemberg cycle route planner.

6.4. Baden-Württemberg, Basel to Lampertheim

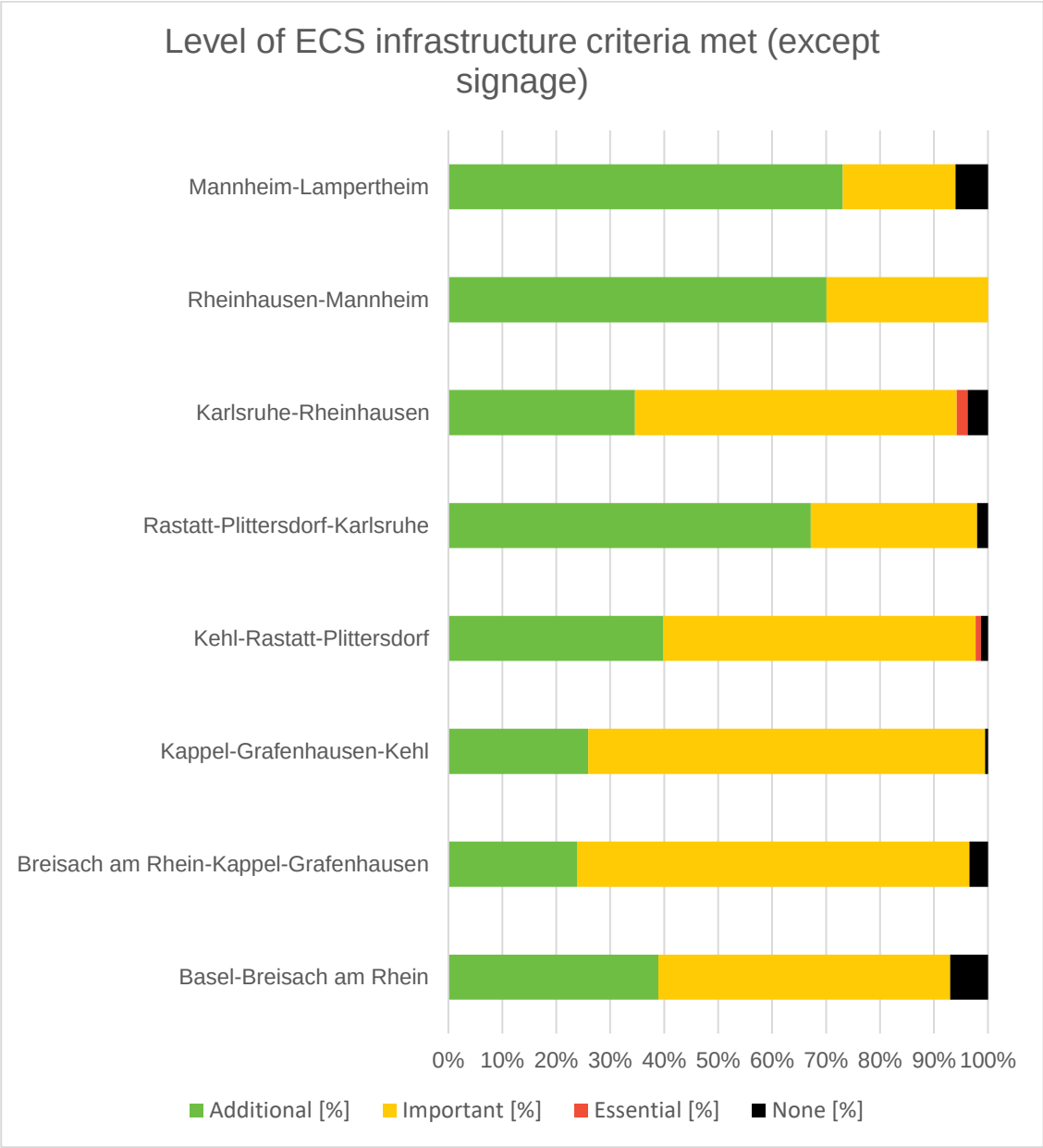
The route starts in Switzerland, but after a few kilometres enters Germany at Weil am Rhein and stays in Germany from there. It follows the Rhine closely and offers an interesting, albeit somewhat homogenous landscapes, in particular north of Breisach. However, these sections offer a very peaceful, zen-like riding experience, with only some industrial landscape immediately after leaving Basel. The route continues along tranquil rural areas near the Rhine, passing cities such as Karlsruhe on their outskirts rather than visiting them, until reaching Mannheim. After a short intermezzo in the city, the route continues on through the countryside until the border with Hesse.

6.4.1. Itinerary changes

- In downtown Basel, at the start of the daily section, there is some confusion as to the direction of the route, as the sign points in the wrong direction (as compared to the GPX). This may be because of the interchange with the left bank EuroVelo route across the bridge. However, as the sign was not followed up by unambiguous further signage, the GPX route was followed and the signage eventually picked up again. From there, signage along the Swiss part of the route is generally better than in earlier Swiss sections on the right bank.
- No trace of original (GPX) track just north of Istein. Probably washed away by flooding? GPX needs to be updated.
- Between Bad Bellingen and Steinenstadt, a short brand-new track around new water management intervention. The original track does not exist any longer.
- A small temporary and well signposted detour in Kehl because of roadworks.
- On the outskirts of Freistett, EuroVelo signs leading to the left bank of the Rheinseitenkanal were followed instead of the GPX track on the right bank.
- In Ketsch, signs on im Bruch and Speyerer Strasse were surveyed instead of the GPX track on Fischergasse.
- Between Helmlingen and Grauelsbaum, the GPX track crosses the Altrheinzug canal at a location without a bridge. The path next to it was surveyed until the next bridge.
- Between Grauelsbaum and Geffern, a water management road on the left bank of the Rheinseitengraben Greffern was surveyed instead of the GPX tracks on Tullastrasse.
- Between Steinmauern and Elchesheim-Illingen, a signed detour due to construction was followed instead of the GPX tracks.
- In Brühl, the route was completely closed on Kollerstrasse. An unsigned detour through the town centre was surveyed instead.
- The Altrheinfähre was not running on the day of the survey, therefore a detour over Altreinbrücke was surveyed instead.

For the entire stretch from Basel to Kehl, extensive flood management and water retention areas are being constructed, which is evidently impacting the cycle route. However, this is being managed in an exemplary way, where the GPX and the signage are generally being kept up-to-date as the landscape changes and the track is being rerouted from one dike to another.

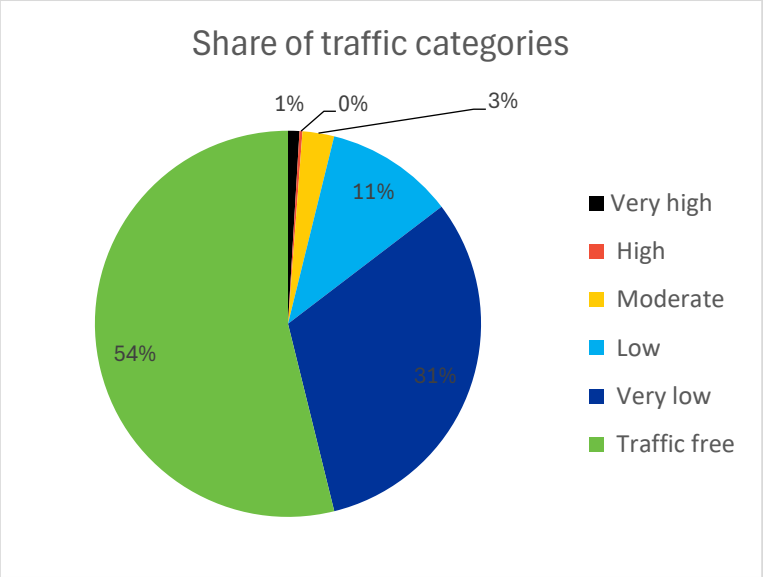
6.4.2. Basic infrastructure



This chart shows the shares of the 8 daily sections defined in Baden-Württemberg that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness.

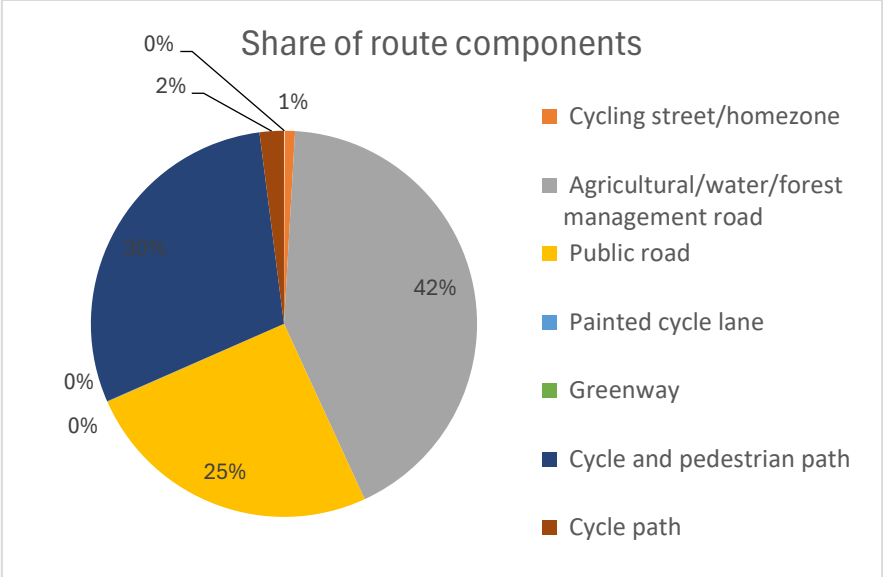
For instance, the daily section from Karlsruhe to Rheinhausen meets just the essential criteria on 2% of its length, while 59.6% meet the essential and the important criteria and 34.6% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

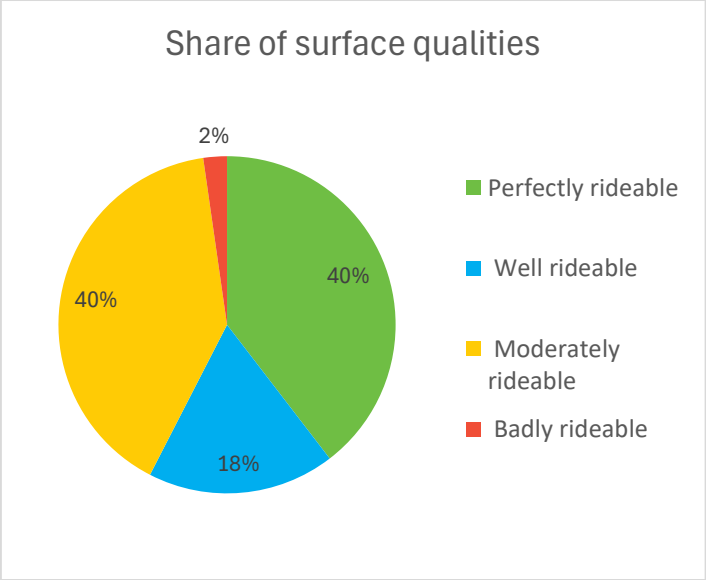
The following table shows which shares of the route fall into which traffic category, depending on the different levels of traffic volume and speed. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):



54% of the route is composed of segregated cycle paths, greenways, or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 31% comprise roads with very low motorised traffic, and 11% roads with low traffic. 3% were classified as featuring moderate traffic and 0.25% as including high traffic. 1% of minor sections were classified as containing very high traffic.

