

Annex to the ECS

Directness of the route itinerary

April 2020

Brussels

Directness vs. branches and loops

- **Directness** is an important principle of route development. Unnecessary detours should be avoided!
- EuroVelo routes should have a **single and direct itinerary without branches, loops and meandering!**
- Cycle tourists prefer the **simplest (yet still safe and pleasant) route between hubs** offering overnight stays where they can leave their luggage. From there, they can explore the surrounding area on local routes.
- The principle of directness is mentioned in the [EuroVelo Guidance on the route development process](#).

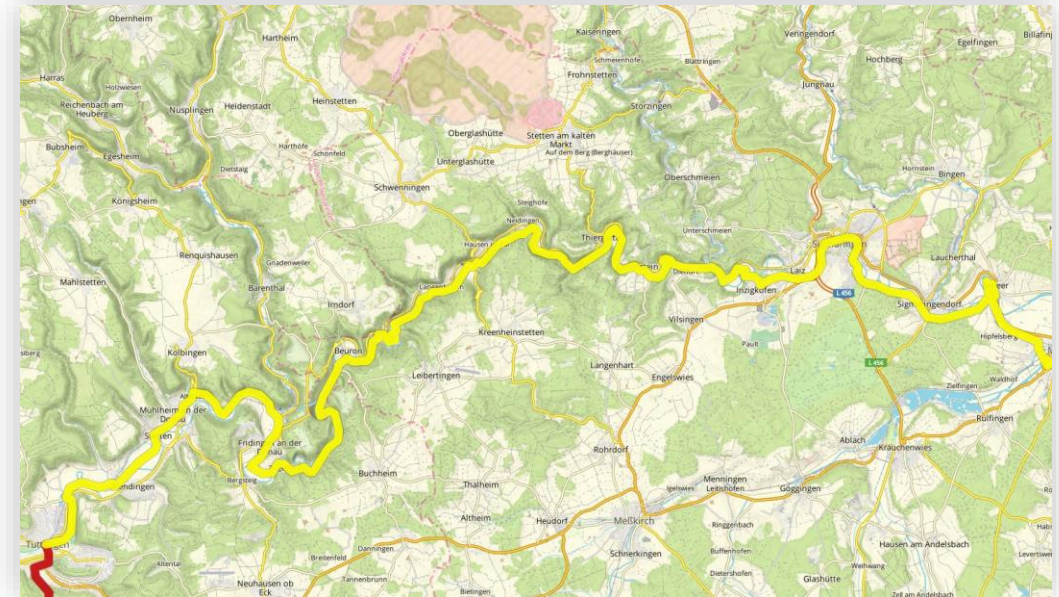


Exceptions: rivers, coastlines, mountains

- Meandering routes are allowed if they follow a river or coastline or are located in very hilly areas.



Example of EuroVelo 8 – Mediterranean Route in Andalusia



Example of EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea along the Danube in Germany

Why should you avoid complicated itineraries?

- **Easiness of navigation:** Branches, loops and meandering routes do not follow a clear logic. On a route with too many turns and no obvious direction, it can be difficult to maintain clear signing and orientation. Practical experience shows that it is very confusing to have the same route going in three different directions from one crossing.

