CYCLING-FRIENDLY SCHEMES IN EUROPE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Insights and Recommendations from Five Partner Countries to Enhance Cycling Infrastructure and Accessibility

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

This report is aimed at tourism organizations, cycling businesses and policy makers, seeking to enhance cycling tourism. It is useful to all stakeholders that would like to become more cycling-friendly and may even aim to create their own cycling-friendly service scheme.

Baltic Biking Upgrade (BBU) is an Interreg South Baltic co-funded project aiming to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) along the southern part of EuroVelo 10, the Baltic Sea Cycle Route. The nine partners from six countries will seek to assist the SMEs in developing bicycle-friendly services, as well as in creating cycling tourism products and offers. This project was born out of the assessment that SMEs are aware of the EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route's potential but do not know how to connect their offers with the route and market it to future customers.

The Baltic Biking Upgrade project officially started on 1st September 2023 and will run over a three-year period (2023-2026). Led by Pomorskie Tourist Board, the project involves partners from six countries including Pomorskie Tourist Board and Westpomerania Region Tourism Organisation from Poland, Visit Lolland Falster and Danish Cycling Tourism from Denmark, Association Klaipeda Region from Lithuania, Region Blekinge and Swedish Cycling Advocacy Organisation from Sweden and the city of Barth from Germany. Those countries cover more than 4900 km of the route, out of a total of over 9000 km, accounting for more than half of the route. The European Cyclists` Federation, based in Belgium is part of this project as a provider of expert knowledge.

BBU will address some significant challenges of SMEs located in the South Baltic Area (SBA) of EuroVelo 10. Among those are a lack of knowledge about possible cycling-friendly measures, underdeveloped bicycle-friendly standards, services and offers, as well as a lack of a solid business network and partnerships with relevant peers, including international stakeholders.

The main goal of the project is to assist SMEs in creating attractive bookable offers and successfully reaching out to national and foreign markets. For this purpose, several actions will be set up: dedicated training on creating new offers targeting an international





audience, guidelines on how to start, a dedicated campaign to market the new offers, and an invitation to join the EuroVelo 10 network in the South Baltic Area.

BBU will allow for the roll-out of more and better bicycle-friendly services along EuroVelo 10, with new products and offers for cycling visitors. The aim is to make the area more visible in the international cycling tourism market and to strengthen the development and management of the route thanks to closer transnational cooperation.

This report offers a detailed yet non-exhaustive analysis and comparison of cycling-friendly schemes throughout Europe, highlighting both successful initiatives and areas needing improvement. It draws on the ECF analysis of cycling-friendly schemes from 2011¹ but uses up-to-date information and is more focused around the participating partner countries. Extensive discussions with local small and medium enterprises (SMEs), tourism organizations, and other stakeholders, provided a nuanced understanding of the current state of cycling-friendliness in each region. By examining best practices and challenges, the report aims to identify opportunities for enhancing cycling infrastructure, services, and accessibility. The insights and recommendations presented here are intended to support policymakers, businesses, and tourism professionals in creating more sustainable and cyclist-friendly environments.

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¹ https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/European-Cycle-Friendly-Service-Network-Concept-Study1.pdf





Cycling-friendly schemes across Europe

Accueil Vélo: France



Cycling tourism has gained significant popularity in recent years, and France, with its vast network of cycling routes and picturesque landscapes, is a favoured destination for cycling tourists. To cater to this growing audience, the French tourism industry introduced the "Accueil Vélo" label. This certification marks accommodations, restaurants, and other tourism services, such as bike rentals, repair shops, tourist offices and tourist attractions that are specifically equipped to meet the needs of cyclists. For businesses in the tourism sector, accreditation as an Accueil Vélo establishment offers a valuable opportunity to increase visibility and target cycling tourists. On-site, these service providers can be recognized by a sign featuring a white bicycle symbol on a green background. In 2021, there were already 8,700 bike-friendly Accueil Vélo service establishments in France². You can find them all on the interactive maps on their website.

The brand was initially conceived as a tool for structuring the cycling tourism offer in France territorially: hence the role of the DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) in the labelling process. It aims to promote cycling as an eco-friendly and comfortable mode of transport.

A new version of this scheme will be launched in 2025, which will focus on 7 core criteria for all Accueil Vélo labelled services, and introduce revised thematic reference guides, meeting the needs of cycling tourists.