Most of the route (58%) leads over perfectly rideable or well rideable surfaces. 40% was classified as moderately rideable – mostly on agricultural/water managements roads, consisting of (stabilised) gravel. 2% of the route was classified as badly rideable, mostly where the quality of the gravel had deteriorated badly. There were no longer stretches of the route that were classified as not rideable. On 36 km of the route, the effective width of the cycling infrastructure was evaluated as not allowing to safely pass cyclists coming from the opposite direction.





Examples of various types of route components

Public road.

Water management road.

Cycle and pedestrian path.

Some examples of surface quality encountered along the route

Perfectly rideable asphalted water management road.

Well rideable public road made from stabilised gravel.

Moderately rideable water management road made from stabilised gravel.

Badly rideable gravel water management road.

6.4.3. Signing

Most of the itinerary was signed with Rhine Cycle Route identification, with the EuroVelo 15 frame integrated, but occasionally EuroVelo 15 appeared as separate route identification. Older Véloroute Rhin cycle route signs, not in line with the national guidelines and with no EuroVelo logo, were also found from time to time. Signage is almost entirely absent between Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen and Philippsburg. From Philippsburg until Rheinhausen, the signage is outdated and/or badly readable.

In terms of sign content, the route was usually signed with next main town names and distances to them at junctions with other, also local cycle routes, and a plain bicycle pictogram with an arrow in between junctions. This was enough in most cases, but somewhat confusing in locations where two different routes run in parallel (one can e.g. see a turn sign from the other route and, without any route identification, consider it as valid for the route they are following), or in cities (where it is easy to miss a sign, and start following a different route without realising it).

Typical signs containing distances to the closest towns and the frame version of the EuroVelo 15 logo.

Direction confirmation signs featuring the EuroVelo 15 logo.

Confusing Variante signing for an "optional route".

Direction confirmation sign containing the old Véloroute Rhin logo.

A vandalised direction confirmation sign.

6.4.4. Public Transport

The whole route is served by a variety of long-distance and regional public transport services. Major hubs include Basel (CH), Strasbourg (F), Karlsruhe, and Mannheim. From here a wide variety of national and international trains can be caught. Near the start of the route in Basel is the biggest border train station in Europe, Bahnhof Basel SBB. Assembled bicycles can be taken here on ICE's originating in Berlin and Hamburg-Altona/Kiel, and in EC's originating in Frankfurt and Milan. There is also an ICE connection to Amsterdam and a TGV connection to Paris, however assembled bicycles cannot be carried on these. Furthermore, there are NightJet connections to Berlin, Hamburg, and Amsterdam on which assembled bicycles can be carried.

Mannheim, near the other end of the section, is an important node point in the German railway system, offering connections to (among others) Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Amsterdam, Basel SBB, Paris, Marseille, Milan.

Advance booking is required to take assembled bicycles on ICE/IC/EC trains (where they are permitted), while regional trains generally require a bicycle ticket, but no advance booking.

Flixbus offers long-distance bus connections with the possibility of transporting an assembled bicycle to/from Basel, Strasbourg, Karlsruhe and Mannheim. Bicycle spots are limited, and there can sometimes be problems taking bikes on busses even with advance booking.

There are no bridges across the Rhine between Breisach and Strasbourg/Kehl, but there is a useful ferry connection to Rhinau on the French side at the start/finish of the daily sections from/to Breisach and Kehl, which connect at the ferry landing. There are train stations at some distance from the ferry connection on the French side (Benfeld – 10km) and the German side (Orschweiler – 8 km).

The ferry between Rhinau and Kappel-Grafenhausen.

6.4.5. Services

Basel is a major historical, cultural and culinary hub, offering world-class museums accommodation at many different levels and all kinds of culinary delights. Weil am Rhein next door on the German side is cheaper for accommodation and offers i.a. the Vitra Design Musem, the Beyeler Foundation and the Three Countries Bicycle Bridge.

Except for the larger cities and towns (Basel, Bad Bellingen, Neuenburg, Breisach, Kehl and the area around the giant Europapark in Rust, Karlsruhe, the greater Mannheim area) availability of accommodation is quite limited. Many smaller hotels, guesthouses and restaurants were closed. They seem not to have recovered from the pandemic. However, AirBnB offers new opportunities.

In general, outside the towns and cities, cycling tourists will have to leave the EuroVelo track to find food and accommodation (e.g to Vogtsburg, Sasbach, Rust, Schwanau, Rastatt, Speyer). There are very few shops directly on the route. Sometimes, with no services along the trail, there are helpful signs pointing to food or accommodation some way inland.

Very few rest areas of any kind, be they water points, shelters, or public toilets can be found along most of the route. Bicycle repair options generally exist only in the larger cities, such as Basel, Kehl, Karlsruhe, and Mannheim, or at some distance from the route, or on the French side of the Rhine. The lack of water points in particular is a concern, as the route frequently follows relatively long stretches outside of built-up areas where cyclists might refill their water bottles in cafes or bakeries. These relatively remote areas do contain

some food and drink options in their own right, however these are highly seasonal, catering to tourists and day-trippers, and may not be open outside of peak season, or on days with bad weather.

Sign pointing towards food and accommodation offered near the route.

6.4.6. Marketing / Promotion

Cyclists in Baden-Württemberg can find information on all regional and national cycle routes in the state on the "RadROUTENPLANER Baden-Württemberg", which contains an interactive map showing, public transport connections, Bett+Bike certified cycling friendly accommodation, and bicycle service points. The website also contains a page detailing EuroVelo 15 in Baden-Württemberg, giving a short description of the route, elevation profile, and downloadable GPX tracks. One downside is the lack of English translations, both of this page and of the Radroutenplaner in general. While the site is fairly easy to use through google translate, this still constitutes a significant barrier for non-German speaking cyclists.

The website of Schwarzwald Tourism contains a route map, a list of Bett+Bike certified accommodation, a downloadable brochure, a link to the route on Komoot, and contact details in case of questions. The website is in German, but contains an integrated translation feature using Google Translate. There are also two apps available, the free Outdoor-App "Schwarzwald" and the free digital companion app "Frag Schwarzwaldmarie".

In terms of print material, a booklet containing information mainly on attractions along the route, as well as a flyer containing useful practical information on areas such as accommodation, transport, etc.

On the section between Basel and Kehl, only one Tourist Information Office was encountered that was not closed, in Breisach. Two EuroVelo brochures were on offer. The Tourist Information Offices in Basel, Neuenburg, Kehl, Karlsruhe, Germersheim (albeit on the left bank of the Rhine), and Mannheim are not far from the route.

There are many route information boards put up by different level authorities, but rarely including the EuroVelo logo. Many boards are decades old, and are thus not only badly readable, but also contain outdated information. However, there are positive exceptions.

Modern information board containing useful information and links.

Barely readable Véloroute Rhin information board dating back more than 20 years.

6.4.7. Deficiencies

The following critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) were observed along the route:

- 750 m of badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path next to Alte Strasse between Weil am Rhein and Märkt.
- 1 km of badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path south of Istein.
- 700 m of badly rideable cycle and pedestrian path south of Kleinkems.
- 900 m of badly rideable water management road south of Steinenstadt.
- 250 m of badly rideable water management road near Forsthaus.
- 1 km of badly rideable water management road at Am Karpfenhod.
- 500 m of badly rideable water management road shortly south of the border of Landkreis Emmendingen and Ortenaukreis.
- 80 m of badly rideable water management road shortly north of the border of Landkreis Emmendingen and Ortenaukreis.

- 1 km of badly rideable water management road close to Kappel, including a wooden bridge in need of repair.
- 200 m of badly rideable surface in front of the Wassersportclub Goldscheuer.
- 700 m of very high traffic on B500 on the way from the French border towards Iffezheim.
- 600 m of very high traffic on Durmersheimer Strasse in Eichesheim-Illingen.
- Signage is almost entirely absent between Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen and Philippsburg. From Philippsburg until Rheinhausen, the signage is outdated and/or badly readable.
- 900 m of badly rideable forest road between Dettenheim and Germersheim.
- 700 m of badly rideable gravel road before the Rudolf-von-Habsburg-Brücke.
- 800 m of high traffic on Jahnstrasse between Philippsburg and Rheinhausen.
- 2 km of very high traffic on Diffenestrasse and Altrheinbrücke.

Part of the wooden bridge requiring repair close to Kappel.

Badly rideable surface in front of the Wassersportclub Goldscheuer.

Badly rideable forest road between Dettenheim and Germersheim.

Badly rideable gravel road before the Rudolf-von-Habsburg-Brücke.

Other issues:

- 9.4 km of moderate traffic.
- 142 km of moderately rideable surface, mostly on water management roads.
- 36 km of insufficient width (cycle tracks used bidirectionally with effective width below 2.0 m).
- 16 chicanes or other obstacles making it difficult to travel with non-standard bicycles, such as tandems, bikes with trailers etc.
- 1 dangerous crossing.
- There are badly rideable ramps leading up and down the path on flood prevention dams at or near Freistett, Grauelsbaum, Stollhofen.
- Stairs requiring a dismount to push the bicycle, without anything to facilitate such outside of Freistett.
- EuroVelo signs pointing in the wrong direction outside of Greffern.
- A missing EuroVelo logo on a sign at the L78a roundabout outside Eichesheim-Illingen.
- A confusing EuroVelo sign pointing in three directions on the outskirts of Karlsruhe. The sign pointing towards Rappenwört does not correspond to the official route.
- A dismount obligation to cross Werftstrasse in Karlsruhe which does not appear to be necessary.

- A generic route confirmation sign pointing the wrong way from EuroVelo 15 outside Tropic Island Beach Bar near Gernsheim.
- Badly readable and/or outdated signage between Philippsburg and Rheinhausen.
- A potentially socially unsafe underpass under the train tracks in Mannheim.
- A dismount requirement to cross a bridge on Riedspitze outside of Sandhofen.

Stairs requiring dismount outside Freistett.

EuroVelo signs pointing in the wrong direction outside of Greffern.

A confusing sign pointing in three directions on the outskirts of Karlsruhe.

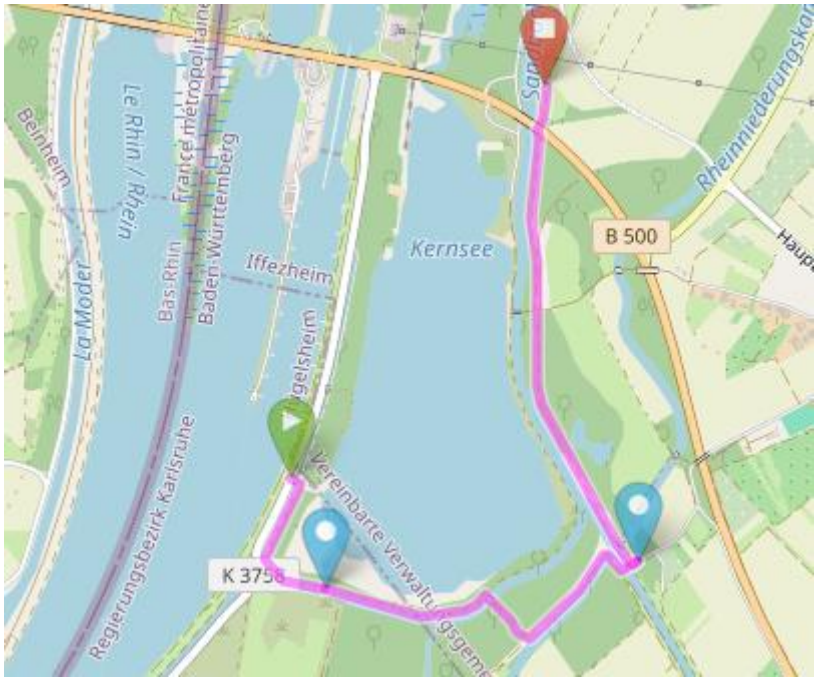
6.4.8. Planned route improvements

ECF is not aware of any planned route improvements, beyond those noted in the scope of the survey, at this moment in time.