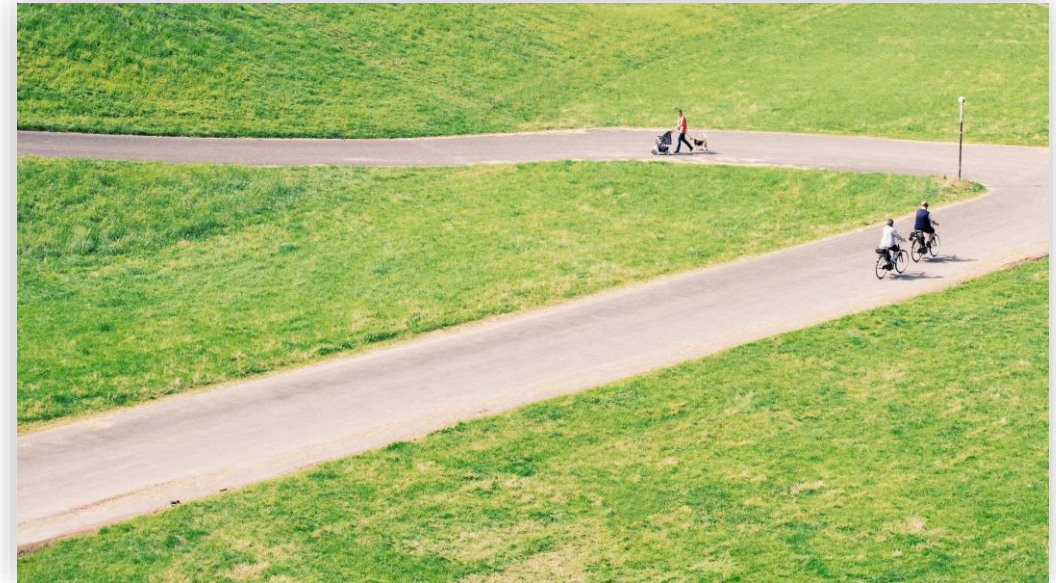


Avoid crossings with the same route continuing in three directions:

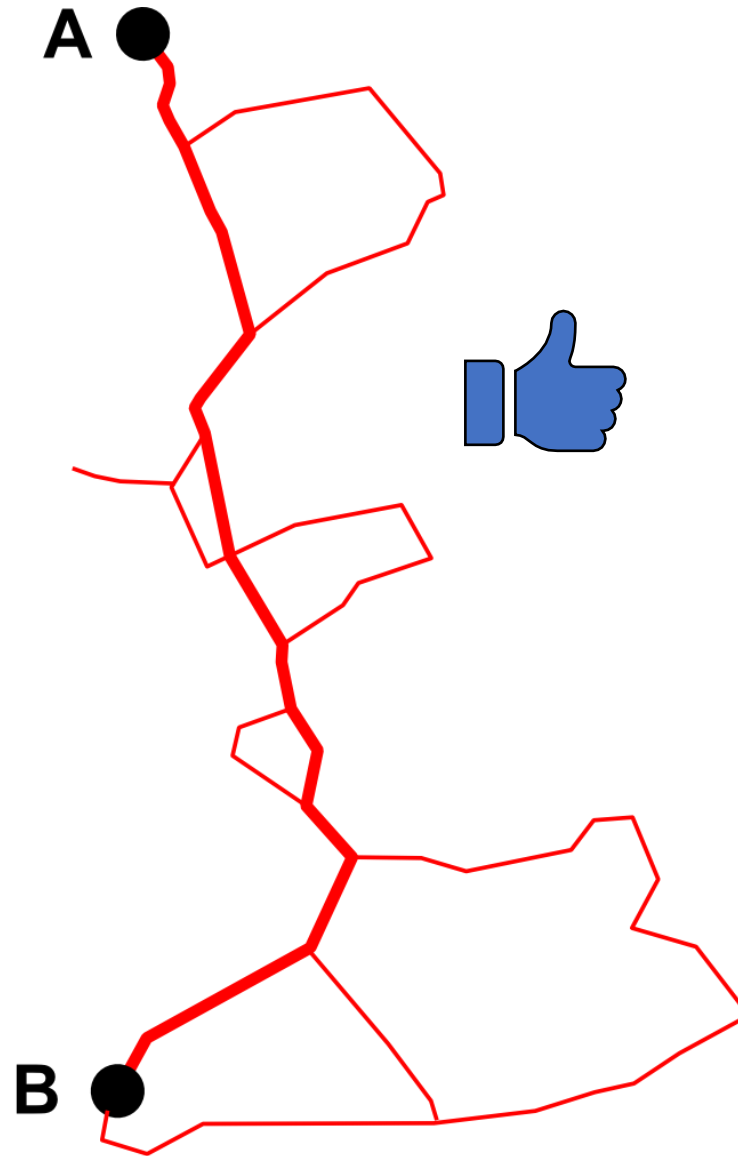
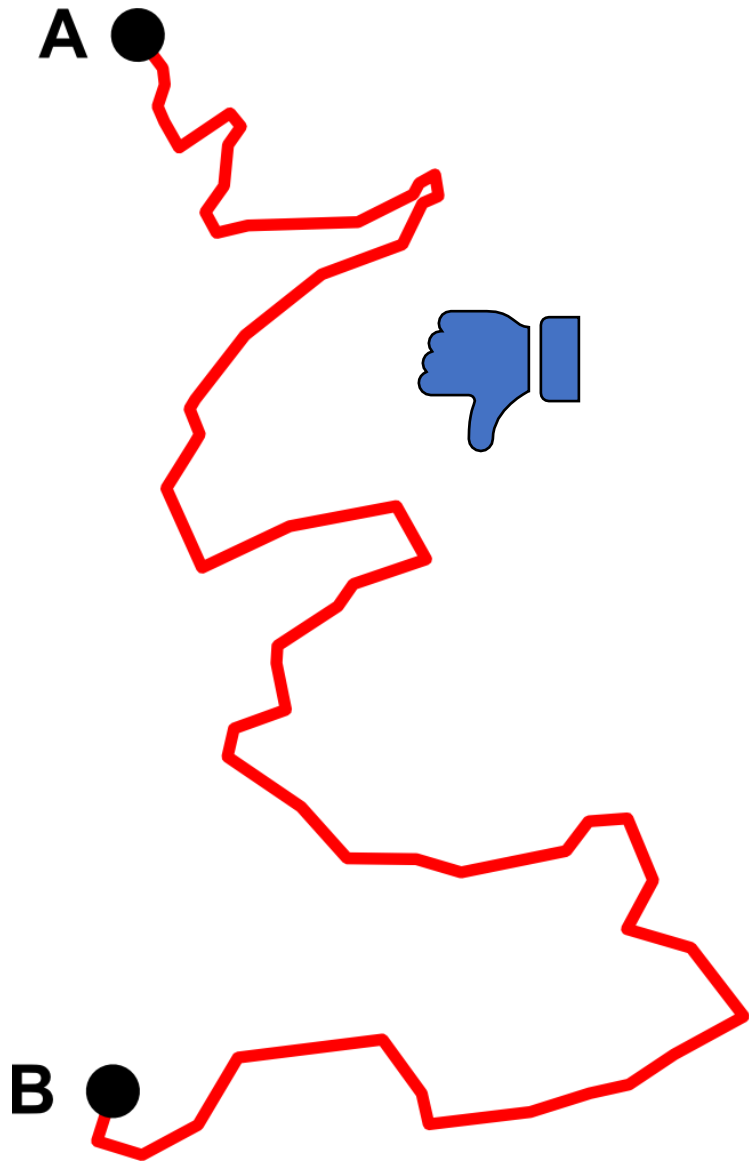