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 $^{^2\} https://www.francevelotourisme.com/sites/default/files/inline-files/devenir-accueil-velo-2021.pdf$





1. Requirements for Accreditation³

To receive the Accueil Vélo label, all businesses must meet the following 7 criteria that ensure cyclists have access to the necessary amenities and services during their stay. Those include:

- Be informed about the best route to get to the business.
- Cycling-friendly welcome: cyclists must be able to easily contact the SME by phone and online and be informed about what it offers. Cyclists must also be able to be informed about other services they may need, e.g. repairers, rental companies, laundromats. This can include having tourist documentation and documentation on the area's bike offering available.
- Secure Bicycle Parking: Accommodations must provide a safe place for cyclists to park their bikes. This could include on-site or nearby racks or a closed, secure and ground-level area.
- Cyclist-Friendly Infrastructure: It is essential that the accommodation or service
 provider offers infrastructure and services tailored to cyclists. This includes
 providing a repair kit for minor damage. It should include puncture repair material,
 standard set of keys, lubricant and a foot pump. All businesses should be able to
 tell you the nearest repair shop.
- Cyclist-Friendly Services: cyclists should be able to leave their bags and luggage during your break via a security service or lockers. This service may not be offered for security reasons – for example, due to the anti-terrorist measures. Another cyclist-friendly service includes offering charging facilities for phones, GPS devices, and e-bikes, where regulations permit.

In addition to those baseline criteria, certain industries must meet certain requirements:

Accommodations like hotels, guest houses and camping spaces must provide the opportunity to wash and dry clothes, and to clean the bikes. When breakfast is offered, it must be wholesome and if no catering is offered, accommodation facilities must be able to inform about the regional possibilities.

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³ https://www.francevelotourisme.com/sites/default/files/inline-files/devenir-accueil-velo-2021.pdf





All rental facilities must offer a range of bikes, regular renewal of the bikes, helmets and locks, assistance in case of any problems, and additional equipment, such as bags, luggage racks etc.

Repair shops must display their opening hours and a phone number, as well as provide daily express repair slots.

Restaurants must provide quick service and seating for on-site consumption, ensuring convenience for cyclists. Additionally, they are encouraged to use fresh, local produce whenever possible to enhance the dining experience and support regional sustainability.

Monuments and sites have to offer parking close to the reception and leisure activities have to offer access to a water point.

2. The Accreditation Process

To better understand the role of the destination management organisations during the application process, it is important to know the brand was initially conceived as a tool for the territorial structuring of the bicycle tourism offer in France: hence its territorial organization. The process of becoming accredited as an Accueil Vélo accommodation is structured and involves several steps⁴:

- A. Application: The first step for businesses interested in the label is to apply through an official website (https://www.francevelotourisme.com/) or through their regional tourism offices. These platforms provide all necessary forms and information about the application process. In many cases, businesses can also request assistance with their application.
- B. An inspection is performed by a quality manager.
- C. If the inspection is successful and all criteria are met, a three-year contract is signed.
- D. A Accueil Vélo sticker or sign is delivered and placed visibly.

⁴ https://cycling.lavelofrancette.com/professional-corner/join-accueil-velo-network





E. The business is authorized to use the label in its marketing and communications and is listed in official tourism directories and on the France Vélo Tourisme website: https://www.francevelotourisme.com.

4. Benefits of Accreditation

There are several advantages for businesses that become accredited as Accueil Vélo accommodations:

- Increased Visibility: Businesses with the Accueil Vélo label are listed on the official Accueil Vélo website, route websites and partner websites of local destinations, as well as in regional tourism brochures, mobile apps, catalogues of travel agencies and tourism offices. This increases visibility and makes the business an attractive choice for cyclists looking for accommodations that cater to their specific needs.
- Targeted Audience: The Accueil Vélo label appeals to a growing target market:
 cycling tourists who are environmentally conscious and seek sustainable,
 specialized accommodations. These cyclists are often willing to pay more for
 comfortable and bike-friendly places to stay, which can lead to increased
 bookings.
- Increased Bookings: Cyclists are a well-defined target group, and many specifically search for accommodations optimized for their needs. By becoming accredited as an Accueil Vélo accommodation, businesses can differentiate themselves from competitors and improve their chances of securing bookings, particularly during peak cycling tourism seasons.
- Networking and knowledge transfer: Accueil Vélo organizes workshops and networking events on a regional and national level, where SMEs can exchange knowledge and foster collaborations. An example of this is given here: https://www.gironde-tourisme.com/espace-pro/wpcontent/uploads/sites/2/2024/04/Presentation-La-grande-journee-Accueil-Velo.pdf





 Marketing Advantages: Being part of the Accueil Vélo network also brings marketing benefits. Regional and national tourism organizations actively promote certified accommodations and help them increase their reach. Accueil Vélo also provides communication support for webpages and physical brochures.