6.4.9. Proposed actions

Please note that the alternative itineraries are suggested on basis of analysis of map data, and they have not been surveyed in field and verified in terms of compliance with the ECS criteria.

- Improve the multitude of water management roads utilised (listed above) which are currently badly rideable, generally due to loose gravel or old, badly repaired asphalt. Where this is not feasible, consider changing the route to run on quiet public roads instead, if this is easier to achieve.
- If the current route is kept, prioritise repairing the wooden bridge near Kappel. Further deterioration may compromise its structural integrity; a bridge in such state also sends a worrying signal about the quality of the route as a whole to cyclists.
- Construct 700 m of dedicated cycle path on the B500 from the French border to Iffezheim. This road contains a high volume of high-speed traffic, often HGVs, where one must currently cycle in mixed traffic. If this is not feasible, change the route to avoid this road entirely, for example:



  The route could also be changed further to pass through Iffezheim and/or Rastatt to take advantage of services available there.
- Convert the pedestrian path next to Durmersheimer Strasse in Eichesheim-Illingen into a pedestrian and cycle path to avoid the very high traffic on the road.
- Construct 800 m of dedicated cycle path next to Jahnstrasse between Philippsburg and Rheinhausen. If this is not feasible, lower the speed limit to 60 km/h. The issue here is the high speed of traffic rather than the volume.
- Add signage at the entrance of Friesenheimer Insel, clarifying the operating hours of the ferry on the main route, so that cyclists know whether they must take the detour across Altrheinbrücke as soon as possible.
- Add signage clarifying that there is a cycle path over the Altrheinbrücke, accessible through Otto-Hahn-Strasse. This was missed during the survey and only identified as the surveyor was already on the bridge, cycling in very high traffic.
- Add or update signage between Eggenstein-Leopoldshafen and Rheinhausen. Add missing signs and replace badly readable/vandalised signs on the rest of the route as per the action plan.

6.6. Hesse

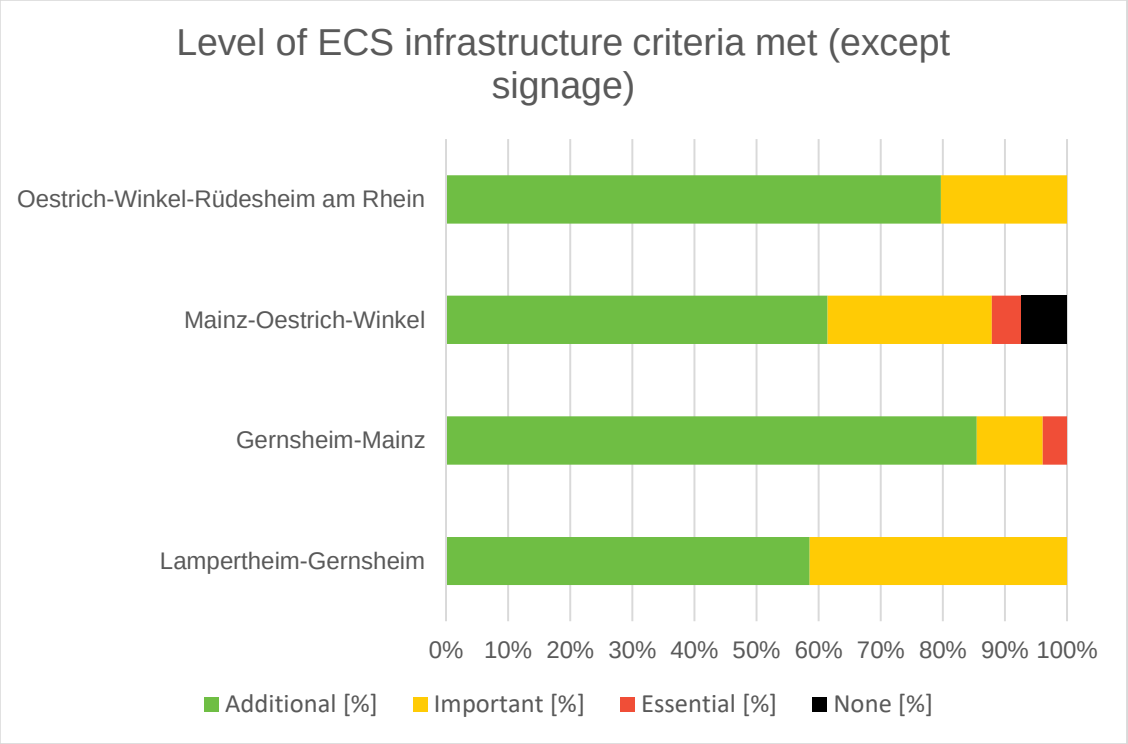
6.6.1. Itinerary changes

The surveyed route differed from the GPS track agreed to follow before the survey in the following locations:

- The newly constructed underpass near Mainz-Gustavsburg train station was surveyed. There are no signs leading back on to the correct route once on the other side of the tracks, these should be added at the latest once construction is finished.
- A signed detour was followed along Rheingaustrasse in Wiesbaden-Äppelallee due to construction. The detour was not signed with EuroVelo signs.
- The signs along Kleinaustrasse, Söhnleinstrasse, Hauptstrasse, Johannisfeld were followed instead of the GPX along Christian-Bücher-Strasse between Schierstein and Niederwalluf.
- Between Eltville am Rhein and Hattenheim, the flood detour was followed. Initially this was required by construction, however there were no signs indicating when this required detour ended, therefore the flood detour was followed for longer than would presumably have been necessary.
- The signs along the inland track of Am Rüdesheimer Hafen were followed instead of the GPX along the riverside track of Am Rüdesheimer Hafen in Rüdesheim.
- Kastanienallee was surveyed instead of the path by the riverside in Rüdesheim.

In general, cyclists can frequently choose between cycling on gravel paths on top of flood protection dams, or on asphalted maintenance roads directly next to them. Where signs pointed towards one option, that was surveyed, otherwise, the option that appeared to correspond to the GPX tracks provided was surveyed. It would be useful to communicate clearly to cyclists that both options are viable, with the dam path offering better views, while the maintenance roads offer a smoother cycling experience.

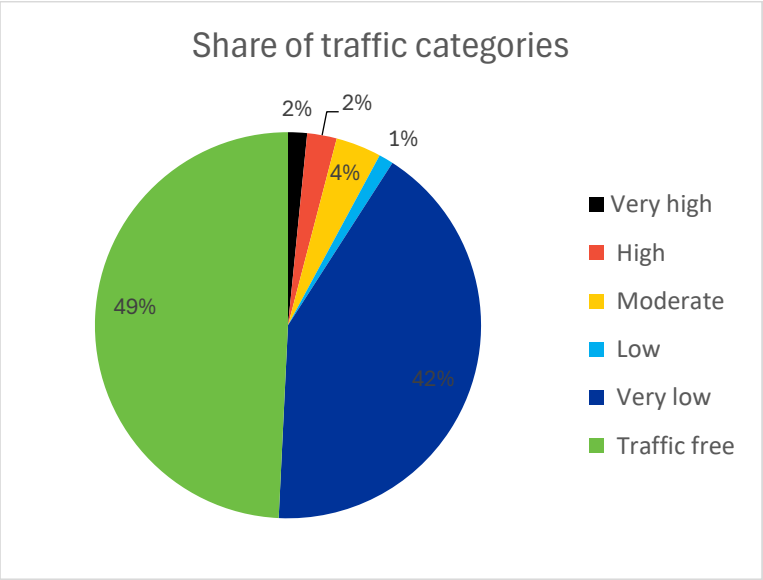
6.6.2. Basic infrastructure



This chart shows the shares of the four daily sections defined in Hessen that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness.

For instance, the daily section from Mainz to Oestrich-Winkel meets just the essential criteria on 4.7% of its length, while 26.4% meet the essential and the important criteria and 61.4% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

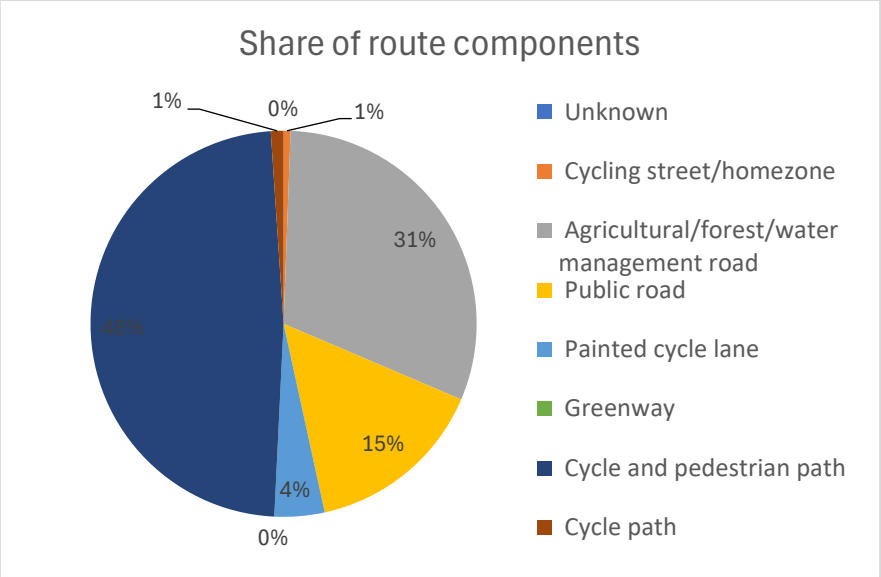
The following table shows which shares of the route fall into which traffic category, depending on the different levels of traffic volume and speed. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):

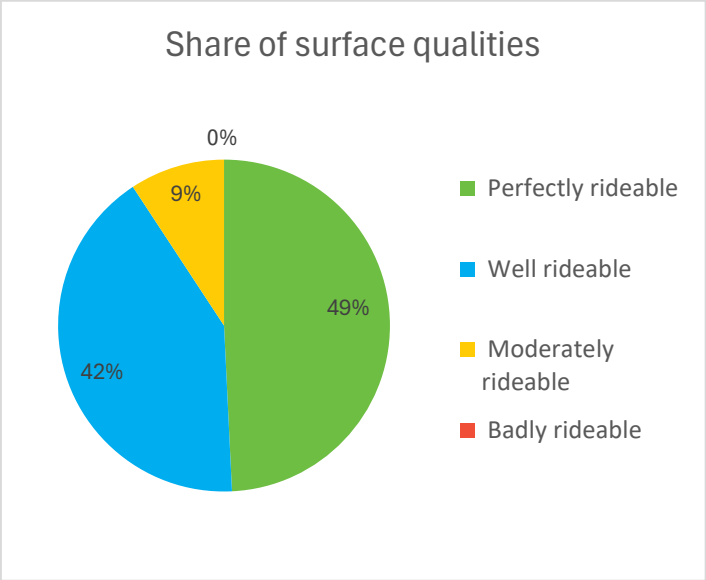


49% of the route is composed of segregated cycle paths, greenways, or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 42% comprise roads with very low motorised traffic, and 1% roads with low traffic. 4% were classified as featuring moderate traffic and 2% as including high traffic. 2% of minor sections were classified as containing very high traffic.