Why should you avoid complicated itineraries?

- Unnecessary complicated itineraries are **problematic** for cycle tourists who need to **reach the next destination quickly** because of bad weather, time constraints, technical or health problems, or fatigue.
- Branches force cyclists to cycle the same stretch twice. This lack of flexibility makes it more **complicated to plan a trip**.
- Branches, loops and meandering routes also **limit resources** for investments and maintenance.

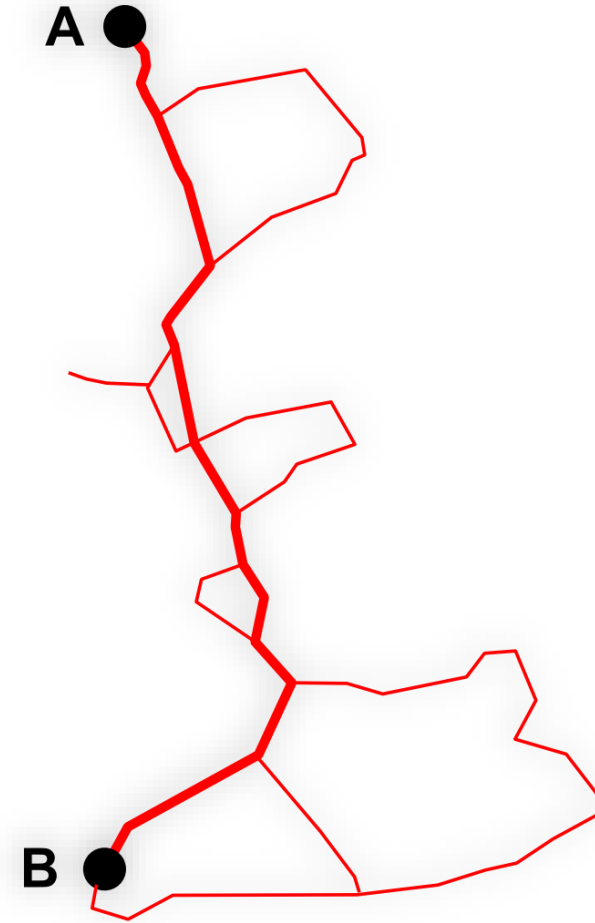


Directness of the route itinerary

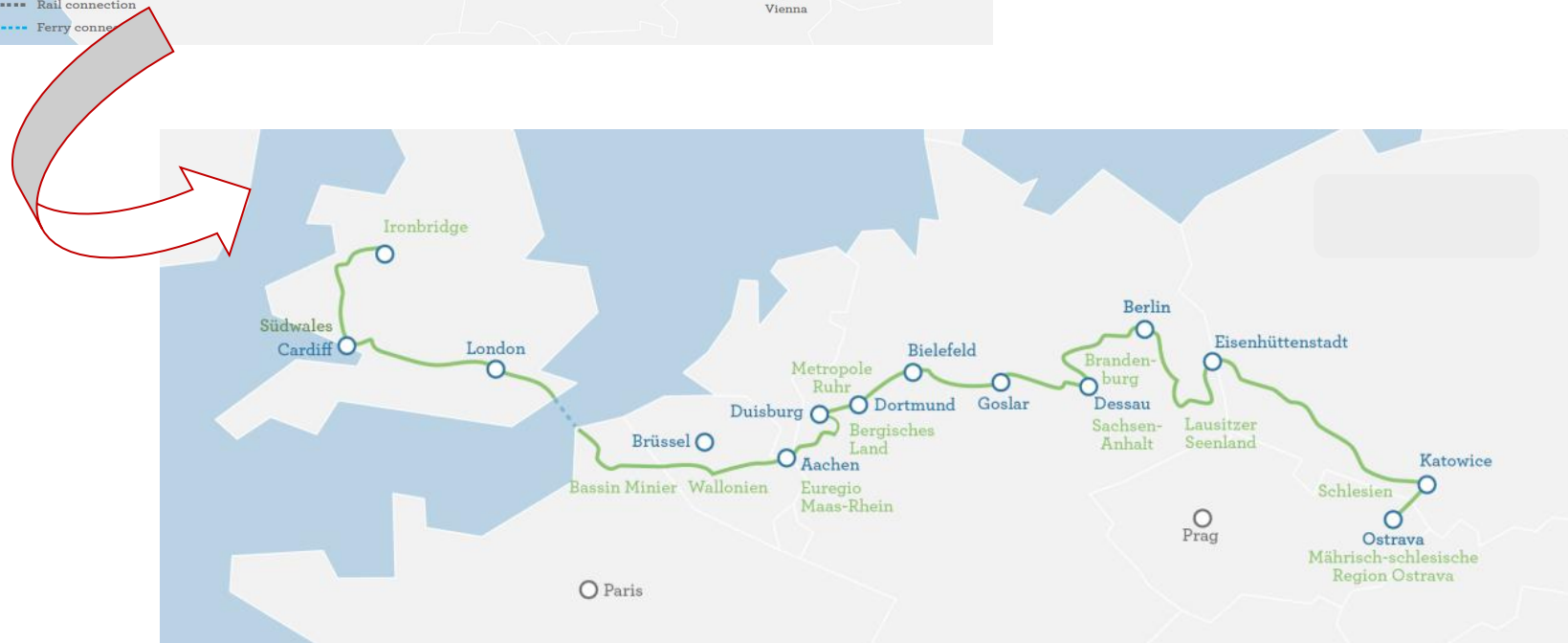


Recommendations:

- We recommend EuroVelo routes to be **backbones of regional or local cycling networks** and not to try to include every possible attraction in the area on the EuroVelo route.
- The drawing on the right covers the needs of a **much wider range of users**, including e.g. local recreational cyclists, who already know the city. It is more user-friendly, allowing tourists to flexibly adapt their itinerary to their personal preferences and current needs.



Directness of the route itinerary



Highlighting attractions

- It makes sense to create a local loop from a EuroVelo route to connect to the **attractions/villages** that are located next to it. Branches and loops can therefore form **part of national/regional routes** connected with the EuroVelo route.
- Route managers can set up **signs** highlighting national/regional routes or POIs linked to the route theme.



Good practice: EuroVelo 1 in France

- The itinerary of EuroVelo 1 in France (La Vélodysée) offers a **good balance** between staying true to the theme (Atlantic Coast Route) and varying landscapes (moving inland from time to time).
- The route is designed as the **backbone** of the network. It does not try to visit every possible attraction in the area.