5. Challenges and Potential Concerns

Despite the many benefits, there are some challenges and concerns that might prevent businesses from seeking accreditation:

- Costs and Bureaucratic Effort: The annual fee and the bureaucratic process, including the inspection and compliance with set standards, may be a barrier, particularly for smaller businesses, especially if cycling tourists are not the primary market for the business.
- Low Demand: In regions where cycling tourism is less developed, the demand for Accueil Vélo-certified accommodations may be lower. Businesses in less touristy areas may find that the potential benefits do not justify the costs and effort of accreditation.
- Infrastructure Adjustments: Some businesses may be concerned that the
 requirements of the Accueil Vélo program could limit their flexibility, especially if
 they need to make structural changes or offer additional services. Smaller
 operations, with limited infrastructure, may feel overwhelmed by the added
 demands.

6. Sources and Further Information

For businesses seeking more information about becoming an Accueil Vélo accommodation, there are numerous resources and contacts available:

Official Accueil Vélo Website: https://www.francevelotourisme.com/accueil-velo.
 This is the primary platform for all information related to the Accueil Vélo label,





including the application process and criteria for certification. More information for businesses can be found on the la vélo Francette website (https://cycling.lavelofrancette.com/professional-corner/join-accueil-velonetwork) well in official pdf document: as as an https://www.francevelotourisme.com/sites/default/files/inline-files/deveniraccueil-velo-2021.pdf

Regional tourism offices

Depending on the region, businesses can get detailed information about the specific requirements and fees for accreditation.





Bienvenue Vélo: Wallonia, Belgium



The "Bienvenue Vélo" label is designed to enhance cycling tourism in Wallonia by recognizing establishments that provide cycling-friendly infrastructure and services. In contrast to previously mentioned schemes, it focuses only on the Region of Wallonia, Belgium. There are other existing schemes in Brussels-Region Capital and Flanders. With hundreds of participating establishments, it spans a wide range of tourism operators, including accommodations, restaurants, campsites, attractions, repair shops, producers and tourism organisation, promoting sustainability and quality tourism.

1. Requirements for Accreditation

The requirements for accreditation under the Bienvenue Vélo label are highly detailed and categorized into mandatory and additional criteria. The document outlining the scheme for SMEs spans over 40 pages, reflecting the comprehensive nature of the standards. Each industry subtype has its own specific set of criteria, ensuring a tailored approach. In total, criteria exist for guest rooms/houses, holiday villages, hotels, tourist and farm campsites, social tourism accommodations, restaurants, bistros, pubs, museums and attractions, tourist information centres, producers and artisans, as well as rental and repair services.

Summarizing all criteria for every industry would require significant space. Therefore, the criteria for hotels are presented as an example to illustrate the stringency of the scheme.

Mandatory criteria for hotels include:

- Official authorization and proximity to relevant cycle routes.
- Free and secure storing of bicycles.
- A small repair kit. A detailed list is provided in the official document.





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- A first aid kit. Again, a detailed list of contents is given in the official document.
- Provision of cleaning equipment.
- Provision of tourist information and route maps for relevant cycle paths in the proximity, as well as information on other scheme participants.
- Information on nearby bicycle rentals and repair shops.
- Possibility of an early departure.
- One night only stays.
- Healthy vitamin-rich breakfast, as well as a wholesome meal (or information on where to dine)
- Drinking water accessibility

"Plus"/ additional criteria include:

- Membership in "Wallonia Destination Quality" Network
- Private parking spaces.
- Bicycle accessories.
- Provision of bikes (electric or non-electric).
- Charging equipment for e-bikes.
- Access to a laundry room.
- Takeaway options for lunch.
- Use of regional products.
- Baggage services, such as baggage drop-off, or information on such services.
- Shuttle services
- Other unique products, such as packages of overnight stays with other cycling activities.

2. Accreditation Process

- a. Initial Application: Submit an application form, a signed charter, and a letter of motivation to the regional tourism body.
- b. On-Site Visit: A Bienvenue Vélo advisor visits the establishment to verify compliance with criteria and offer suggestions for improvements.