Most of the route (91%) leads over perfectly rideable or well rideable surfaces. 9% was classified as moderately rideable – mostly on old agricultural/water managements roads, built with concrete plates with growing gaps in between, or on sections containing (stabilised) gravel. There were no parts of the route that were classified as not rideable. On 35.9%, the effective width of the cycling infrastructure was evaluated as not allowing to safely pass cyclists coming from the opposite direction.

The route leads predominantly through attractive landscapes, particularly in the northern part of the Bundesland. However, there are a few segments where large-scale agriculture is somewhat monotonous. This is exacerbated by the fact that the route does not enter many towns or villages on these stretches. There are also very few trees along these segments, which reduces the attractiveness and comfort of cycling during summer or in headwind.

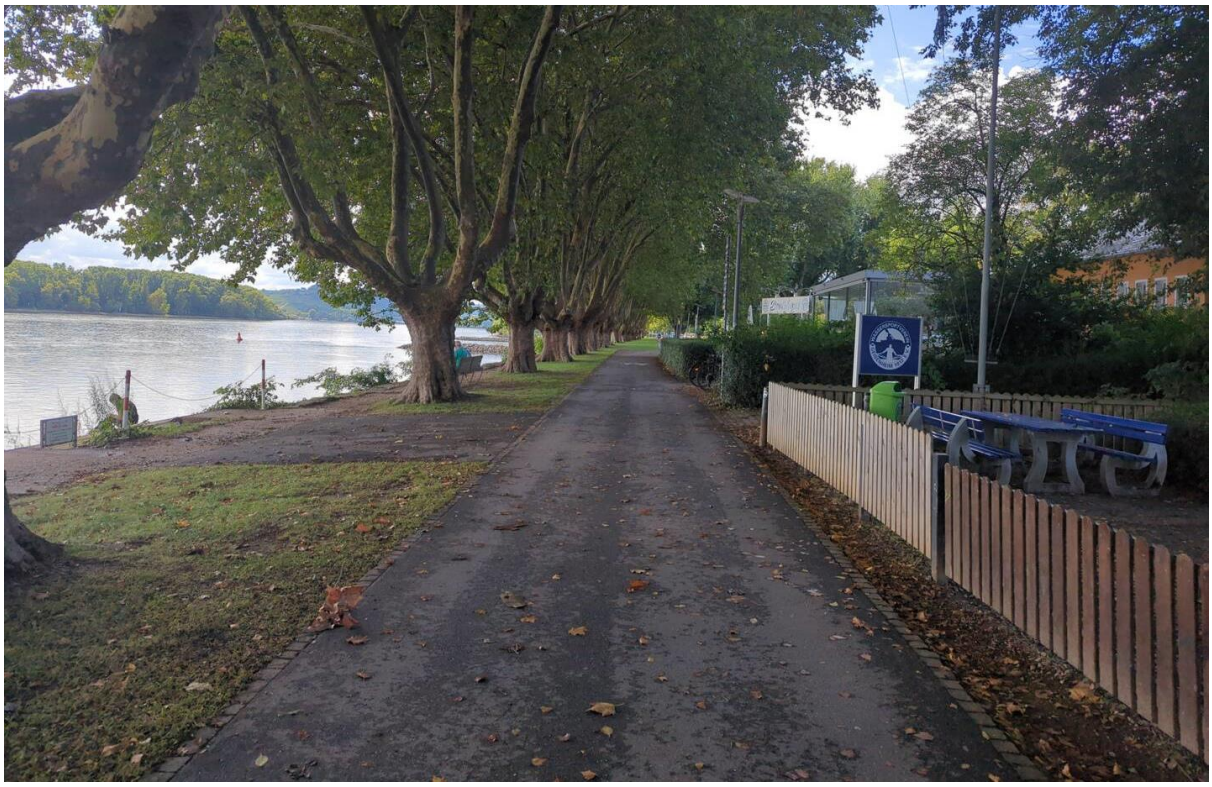

Share of route components
1%
0%
1%
31%
48%
15%
4%
0%
Unknown
Cycling street/homezone
Agricultural/forest/water management road
Public road
Painted cycle lane
Greenway
Cycle and pedestrian path
Cycle path


Share of surface qualities
0%
9%
49%
42%
Perfectly rideable
Well rideable
Moderately rideable
Badly rideable

Examples of various types of route components

Public road.

Water management road.



Cycle and pedestrian path.

Painted cycle lane. For ECS purposes, this was treated as cycling in mixed-use traffic, as the cycle lane does not reach the minimum effective width.

Cycle street.

Some examples of surface quality encountered along the route

Perfectly rideable asphalt cycle and pedestrian path.

Well rideable concrete slab cycle and pedestrian path.

Moderately rideable concrete slab water management road.

6.6.3. Signing

There are some old or confusing signs that should be replaced or taken down in order to avoid confusion. Signs pointing out detours in cases of flooding are only in German and could confuse cyclists who cannot speak German. Pictograms could be used to convey the pertinent message.

The rules of cycle-route signage are covered in the “Handbuch zur Radwegweisung in Hessen” (Handbook on cycle-route signing in Hesse).[2] In practice, from the point of view of a cycle tourist, two parallel signage systems are in use. The main long-distance routes (Radfernwege) use slightly larger signs with Hessen’s

[2] https://www.mobileshessen2030.de/mm/HB-RWW-2017_komprimiert.pdf

coat of arms included) and other routes use the same size of signs as neighbouring German lands. This provides very clear information when both types of signs are used on the same crossing with full route identification, but can cause confusion when only one system is present on the crossing, or turning signs are used without route identification.

EuroVelo 15 shares its route with two regional long-distance routes:

- R6 between the border with Baden-Württemberg at Lampertheim and Mainz-Kostheim;
- R3 between Mainz-Kostheim and Rüdesheim am Rhein.

Signs showing next main towns and distances with EuroVelo logo.

Direction confirmation signs without the EuroVelo logo.

Flood detour sign featuring R6 and EuroVelo 15 logos.

6.6.4. Public Transport

Public transport connections are frequent and readily available along the Hesse stretch of EuroVelo 15. The biggest long-distance train station in the vicinity of the route is Mainz Hauptbahnhof, located a few km from the route on the right bank of the Rhein. From there, assembled bicycles can be brought on ICEs to, among

others nationally, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Dortmund, Munich, Passau, Düsseldorf, Kiel and internationally Interlaken, Innsbruck, Basel SBB, Amsterdam Centraal, Zürich, Vienna.

Regional and local train connections are plentiful along the entirety of the route and offer the possibility of transporting assembled bicycles. In the trains of the Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund, which covers most regional and local trains along the route (outside of Landkreis Bergstrasse on the border to Baden-Württemberg), assembled bicycles can be transported free of charge and do not require a separate ticket.

Of note are also the ferries crossing the Rhine, particularly that connecting the end of the route in Hessen at Rüdesheim am Rhein to the left bank of the Rhine at Bingen am Rhein. Under normal conditions this ferry leaves Rüdesheim for Bingen in 20 minute intervals from 5:40 am until midnight. A single trip for a cyclist including bicycle costs 3.30€ and must be paid in cash on the ferry.

Example of a ferry along the route.

6.6.5. Services

Services along the route are generally plentiful, although in the southern part of Hesse, cyclists need to leave the route and find services in the towns and villages located nearby. There are few public shelter areas – as opposed to simple benches – and public toilets, and sources of drinking water are also lacking, again predominantly in the southern part of the route. Cyclists must currently leave the route to access the aforementioned services in order to find toilets and drinking water.

There is a good amount of accommodation on or near the route, some of which is certified cycling friendly by the Bett+Bike label. Even in cases where accommodation is not certified, they are often very accustomed to catering towards cycling tourists, and offer secure bicycle parking and sometimes services such as e-bike charging.

E-bike charging point on the route.

Signs pointing out the many food and accommodation options close to the route in Wiesbaden.

6.6.6. Marketing / Promotion

Cyclists in Hesse can find information on all regional and national cycle routes in the state on the "Radroutenplaner Hessen", which contains an interactive map showing, among other things, public transport connections, accommodation, bicycle services such as rental and repair shops, and attractions. The website also offers an overview of the road surface and gradients encountered on the route.

The website also contains a page detailing EuroVelo 15 in Hesse, giving a short description of the route, elevation profile, a summary of the surface quality, a reference to the guidebook "Rhein-Radweg Teil 2: von Basel nach Mainz", as well as downloadable GPX tracks. One downside is the lack of English translation on this page, another is that it is somewhat difficult to find among the myriad tours shown on the website. Displaying the route more prominently in the "Touren entdecken" section of the website would enable cyclists to easier find information about the route.

Along the route, cyclists can find route information boards that show the course of the route throughout Hesse, as well as the corresponding section the left bank of the Rhine, and the bridges and ferries where both connect. The boards also generally contain information on the cities, attractions and tourist information

centres along the route, as well as links to the EuroVelo website (via a redirect from rheinradweg.eu) and the Radroutenplanner Hessen.

A typical route information board.

6.6.7. Critical deficiencies

The following critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) were observed along the route:

- 1.7 km of high traffic on Mainzer Strasse in Gernsheim.
- 1.7 km of very high traffic on Biebricher Strasse and Rheingaustrasse in Mainz-Amöneburg.
- 600 m of high traffic on Wallufer Strasse in Eltville am Rhein.

Other deficiencies impacting route quality:

- A short section of badly rideable gravel in front of the power plant outside of Wattenheim.
- A dismount requirement on the bridge across the Altrhein at Erfelden.
- The dirt path on Rampenstrasse in Mainz-Kastel forms a large puddle following rainfall that is difficult to pass through.
- Two poles with a distance of 1.25 m blocking the route before turning onto Biebricher Strasse in Mainz-Amöneburg.
- A one-way street with no exception for cyclists indicated on Hauptstrasse in Niederwalluf.
- A dismount requirement in Geisenheim.

Short section of badly rideable gravel.

Dismount requirement on the bridge crossing the Altrhein at Erfelden.

A puddle formed on the route by moderate rainfall.

Poles 1.25 m apart.

One-way street without exception for cyclists.

Dismount requirement in Geisenheim.

6.6.8. Planned improvements

ECF was not notified about any planned route improvements.

6.6.9. Proposed actions

For several sections we propose to consider changing the itinerary. Please note that the alternative itineraries are suggested on basis of analysis of map data, and they have not been surveyed in field and verified in terms of compliance with the ECS criteria.

- Take action to avoid the 1.7 km of high traffic on Mainzer Strasse in Gernsheim. Possible solutions include:
    - Changing the route, for example to follow the cycle path along the train tracks that run parallel to Mainzer Strasse. This would be the quickest solution, but would make the route quite complicated to follow.
    - Expanding the cycle lane along Mainzer Strasse. Currently it is too narrow to be considered a safe and comfortable cycle lane.

    - Expanding the pedestrian path on Mainzer Strasse and changing it to a cycle and pedestrian path.
- Explore the possibility of removing the dismount requirement on the bridge over the Altrhein at Erfelden. Visibility on the bridge appears good enough that dismount should not necessarily be required to ensure safety.
- Take action to combat the 1.7 km of very high traffic on Biebricher Strasse and Rheingaustrasse in Mainz-Amöneburg. This is the most pressing concern on EuroVelo 15 in Hesse. Options include:
    - Changing the route: There does not seem to be a viable detour that addresses only these two roads, however a slightly larger scale detour may be possible.
    - Expanding the cycle lane to ensure safe and comfortable cycling: The road is already fairly narrow, it may be difficult to expand the cycle lane in such a way that drivers will still respect it.
    - Expand the pedestrian path and allow cycling on it: Most of this stretch already has a fairly wide pedestrian path, which would require minimal work to become cyclable.
- Take action on the 600 m of high traffic on Wallufer Strasse in Eltville am Rhein.
    - The route could be changed to follow the cycle path directly on the banks of the river.
    - The cycle lane could be extended to ensure safe and comfortable cycling.

Non-critical actions:

- Improve the section of badly rideable gravel outside of the power plant near Wattenheim, e.g. by stabilising it or asphalting it.
- Asphalt or add stabilised gravel to Rampenstrasse in Mainz-Kastel to make it more pleasant to cycle through in bad weather.
- Expand the distance between or remove the poles on the route in Mainz-Amöneburg.
- Add an exception for cyclists on the one-way street Hauptstrasse in Niederwalluf.
- Remove the dismount requirement in Geisenheim.
- Add missing signs and fix defect ones as specified in the action plan.
- Install drinking water points, rest areas with tables and shelters, and public toilets, especially in the southern part of the Bundesland.

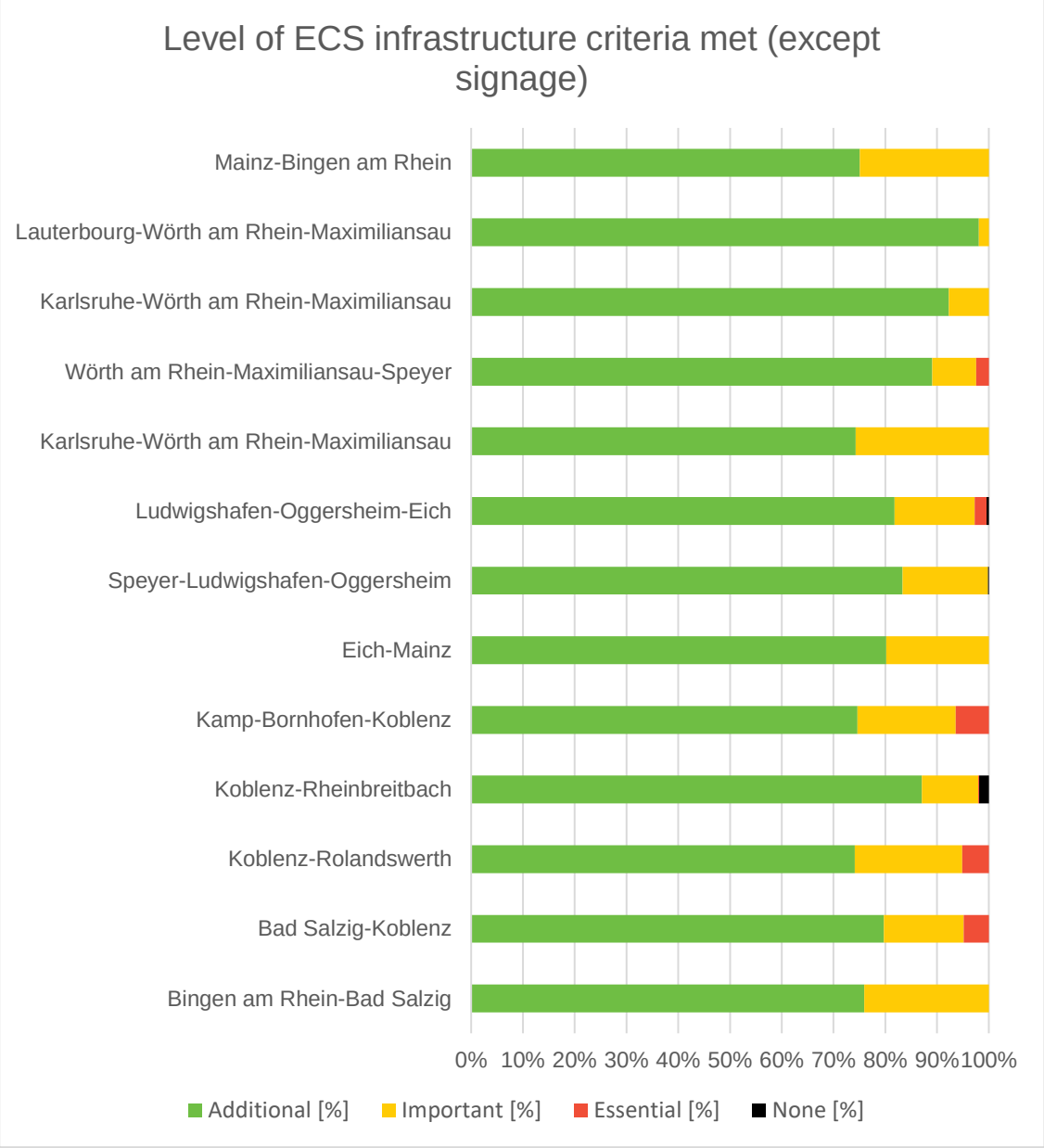
6.5. Rhineland-Palatinate

6.5.1. Itinerary changes

The route surveyed deviated from the agreed upon GPX tracks at the following locations. ECF has been in contact with the relevant authorities to determine the duration of the detours and taken this into account for the analysis of the route in accordance with ECS criteria.

- In Ludwigshafen, across the park near the end of the daily section Speyer – Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim, the route is signed on the lower alley (more to the west) and not upper as indicated in the original GPX track.
- In Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim, on Prälat-Claire-Strasse, the signage in the field leads cyclists on the carriageway, and not on the parallel sidewalk (probably meant for pedestrians only).
- Directly south of Worms, the signage seems to indicate the carriageway of Alemannenstrasse, and not the parallel path on the southern side of the street (the path is not signed as cycle track, probably meant for pedestrians only).
- In Bingen am Rhein, a temporary detour along Rheinkai was surveyed instead of the regular route along Hafenstrasse and Hindenburganlage, as this was closed to traffic for a fun fair.
- In Koblenz, the signed detour, which matches the GPX tracks provided, was surveyed on Sebastian-Bach-Strasse and Mainzer Strasse.
- In Koblenz, a detour, signed but lacking EuroVelo logos, was followed along Julius-Wegeler-Strasse, Rizzastrasse, Südallee, Casinostrasse, Schlossstrasse, Neustadt, Stresemannstrasse, Konrad-Adenauer-Ufer.
- In Koblenz, a detour was followed on Rheinstrasse and Kastorpfaffenstrasse. It is unclear how temporary this detour is.
- In Koblenz, EuroVelo signs were followed on Kornpfortstrasse instead of the GPX tracks provided. Following this, a signed detour was followed on Kornpfortstrasse, Braugasse, Mehlgasse, before rejoining the signed route (that differs from the GPX track) on Florinsmarkt.
- In Koblenz-Kesselheim, a signed detour was followed on Kurfürst-Schönborn-Strasse, Kaiser-Otto-Strasse, Kesselheimer Strasse, Haupstrasse, Hoffmansgasse instead of the signed route and GPX tracks.
- In Bad Breisig, a signed detour to avoid the pedestrian zone on Rheinufer was followed on Biergasse, Zehnerstrasse, Rheinstrasse.
- In Linz, EuroVelo signs were followed on Brückenstrasse, Zum Bahnhof, Bahnhofsplatz, and a towpath along the river instead of the GPX provided.
- In Hammerstein, EuroVelo signs were followed on Haupstrasse and Pater-Konrad-Keller-Strasse.
- Between Hammerstein and Leutesdorf, the signed route next to the B42 was followed.
- In Bendorf, EuroVelo signs were followed on Eisenbahnstrasse and the cycle/pedestrian path next to the B42 instead of the GPX provided.
- In Vallendar, EuroVelo signs were followed on Rheinufer and Willy-Brandt-Ufer instead of the GPX tracks provided.
- In Koblenz, a signed detour along Emser Strasse, Didierstrasse, and Goethestrasse was followed.

6.5.2. Basic infrastructure

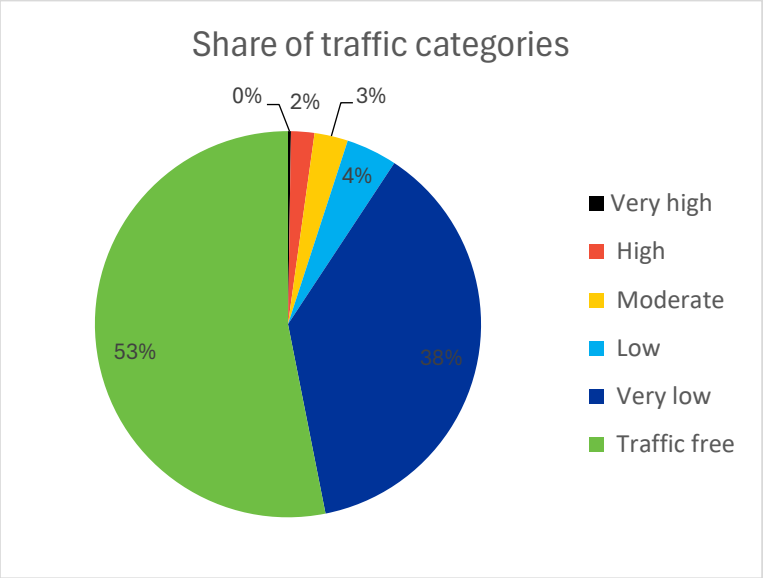


This chart shows the shares of the 13 daily sections defined in Rhineland-Palatinate[3] that meet or do not meet the essential, important and additional criteria of the European Certification Standard with respect to continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness.

For instance, the daily section from Koblenz to Rolandswerth meets just the essential criteria on 5.1% of its length, while 20.8% meet the essential and the important criteria and 74.1% meet all the criteria, i.e. the essential, important and additional criteria combined. Black-coloured parts of a section show which share does not meet any of the criteria, illustrating which sections do not fulfil the minimum requirements (100% of the essential criteria must be met).

[3] The two daily sections Karlsruhe – Wörth am Rhein-Maximiliansau are short sections connecting the left and right bank routes.