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- c. Step 3: Evaluation and Approval: The advisor submits a report to the tourism commission for review. Upon approval, the establishment receives the label and marketing materials.
- d. Renewal: Accreditation is valid for three years, with periodic reviews to ensure ongoing compliance.

3. Fees

Membership of the Bienvenue vélo label is free of charge

4. Benefits of Accreditation

- Increased visibility through official cycling maps, websites, and marketing campaigns.
- Enhanced reputation as a cyclist-friendly destination.
- Access to a network of tourism stakeholders promoting sustainable travel.
- Support from regional tourism authorities in maintaining and improving services.

5. Challenges and Potential Concerns

- Smaller establishments may find it challenging to meet infrastructure requirements, such as heated bike storage or repair kits. Smaller establishments are, however, encouraged to work with local bike shops.
- The list of criteria is notably more extensive compared to other European schemes.
 While direct investments are primarily limited to covered premises for accommodation providers and rack cycle parking for other facilities, additional costs may arise from staff training and necessary adjustments to business models.





- The on-site evaluation process may require time and resources, potentially delaying certification.
- Continuous compliance with evolving criteria demands ongoing investments in training and infrastructure.

6. Sources and Further Information

For more information about accreditation as a Bienvenue Vélo accommodation and how to apply, businesses can contact the regional tourism organizations directly. Here are some useful resources:

- Official Bienvenue Vélo Website:
 - https://monbagagenumerique.tourismewallonie.be/ This website provides detailed information about the requirements, application process, and accreditation criteria in the "welcome bike membership file"
- As part of its ongoing efforts, the label has collaborated with the CGT "Mon Bagage Numérique" service to help participating businesses better promote their commitment to cycling tourists. This initiative includes the provision of memo sheets offering practical advice and examples of effective French-speaking communication strategies for digital platforms like websites and social media. By leveraging these tools, establishments can highlight their cyclist-friendly services more effectively, increasing the visibility and impact of the *Bienvenue Vélo* label while fostering stronger connections with cycling tourists. Information on how to properly use digital channels (website, social networks, etc.) can be found here: https://www.tourismewallonie.be/bienvenue-velo/





ADFC Bett+Bike: Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, Austria, Italy, Belgium



The "Bett+Bike" label is a well-established certification for bicycle-friendly accommodations in Germany and a few other European countries developed in cooperation with the ADFC, the world's largest cyclist lobby. The support for the different regions in Germany and other countries is provided by the respective regional management. The contact details can be found on the ADFC website. It was created to promote cycling tourism and provide cyclists with a reliable network of accommodations that cater to their specific needs and currently has over 5900 member establishments. The program is part of Germany's national initiative to position itself as a top destination for cycling tourists, especially those travelling along popular bike routes, such as the Elbe Cycle Route, the Rhine Cycle Route, and the Romantic Road. By receiving the Bett+Bike label, accommodations can improve their visibility among cycling tourists and offer specialized services that enhance the overall cycling experience.

1. Requirements for Accreditation

To be accredited with the Bett+Bike label, accommodations must meet certain criteria designed to ensure that they provide services that are specifically tailored to the needs of cyclists. The requirements are very similar across Europe; nevertheless, there may be additional or specific requirements in different countries due to local conditions or legal regulations. Accommodations are divided into: Hosting, Camping, Holiday Home and Sport. The main requirements include:

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⁵ https://www.bettundbike.de/kontakt

⁶ https://www.adfc.de/artikel/adfc-bett-bike



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- Secure Bicycle Storage: Accommodations must provide a lockable room for cyclists to store their bikes overnight. Secure storage is a key aspect of attracting cyclists who are concerned about the safety of their bikes during their stay.
- Bike Repair: Cyclists need easy access to basic bike repair services, such as a repair station or a toolkit for minor repairs. Ideally, accommodations should offer a bike pump, a basic repair kit, and tools for fixing flat tires or adjusting bikes. The ADFC provides a detailed list of what has to be included in the repair kit here: https://www.bettundbike.de/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Fahrrad-Reparatur-Set-Grundausstattung.pdf

Moreover contact to a local repair shop must exist.

 Cyclist-Friendly Services: Accommodations must offer services that cater to the specific needs of cyclists. This includes accepting guests for only one night, having a room to dry clothes and equipment, as well as providing information on regional touristic offers. Additionally, accommodations should provide cyclists with energy-rich meals, particularly breakfast, or a possibility to cook to fuel their rides.