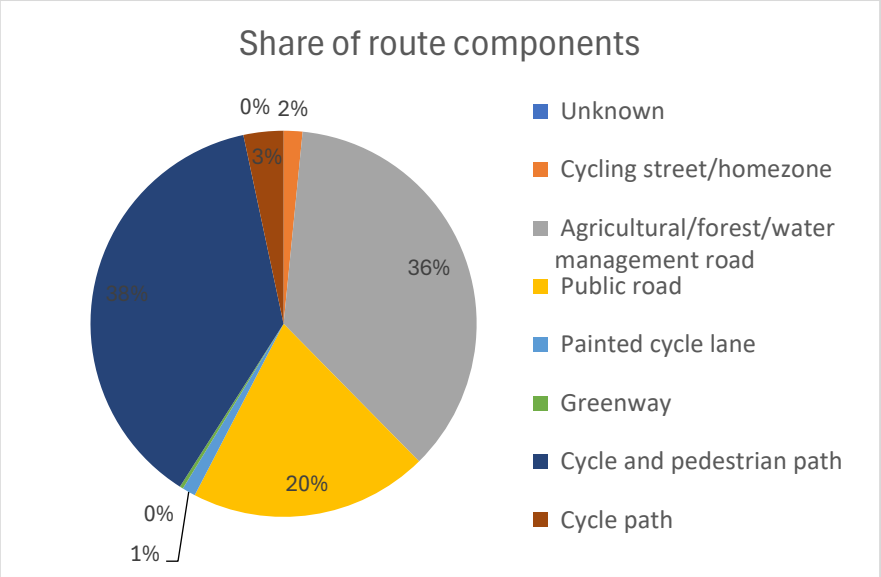
The following table shows which shares of the route fall into which traffic category, depending on the different levels of traffic volume and speed. The traffic categories range from traffic-free/very low (green) to very high (black):

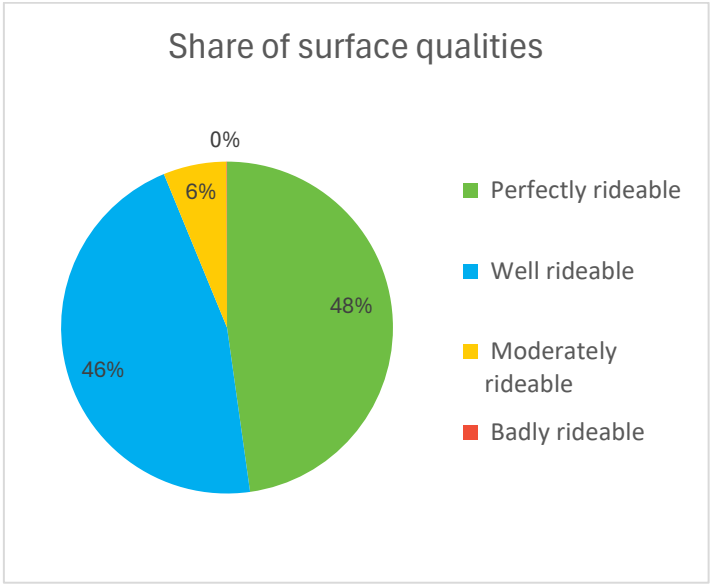


53% of the route is composed of segregated cycle paths, greenways, or similar traffic-free route segments. Another 38% comprise roads with very low motorised traffic, and 4% roads with low traffic. 3% were classified as featuring moderate traffic and 2% as including high traffic. 0.2% of minor sections were classified as containing very high traffic.

Most of the route (94%) leads over perfectly rideable or well rideable surfaces. 6% was classified as moderately rideable – mostly on old agricultural/water managements roads, built with concrete plates with growing gaps in between, or on sections containing (stabilised) gravel. There were no parts of the route that were classified as not rideable. On 8.1%, the effective width of the cycling infrastructure was evaluated as not allowing to safely pass cyclists coming from the opposite direction.

The route leads predominantly through attractive and highly attractive landscapes, with a notable highlight being the UNESCO World Heritage Site Upper Middle Rhine Valley. The route generally follows the river closely, allowing for stunning views and enjoyable cycling with little elevation. One slight drawback is the amount of route spent on cycle and pedestrian paths directly next to busy main roads, however this is difficult to avoid as the Rhine gorge is very narrow in these areas, leaving little room for infrastructure.


Share of route components
0%
2%
3%
36%
38%
20%
0%
1%
Unknown
Cycling street/homezone
Agricultural/forest/water management road
Public road
Painted cycle lane
Greenway
Cycle and pedestrian path
Cycle path


Share of surface qualities
0%
6%
48%
46%
Perfectly rideable
Well rideable
Moderately rideable
Badly rideable

Examples of various types of route components

Public road.

Highly attractive section on an agricultural road across vineyards.

Highly attractive cycle and pedestrian path accessible to all users on the riverside in Germersheim.

Painted cycle lane. For ECS purposes, this was treated as cycling in mixed traffic, as the cycle lane does not reach the minimum effective width.

Cycle street.

Some examples of surface quality encountered along the route

Perfectly rideable asphalt cycle and pedestrian path – however, it is too narrow for two bicycles to pass comfortably.

Well rideable cobbled water management road.

Moderately rideable asphalt cycle and pedestrian path.

6.5.3. Signing

The signing of the route in Rhineland-Palatinate is governed by the “Hinweise zur wegweisenden Beschilderung für den Radverkehr in Rheinland-Pfalz”[4], last updated in 2021. In effect, the signs are similar or identical to those used in the neighbouring Bundesländer, featuring green writing on white background with route information panels attached to the bottom of the sign.

In general, the signage is good, but maintenance levels can vary. Some signs have been vandalised, i.e. bent, covered by stickers, or spray paint, and others are very dirty or worn out and therefore difficult to read. There are also some instances of very old route information panels, missing the EuroVelo 15 logo, being present on signs. Lastly, there are often missing signs on forks in the track. Probably for the person that was designing / locating signage, it was obvious that one of the arms of the fork is “straight”, so no sign is necessary, but for the user in the field it is not.

[4] https://www.radwanderland-fachportal.de/dokumente/upload/80f20_211111_HBR_Basis.pdf

While almost the entire route is signed with EuroVelo signs, the last part of the daily section Koblenz – Kamp-Bornhofen is lacking signs. The last sign recorded during the survey was in Lahnstein, although ECF has been assured there are signs in Braubach and Filsen, too. There is no sign indicating the end of the route in Kamp-Bornhofen.

Typical signage on a crossroad: direction signs indicate next towns and distances, route information panels attached to arms that point in the directions followed by the routes.

Old route information panels without EuroVelo logo.

Example of a missing sign on a fork in the road.

Examples of badly readable (vandalised with stickers or paint) signs.

Example of a badly readable (dirty) sign.

Badly readable and misleading sign – the route turns left here, but the sign can be easily read as indicating the way straight.

Clear signage of a detour with route information panel included.

Example of unclear detour signage – does the arrow pointing straight mean to go left or right?

6.5.4. Public Transport

Rhineland-Palatinate has an excellent public-transportation network, and Deutsche Bahn provides detailed information on bike transport. Bicycles are usually accepted on regional and long-distance trains, but the number of bikes that can be transported is limited. Bike transport on the long-distance ICE, Intercity, and Eurocity trains needs to be booked in advance. On DB regional trains, bicycle transportation from Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. and on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays for an unlimited period of time on DB Regio trains is free of charge, subject to capacity. Capacity can be insufficient particularly on weekends, but in peak season also during the week.

Major train stations along the route can be found in Karlsruhe (Baden-Württemberg, but very close to the southern end of EuroVelo 15 in Rhineland-Palatinate), Worms, Ludwigshafen/Mannheim, Mainz, and Koblenz. The biggest of these stations is probably Mainz Hauptbahnhof: From there, assembled bicycles can be brought on ICEs to, among others nationally, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Dortmund, Munich, Passau, Düsseldorf, Kiel and internationally Interlaken, Innsbruck, Basel SBB, Amsterdam Centraal, Zürich, Vienna.

These cities are also covered by long-distance bus providers such as Flixbus. Bike transport needs to be booked in advance in these buses, and the number of bikes that can be transported is limited. Regional trains cover the entire route, so that it is easy to reach even smaller villages by train. However, elevators are often not available on smaller local train stations. The many smaller train stations can also be researched on the RLP cycle route planner available on “radwanderland.de”. The trains usually have special bike compartments and cars with signs indicating these compartments.

Switching between the left and right bank is often possible thanks to many bridges and ferries, however, it must be kept in mind that there are no bridges on the entirety of the UNESCO World Heritage Site Upper Middle Rhine Valley. Ferry connectivity is good there, however cyclists must be aware of the timings of the ferries. The ferry connecting the end of the right bank route in Kamp-Bornhofen with Boppard, for example, only runs until 18:00 each day.

6.5.5. Services

There is a wide variety of services available along the entirety of the route. There is a large number of cycling-friendly accommodation, certified according to the Bett+Bike label, but in reality, even most non-certified accommodation is accustomed to cycling tourists and equipped to deal with their needs.

There is also a large amount of food options to choose from, as the route generally passes through or close by towns and villages that cater towards tourists of all kind, cycling tourists included. One thing that could be improved upon is the current lack of public drinking water fountains. These are few and far between, forcing cyclists to stop in restaurants or cafes to access drinking water. The same goes for public toilets.

Rest area with a small shelter.

Drinking water point.

6.5.6. Marketing / Promotion

The main page for cycle tourism in Rhineland-Palatinate is https://www.radwanderland.de/. The website is available in German, English, French and Dutch and includes plenty of information on cycling in the region, signing, cycle routes, detours, accommodation such as Bett+Bike or youth hostels, multimodality, and cycling for those with disabilities.

It also includes a cycle-route planner with an interactive map available in the four languages. The planner contains various layers of information on public transport, accommodation, attractions, infrastructure, and cycle routes. However, some messages and headings in the planner are not translated from German into other languages (e.g. “Radwandern”, “Luftbild”, “Karte”).

The website, does not, however, have easily accessible information on EuroVelo 15 itself. There exists a page with some basic information on the route, which contains sub-pages offering the download of GPX tracks, however the page is not straightforwardly accessible from the main page.

The Rhine Cycle Route is also marketed to tourists in four languages via the Tourenplaner Rheinland-Pfalz, both as a complete route and as individual sections in the Palatinate, Rhine-Hesse, and Romantic Rhine regions. The Tourenplaner Rheinland-Pfalz contains tourist hiking and cycling trails and is used by both Rheinland-Pfalz Tourismus GmbH and the touristic regions. Detours and other conditions are also entered here.

Various data on mobility in Rhineland-Palatinate is offered bundled in the Mobilitätsatlas. In addition to diversions/closures on cycle paths, rescue points, accident hotspots and much more are also displayed.

Overview information is also available on the EuroVelo website in English, German, French and Dutch.
The route is generally well-equipped with physical information boards showing the course of the route on both banks of the Rhine, and the bridges and ferries where both connect. The boards also generally contain information on the cities, attractions and tourist information centres along the route, as well as a link to radwanderland.de. Between Lauterbourg and Speyer, the information boards are however either missing our outdated.

Example information board.