Additionally, to those mandatory requirements, establishments must meet at least three additional criteria, such as:

- Cyclist-Friendly Services: Guests can enjoy a variety of convenient bike-related services, including pick-up and drop-off for cyclists, a rental program for regular bikes and e-bikes, access to an e-bike charging station, and the option to rent navigation devices for easy route planning.
- Travel Planning & Luggage Support: The facility provides guidance on eco-friendly ways to arrive and depart, organizes day tours tailored to guests' interests, and offers a luggage transfer service, ensuring a hassle-free cycling experience.
- Technical assistance & partnerships: To ensure smooth cycling, the facility collaborates with a local bike repair shop, offering quick and reliable maintenance or repair solutions.
- Convenient Extras: Guests can take advantage of free Wi-Fi, making it easy to plan routes, stay connected, and access helpful information during their stay.





Camping places must additionally offer a flat grass surface for non-motorized guests, as well as chairs and tables.

Vacation apartments must additionally offer a place to cook, information about the nearest grocery store, as well as towels and linen.

The criteria for additional "Sport" certification include:

• weather forecasts, healthy lunch package including electrolyte drinks and protein bars, facility to wash the bikes and contact to specialized repair shops.

Additional criteria, of which at least two have to be met, include:

- Tour Planning & Guided Experiences: Guests receive personalized advice on selecting the best tours, including GPS-based routes, with the option to rent GPS devices. Guided tours and riding technique seminars are also available to enhance their experience.
- Specialized Bike Services: The facility offers mountain and road bike rentals and provides a breakdown and pick-up service for guests and their sports bikes, ensuring worry-free cycling.
- Wellness & Recovery: Guests can enjoy a massage service to relax and recover after their rides.

2. The Accreditation Process

The process of becoming accredited as a Bett+Bike accommodation is clear and structured, ensuring that all accommodations meet the necessary standards for cyclist comfort and safety. The steps involved are:

- a. Application: Interested businesses can apply for the Bett+Bike certification via a registration portal or by filling out the necessary documents. Those can be found on their homepage or requested at local Bett+Bike management.
- b. Those documents then must be sent to the regional management.





- c. On-Site Inspection: an inspection is conducted by a local manager/auditor. The purpose of this inspection is to verify that the accommodation complies with the Bett+Bike criteria. This includes checking the condition of the bike storage area or verifying the availability of services, such as bike repair kits.
- d. Certification and Listing: If the accommodation successfully meets all the requirements, it is awarded the Bett+Bike label. The property is then listed in the official Bett+Bike directory, which is available online. The establishment is furthermore provided a Bett+Bike sign.

3. Fees for Accreditation

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The fees for Bett+Bike accreditation are designed to be affordable and cover the cost of inspections, administration, and the use of the Bett+Bike logo. Fees may vary depending on the size and type of accommodation and the country, for example, due to different regional factors, such as administrative costs or local support programs. Typically, the fees are:

- 140€ registration fee
- 70€ yearly fee + 6,50€ per room⁷

4. Benefits of Accreditation

There are several benefits to being accredited as a Bett+Bike accommodation:

Increased Visibility: Being listed in the Bett+Bike directory makes the
accommodation visible to cyclists searching for bike-friendly places to stay. This
also includes that guests can find direct booking links book through the Bett+Bike
website, as well as visibility in GPS routes.

Moreover, establishments will be listed in partner websites and official government route-planning websites.

⁷ https://tourismus.mv/artikel/bett-bike-fahrradfreundliche-unterkuenfte





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- Targeted Marketing: The Bett+Bike label helps businesses target a specific and growing market: cycling tourists. This market is known to be highly motivated, and cyclists often seek out accommodations that are specifically geared to their needs.
- Competitive Advantage: By becoming a Bett+Bike certified accommodation, a
 business can stand out from other properties that do not offer specialized services
 for cyclists. This competitive edge can help increase occupancy rates, especially
 during peak cycling seasons.
- Boosted Revenue: Cyclists are willing to pay a premium for accommodations that
 cater to their specific needs, such as secure bike storage, access to cycling routes,
 and cycling-related services. This can lead to higher bookings and increased
 revenue, particularly in cycling tourism hotspots.
- Expert Support and Visibility: Professional advice through information briefs, dedicated contacts, and business consultants, combined with promotion through press campaigns and representation at cycling and tourism fairs.