6.5.7. Deficiencies

The following critical deficiencies (related to Essential or Important European Certification Standard criteria) were observed along the route:

- 1.2 km of high traffic on the road leading to the recycling centre near Römerberg (Wertstoffhof Römerberg). This might be only a periodical problem, as the recycling centre seems to be open only on Saturdays, but during the opening hours it generates a lot of car traffic. The traffic also significantly degraded the surface of the road (paving stones, not suitable for this kind of traffic), reducing it to only moderately rideable.
- Around the train station in Ludwigsheim-Oggersheim sections of the route lead on narrow cycle lanes (1.0-1.2 m, occasionally disappearing completely) on busy roads with heavy vehicle traffic. While on the bridge over the railway line there is a physically segregated cycle track, it is not the case on the streets approaching it from both sides: Mittelpartstraße (250 m) and Prälat-Caire-Straße (600 m). The lanes are too narrow to ensure safe distance from overtaking busses and trucks. The originally provided GPX track partially leads on a sidewalk along Prälat-Caire-Straße, but the actual signage in the field does not indicate that it should be or even may be legally used by cyclists.
- 1.3 km of high traffic on Mainzer Strasse in Koblenz. This is on a detour that will be removed in the near future.
- 300 m of high traffic on Neustadt in Koblenz.
- 400 m of high traffic on Kastorpfaffenstrasse in Koblenz. This section was a temporary detour due to an event on the regular route.
- 300 m of high traffic on Peter-Altmeier-Ufer in Koblenz.
- 1.75 km of high traffic on Hans-Böckler-Strasse in Koblenz.
- 100 m of high traffic on Haupstrasse/B42 in Leutesdorf.
- 1 km of very high traffic on Rheinstrasse/B42 in Vallendar.

- 800 m of high traffic on Brückenstrasse in Lahnstein. This was the result of a detour for cars and heavy good vehicles, which has since been removed. Traffic levels should be significantly lower now.
- 800 m of high traffic on Rheinuferstrasse/B42 in Osterspai.

Other deficiencies:

- 11.5 km of moderate traffic, notable sections:
  - 2.2 km on K45 road between Hamm am Rhein and L440,
  - 1 km on Dammeg in Worms (detour section, heavy good vehicles)
  - 0.5 km on Bad-Aussee-Strasse in Ludwigshafen-Oppau
- Short sections of badly rideable surface:
  - 50 m in Ludwigshafen-Maudach (cobblestones)
  - around 150 m north of Worms (damaged paving stones at the end of an industrial road, Industriegebiet Nord I/7). The sections are short enough to not block the certification, but they should be addressed if the route is meant to cater for all user groups.
  - Two short stretches of muddy cycle path that are difficult to cross when it has rained, between Trechtingshausen and Niederheimbach.
- 25.4 km of moderately rideable surface, mostly because of tree root damages or poorly maintained stabilised gravel.
- 20.3 km of insufficient width (cycle tracks used bidirectionally with effective width below 2.0 m), notable sections:
  - 4.5 km north of Mainz
  - 2.5 km in Speyer
  - 1.2 km in Gemersheim
- 13 locations (crossings, pedestrian bridges, roadworks), where cyclists have to dismount and walk their bicycles.
- 14 chicanes or other obstacles making it difficult to travel with non-standard bicycles, such as tandems, bikes with trailers etc.
- 2 dangerous crossings (K31 road – left turning in moderate traffic, 100 km/h speed limit)

Badly rideable surface in Maudach.

Narrow (bidirectional!) cycle track along Industriestraße in Speyer; partially blocked by parking HGVs, danger of dooring.

Narrow cycle track with obstacles along Rheinallee near Mainz Nord.

Legal (dismount) and physical (chicane) obstacle.

200 m section on a 100 km/h road (K31) between Speyer and Otterstadt; in both directions cyclists need to turn left from the main road.

6.5.8. Planned route improvements

ECF has been informed of the following planned improvements to the route:

- The construction work in Koblenz Stolzenfels, observed already during this survey, which will achieve an enormous increase in quality of the Rhine Cycle Route.

- In Neuwied, the Cycle Route is being improved over a length of around 700 metres. The surface will be covered with a light-coloured aggregate top layer to ensure optimum visibility and safety of use. The work is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024.
- In 2025, the through road in Osterspai will be renovated (expansion of the main road and construction of a separate cycle path)

6.5.9. Proposed actions

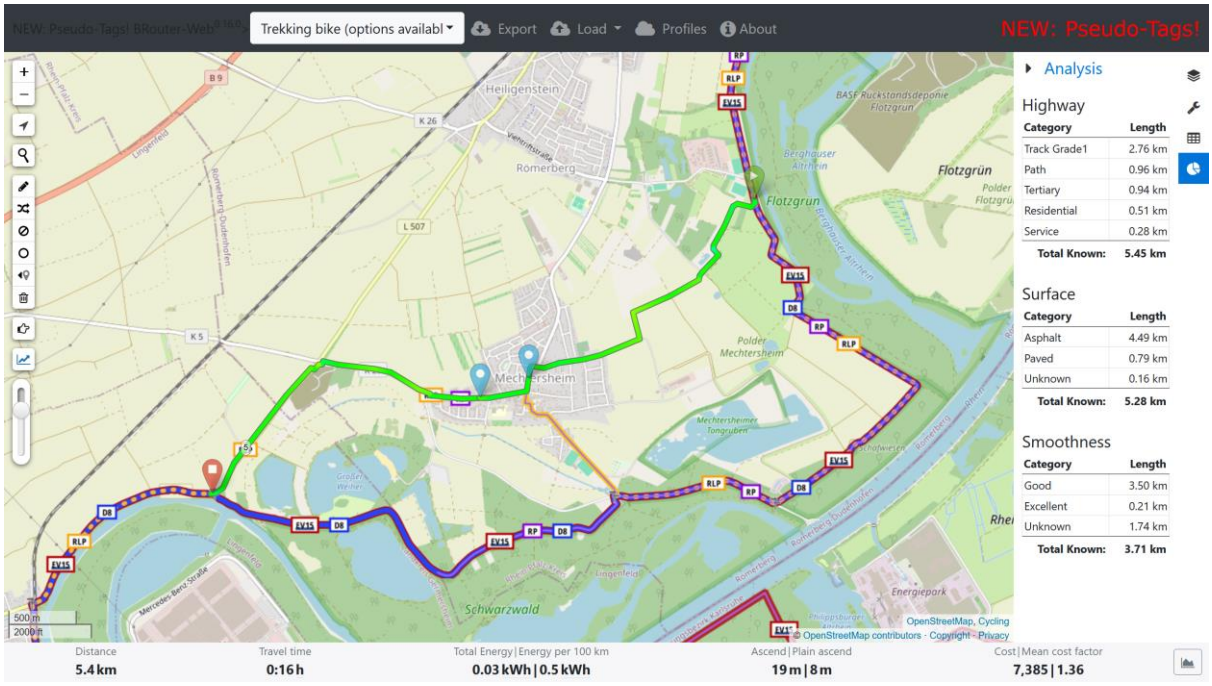
For several sections we propose to consider changing the itinerary. Please note that the alternative itineraries are suggested on basis of analysis of map data, and they have not been surveyed in field and verified in terms of compliance with the ECS criteria.

- In Neuburg am Rhein, build 80 m of missing cycle track along Rheinstraße (bridge over Lauter); it will probably require reallocating some space from the carriageway on the bridge or a separate cycle and pedestrian bridge.
    - Alternatively, reduce the speed limit to 30 km/h (currently 50 km/h) and add traffic-calming elements that will make it safer to enter the carriageway and perform turns.
- In Wörth am Rhein, redirect cycling traffic from substandard cycle and pedestrian track along a local section of Bahnhofstraße (between Hanns-Meyer-Schleyer Straße and Dammstraße) and Altrheinstraße to carriageway.

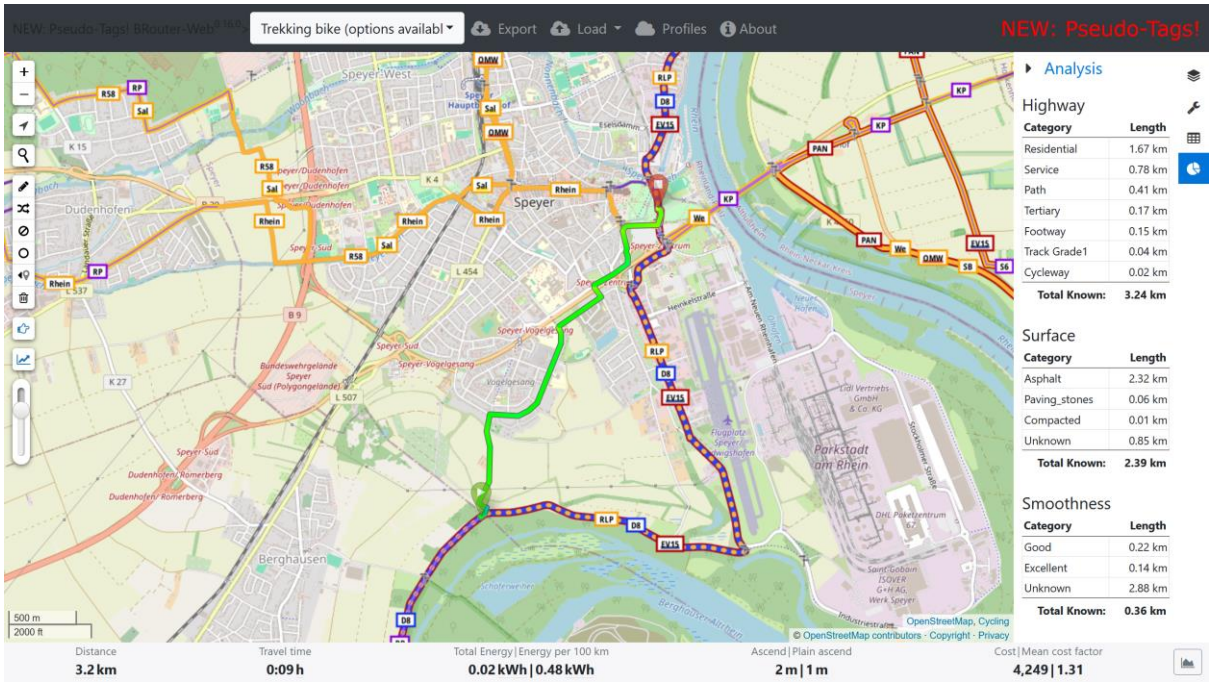
Narrow cycle and pedestrian track along Altrheinstraße in Wörth am Rhein - here cyclists could safely use the carriageway.

- Build 200 m of a cycle track on the western side of the K31 road (north of Speyer, from the intersection with K23 northwards); consider adding traffic islands for crossing cyclists or reducing the curve radii for turning cars at the intersection of K23 and K31.
    - Alternatively/provisionally: lower the speed limit to 50-60 km/h on the section of K31 shared by EV15.
- In Römerberg, build 1.2 km of a new cycle track along the access road to the recycling centre to address the issue of high traffic and moderate surface quality on the access road. Instead of along the road, the cycle track could lead along the edge of Mechtersheimer Tongruben, providing better access to rest area and observation platform on the lakeside.

- Alternatively, consider rerouting the itinerary through Mechtersheim instead of next to the recycling centre. This would probably be somewhat less attractive, but shorter and provide better access to services. Example option suggested by BRouter below (green line). This option would probably at least require reducing speed limit on Schwegenheimer Straße to 30 km/h.



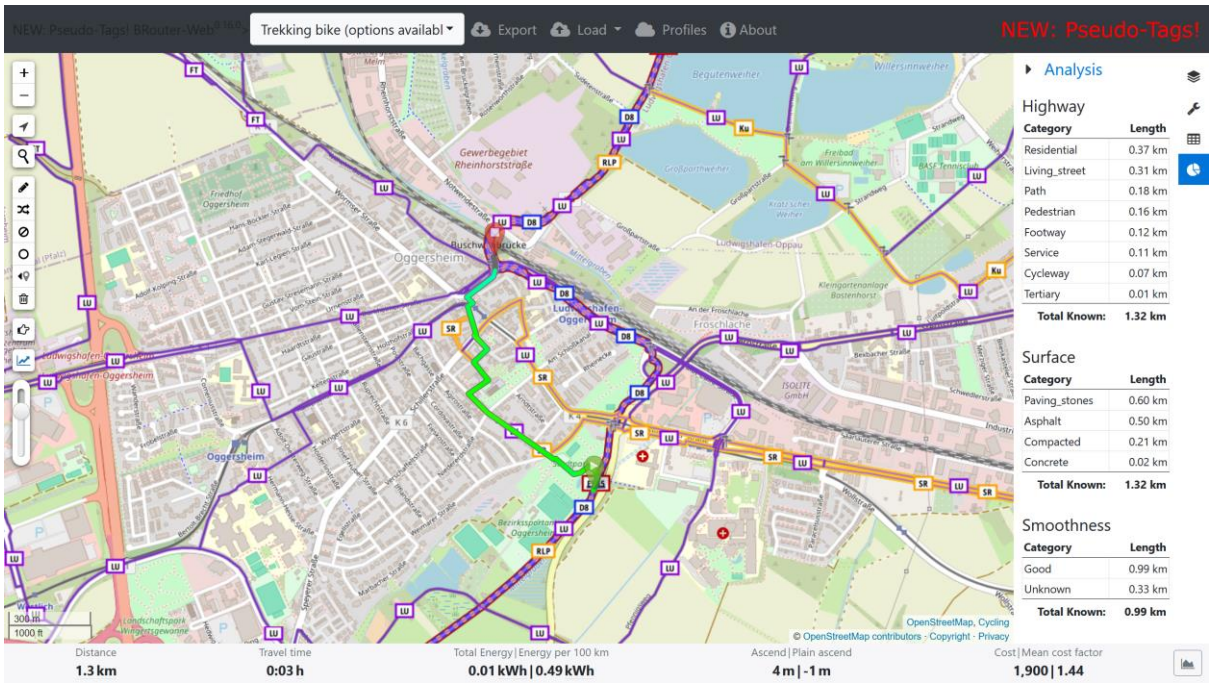
- On Industriestraße in Speyer, relocate car parking to the right lane of the street (currently three lanes on most of the street), widen the cycle track to meet current standards and provide a safety buffer between parking lane and the cycle track.
  - Alternatively reroute the itinerary to avoid the industrial area next to the airport. Example suggestion from BRouter below.



- In the northern part of Speyer build 1.7 km of a new cycle track / water management road between the end of Hafenstraße and the ramp where the K2 road leaves the river. Ideally, the new infrastructure should be located at the top of the embankment, but if that is not possible, the gravel road on the riverside could probably also be improved and provide a better alternative. This would resolve the issues of insufficient width, noise exposure and low attractivity of existing cycle track along Franz-Kirrmeier-Straße.

North of Speyer: the route currently leads on a cycle track along busy road, unattractive and with multiple conflict points (left side of the picture). There is space to build a much better quality cycle track on the top of the embankment (middle); alternatively the road on the riverside could also be used (right).

- Provide a lane of even surface on the cobblestone section in Maudach; alternatively improve one of the parallel paths through the forest.
- In Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim consider rerouting the itinerary to lead through the centre of the town (Hans-Warsch-Platz) instead of by the train station; this will not only allow to avoid the dangerous section on Prälat-Caire-Straße, but also provide better access to more interesting services (local cafés, restaurants and bakery instead of McDonald's and gas station).
- In Ludwigshafen-Oppau reduce the speed limit on Bad-Aussee-Straße and the easternmost section of Horst-Schork-Straße to 30 km/h.
    - Alternatively, look for a route on local streets through the centre of the town, avoiding the busy street next to the tram terminal and substandard cycle tracks.



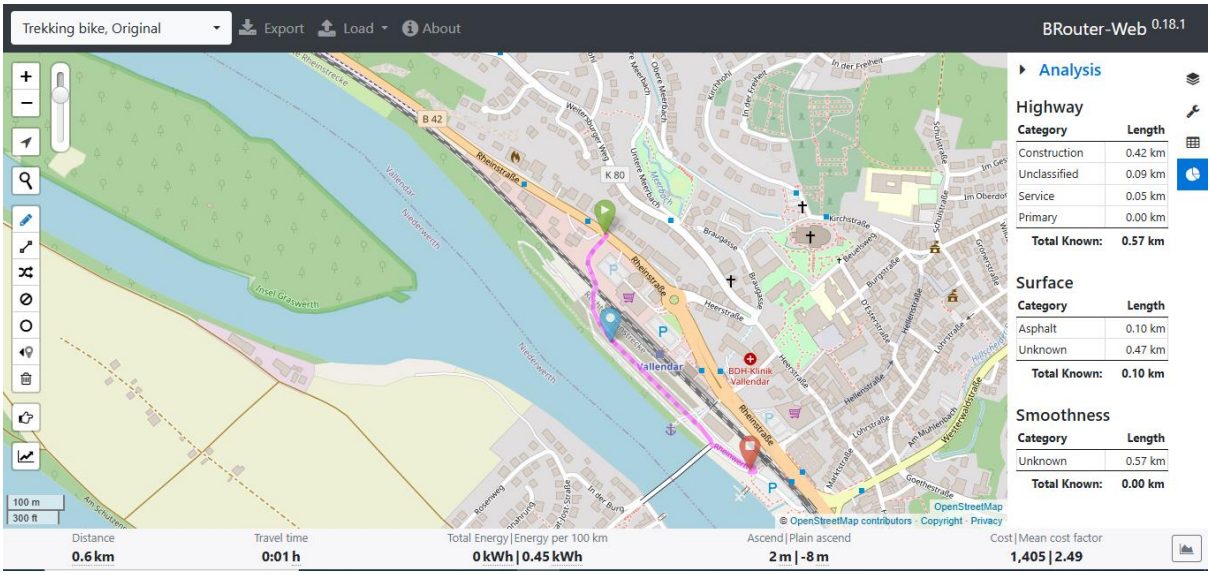
Example itinerary across the centre of Ludwigshafen-Oggersheim, avoiding critical issues on Prälat-Caire-Straße. The change would not however address the other critical section, on Mittelpartstraße.

- In the northern part of Mainz consider rerouting the itinerary from a section of Rheinallee to the newly developed quarters along the Rhine (including Zollhafenbrücke); this will mean more attractive surroundings, less noise, and better surface quality.

Zollhafenbrücke in Mainz – potentially more attractive and better infrastructure alternative to current itinerary.

- Improve the 2 km of moderately rideable surface between Bingen and Trechtinghausen
- Investigate the possibility of removing the requirement to dismount crossing factory terrain in Spay. In case this is not possible, a short route change along Werftstrasse, Koblenzer Strasse, and Jahnstrasse seems possible.

- Improve the 800 m of moderately rideable cobblestones on Brunnenstrasse shortly before Koblenz-Stolzenfels. The only feasible seeming detour would lead onto a main road and is not recommended.
- Pave the 850 m of moderately rideable gravel/dirt path leading from Königsbach towards Stadion Oberwerth.
- Improve the cyclability of Balduinbrücke going north, either by constructing a separated cycle path incorporating the raised ledge currently next to the painted cycle lane, or by expanding the southbound cycle path and allowing bi-directional cycling.
- Remove the southbound painted cycle lane on Hans-Böckler-Strasse and allow bi-directional cycling on the wide cycle and pedestrian path instead.
- Change the route to remain above the B42 in Linz. The current route requires two dismounts to access a 500 m stretch directly on the riverbank that is not remarkable enough to justify the dismounts.
- Allow cycling on the pedestrian paths next to the B42 in Leutesdorf.
- Extend the cycle and pedestrian path next to the B42 in Vallendar. Do this either for the full 1 km section featuring very high traffic, or do so until the Esso petrol station, and follow the following alternative route from there:



- To rectify 800 m of high traffic on Brückenstrasse in Lahnstein, either create a separate cycle path (the current cycle lane is too narrow to allow safe and comfortable cycling), for example by converting one of the pedestrian paths into a bi-directional cycle and pedestrian path, or lower the speed limit to 30 km/h.
- Reassess the necessity of so many “cyclists dismount” signs. Consider alternative itineraries or infrastructure improvements where the sign cannot be simply removed or replaced with less restrictive (yield sign, speed limit).
- Add a sign to indicate the end of the route in Kamp-Bornhofen. There should also be a sign at the ferry between Kamp-Bornhofen and Boppard indicating that cyclists must cross here to carry on southwards. The sign at the end of the route should also indicate that cyclists must turn back towards the ferry to continue.
- Signage short term: add missing signs, clean or replace badly readable signs (coordinates provided as part of the action plan).
- Signage long term: introduce regular sign reviews/audit, integrate them in the regular sign maintenance procedures (not wait for user complaints). Additionally/alternatively, some redundance (for example having signs both before and after the turn) would make the signage more resilient to vandalism.

7. Conclusion

When assessing the survey data based on the ECS, the results show that the surveyed route already meets the essential criteria at 95.8% of its length in terms of continuity, route components, surface and attractiveness (excluding signing, public transport, services and promotion). It also meets the important criteria at 92.9% of its length and the needs of the most demanding users at 64.3% of its length (additional criteria).

The surveyed sections of the Rhine Cycle Route lead through very attractive areas, including 6 UNESCO World Heritage sites and many natural and protected areas. 23.1% of the route was classified as highly attractive and 71.4% as attractive. The route has been among the top ten of the most popular long-distance cycle routes identified by the ADFC in its annual Bicycle Travel Analysis for many years, and was the second-most visited EuroVelo route page on EuroVelo.com in 2023 according to the EuroVelo Digital Statistics Report (2023). This is proof of the route's great attractiveness as a cycle-tourism destination.

However, the Rhine Cycle Route cannot rest on its laurels. Competition in the cycle-tourism market is strong and growing. While there were improvements noted in comparison to the 2019 survey of the route, such as a marked reduction in obstacles and better public transport options, other elements of route quality have deteriorated. Rising levels of very high traffic confirm the trend already visible from 2014 to 2019, and surface deterioration has made the route more difficult to cycle in certain areas. Constant improvement is needed to maintain a quality cycle route.

The major issues that were identified during the survey include:

- 5 cases where entering with a bike is forbidden;
- 2 difficult stairs;
- 49,5 km of very high traffic;
- 42,4 km of high traffic;
- 1 very dangerous crossing;
- 17,9 km of badly or not rideable surfaces;
- Almost 200 missing or wrongly placed signs, with longer stretches featuring signing issues in eleven daily sections.

Transnational cooperation between the partners along the Rhine and investments into route improvements are crucial for maintaining the Rhine Cycle Route as a top cycle-tourism destination. The Rhine Cycle Route's EuroVelo Route Partnership has been extremely helpful in improving coordination among all actors. Moreover, the economic benefits for SMEs following the route-improvements actions along EuroVelo 15 have been huge.

This report aims to provide the required overview and impetus to keep up this momentum to improve the route together. The action plans provided by ECF to the partners alongside this report can form the basis for eliminating the issues identified during the survey and lay the foundation for recertification of the route in 2025.

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