5. Challenges and Potential Concerns

While there are many benefits to being accredited with Bett+Bike, some businesses may face challenges:

- Costs and Effort: The annual fees and the effort required to meet the certification
 criteria may seem like a burden to small or less busy accommodations.
 Particularly for businesses that are not located along popular cycling routes, the
 cost of accreditation might not justify the potential increase in bookings.
- Infrastructure Requirements: Some accommodations may need to make significant investments in infrastructure, such as building secure bike storage areas or installing repair stations. These upfront costs might be a concern, particularly for small establishments with limited resources.
- Demand Variability: The demand for Bett+Bike certified accommodations may be lower in certain regions, particularly in areas where cycling tourism is not yet well established. Businesses in such regions may find it harder to recoup the costs of





accreditation if cycling tourism does not make up a significant portion of their clientele.

6. Sources and Further Information

For more information on how to apply for Bett+Bike certification or to learn about specific regional requirements, businesses can consult the following resources:

- Official Bett+Bike Website: https://www.bettundbike.de/ The official website
 provides detailed information about the application process, criteria, and benefits
 of becoming a Bett+Bike accommodation.
- Regional Tourism Organizations: Businesses can contact local tourism organizations for region-specific advice.





Bed and Bike: Sweden



The Swedish "Bed and Bike" scheme⁸ was developed by volunteers in cooperation with the Swedish Cycling Association Cykelfrämjandet. The program was operated by volunteers, but it could not be maintained in the long term. While the accreditation was funded by the applying businesses, long-term tasks, such as administration, follow-ups with businesses, and further development of the program on a voluntary basis could not be implemented. Bed and Bike is no longer active as an accrediting scheme, but still provides tour suggestions and information for cyclists on its website.

Currently, there is no overarching scheme in Sweden, but there are smaller, regionally active initiatives to support cycling tourism. In addition, the organization "Sweden by Bike", founded in 2014, provides comprehensive information on cycling tourism on its website, such as routes, accommodation options, and attractions. Furthermore, tours can be planned, and booking inquiries can be sent. It is however, not a scheme, as it has no criteria on its own, but rather lists information from different local schemes.

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⁸ http://www.bedandbike.se/

⁹ www.swedenbybike.com





Miejsce Przyjazne Rowerzystom: Poland



Poland has multiple cycling-friendly certification schemes, for example along the Green Velo route (https://greenvelo.pl/en/places) in numerous provinces from the eastern wall of Poland. This chapter will focus on the Miejsce Przyjazne Rowerzystom (MPR) scheme. This cyclist-friendly place label in Poland is a certification program designed to identify accommodations, gastronomy, tourist attractions, tourist information and other service facilities that cater to the specific needs of cyclists. Poland, with its increasing network of cycling routes and growing popularity as a cycling destination, has created this program to ensure that cyclists traveling through the country have access to safe, comfortable, and practical facilities. MPR currently exists in multiple regions, such as Pomorze Zachodnie or Malopolska region. This chapter focuses on MPR in Pomorze Zachodnie, the Partner Region of this Project. Information on MPR in Malopolska can be found here: https://narowery.visitmalopolska.pl/en_GB/mpr

1. Requirements for Accreditation

To receive the Miejsce Przyjazne Rowerzystom label in Poland, accommodations and services must meet several key criteria. These criteria are designed to ensure that cyclists have everything they need for a comfortable and enjoyable stay. The primary requirements for accommodations include:

- Sufficient capacities: facilities must welcome at least 4 cyclists for an overnight stay, offering a comfortable and accommodating environment for their journey.
- Provide secure, weatherproof storage for bicycles and luggage, ensuring cyclists
 can rest easy knowing their gear is safe from theft or the elements. Establishments
 also need to be prepared to accommodate unique setups, offering solutions for
 trailers, tandems, and other non-standard bicycles.
- Tools for basic repairs: this includes but is not limited to: a set of Allen keys, a set of open-end wrenches, a set of "cross" screwdrivers, a set of flat screwdrivers, a





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set of spoons for removing/installing bicycle tires, a bicycle chain breaker, a set of tire patches with glue and a service floor bicycle pump.

 Offer guests a lifeline by sharing contact details for nearby bike repair shops and service points, ensuring they're never stranded without help.

For gastronomy, tourist attractions, information points and other services, basic standards include:

- Safe, free bicycle parking: for example, a "goal"/"U"-shaped rack or others enabling
 the attachment of a bicycle frame or another safe place for storage, e.g. with
 monitoring.
- information about nearby service points and bicycle shops.
- Tourist attractions like boat rides, railways etc., should moreover be able transport
 of a bicycle trailer and a non-standard bicycle: for example, a bicycle trailer and
 other non-standard sizes and types of bicycles (e.g. cargo, tandem, etc.).

2. The Accreditation Process

The process of becoming a Cyclist-Friendly Place in Poland is particularly easy and involves several steps to ensure that all criteria are met and that the accommodation or service is properly equipped for cyclists. The steps include:

- a. Cyclist-friendly facilities can kickstart their accreditation by sending a simple application form to mpr@wzp.pl. The application form, regulations, the current MPR list and information about the recruitment results can be found at: https://rowery.wzp.pl/en/mpr
- b. A formal review ensures all initial criteria are met, followed by an on-site verification, where the facility's readiness is inspected in action.
- c. Once approved, facilities are proudly showcased on the official platform (rowery.wzp.pl) and receive confirmation directly via email.
- d. After two years, every facility must undergo recertification to check if all criteria are still fulfilled.





3. Fees for Accreditation

The accreditation includes a free, temporary license to use the trademark. No explicit fees for the accreditation process are mentioned. The absence of fees for accreditation makes the program highly accessible, especially for smaller businesses or organizations with limited budgets. It encourages a wider range of facilities to participate, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive network of cyclist-friendly locations. Other accreditation schemes should take inspiration from this approach, as it removes financial barriers and promotes greater participation, ultimately benefiting the cycling community at large.

4. Benefits of Accreditation

- Recognition and Trust: Accredited facilities earn the right to display the "Bicycle-Friendly System" trademark, a symbol that immediately conveys reliability and dedication to cycling travellers. This badge helps businesses stand out as trusted destinations, enhancing their reputation in the cycling community.
- Enhanced Visibility: With inclusion on the official cycling platform (https://rowery.wzp.pl/en/map), in regional maps, and the regional cycling app (The West Pomerania), facilities can attract a broader audience, especially those who actively seek cyclist-friendly destinations.
- Promotion Opportunities: Facilities benefit from exposure through regional brochures, social media, digital campaigns, and promotional materials, showcasing their services to both local and international cycling tourists. This increased visibility can lead to higher customer engagement and revenue growth.
- On-Site Branding: Accredited facilities receive a recommendation plate, a physical indicator of their certification. Displaying this plate reassures cyclists and promotes the facility's commitment to excellent services.





5. Challenges and Potential Concerns

While there are many benefits to becoming a Cyclist-Friendly Place, businesses should be aware of certain challenges:

- Initial Investment: Some businesses may need to invest in facilities, such as secure bike storage or bike repair equipment. For smaller accommodations, this initial investment can be a barrier, especially if the return on investment is not immediate.
- Regional Demand: As with any niche tourism market, the demand for Cyclist-Friendly Place accommodations can vary by region. In some areas with fewer cyclists, businesses may not see as many bookings from cyclists. Businesses in regions with lower cycling tourism may need to market the label more aggressively to attract cycling tourists.
- Ongoing Maintenance: To maintain certification, businesses must continually
 meet the program's requirements. This means that businesses must regularly
 check their facilities, ensure that their services are up to standard, and stay
 informed about changes to the program's criteria.

6. Sources and Further Information

For more information about the Miejsce Przyjazne Rowerzystom label and how to apply for accreditation, businesses can visit the following resources:

- Businesses in the Pomorze Zachodnie region can find more information online at: http://rowery.wzp.pl/
- Businesses in the Malopolska region can find more information on the accreditation the benefits and criteria process, the at https://narowery.visitmalopolska.pl/en_GB/mpr#2. The terms and conditions of a cooperation be found can at: https://narowery.visitmalopolska.pl/documents/36564/1965767/RegulaminMPR. pdf/66b018a5-5d4d-4656-9483-b6e12969c493





Velo Popas: Romania



The "Velo Popas" certification in Romania is a program aimed at identifying and promoting accommodations, restaurants and tourist attractions that meet the specific needs of cyclists. With Romania's growing network of cycling routes and its diverse landscapes, the program seeks to enhance the experience of cyclists by ensuring access to well-equipped, safe, and welcoming facilities. It was founded very recently by POPASURI and is part of the Cyclists Welcome network, collaborating with Bed and Bike, MPR and other European certification schemes throughout Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Romania.

1. Requirements for Accreditation

To earn the Velo Popas certification, facilities must meet specific criteria tailored to the needs of cyclists. These requirements ensure that certified locations provide a safe, practical, and enjoyable environment for visitors traveling by bike. Moreover, for each industry, there are specific additional criteria an can be met to provide even more service to cycling tourists. For mandatory and additional criteria, there is always a bare minimum defined, as well as an ideal scenario. In contrast to other schemes, velo popas provides many pictures and descriptions to inspire the SMEs.

For Tourist Attractions:

- Bicycle Parking: Facilities must provide secure and accessible parking areas for bicycles, ideally in an all-night secured enclosed space, but also unlocked spaces with possibilities to secure the bike with a chain or indoor storage is accepted.
- Repair Tools: Availability of essential tools for minor bicycle repairs, such as pumps and basic wrenches, is mandatory, as well as free or paid supplies, such as tape, chain oil, wipes etc. An ideal tool and supply lists can be found at: https://velopopas.ro/en/conditions-tourist-attractions/





- First Aid Kit: A well-stocked first aid kit must be accessible, including additional items for cycling injuries.
- Charging Points: E-bike and phone charging stations must be available.
- Information Access: Cyclists should have access to detailed maps, weather
 updates, and routes, ideally tailored for cycling. Establishments ideally have
 information on detailed routes, bike friendly accommodation options nearby,
 contact to the next bike shop and general tourist information.

Optional Enhancements for cyclists include:

- Offering food and beverages, such as vending machines or a café, ideally with ergonomic packaging.
- Possibilities to wash and dry equipment and clothes, as well as the bikes.
- Toilets and ideally showers open for visitors.
- Free WiFi for the planning of the next route.
- Access to local bike trails, ideally very close to the attraction/accommodation
- Maps: Facilities are encouraged to offer digital or print maps of the region, for a charge or free

In addition to those criteria, accommodation must offer breakfast or the ability to cook, opportunities to clean and dry clothes and equipment, as well as enabling one night only stays. Additional optional offers for accommodations include bike rental, transport of luggage or equipment, takeaway food options, the ability to book a tent instead of a hotel room and free drinking water.

Campsites are moreover encouraged to additionally offer a picnic area near the tents, as well as nearby shopping possibilities.

Gastronomy facilities are required to additionally offer dedicated cyclist menus (of which one should be vegetarian), energizing and hydrating cyclists drinks, as well as free water.





Optional gastronomy specific criteria include takeaway options, multi lingual menu, a local specialty on the menu, a designated cyclist menu, 24 hour service, bike rental, bicycle components and washing/drying possibilities for equipment, clothes and the bikes.

2. The Accreditation Process

The Velo Popas accreditation process is straightforward and ensures that all participating facilities meet the established standards for cyclist-friendly services.

- a. Facilities interested in certification must submit an online application with a self assessment form via the official Velo Popas website.
- b. To meet all the mandatory criteria, Velo Popas provides information, materials and services to help the SMEs.
- c. An on-site inspection is conducted by the program's evaluators to verify that the listed criteria are met in practice. This ensures authenticity and quality. Now the partnership contract is signed.
- d. Certified facilities receive confirmation of accreditation, along with promotional materials, such as signage and inclusion in Velo Popas marketing platforms.

3. Fees for Accreditation

There is a fee for the evaluation and certification process, as well as a yearly membership fee. This fee supports the ongoing development and promotion of the initiative while helping businesses enhance their appeal to cycling tourists. Discounts can apply for second businesses.

- The initial fee for certification and promotion materials, such as signs is 400 RON
 (80€)
- The annual fee is 356 RON (70€)





4. Benefits of Accreditation

- Increased Visibility: Certified facilities are featured on the official Velo Popas platform and in promotional materials distributed to cycling communities and tourists.
- Recognition: The Velo Popas badge serves as a mark of quality, signalling to cyclists that the facility is reliable and accommodating.
- Sustainable Tourism: Participation aligns businesses with eco-conscious tourism practices, appealing to environmentally aware travellers.
- Enhanced Revenue: By catering to the cycling community, businesses can attract a new and growing segment of travellers, boosting income and customer loyalty.

5. Challenges and Recommendations

While the Velo Popas certification offers numerous advantages, businesses should be prepared for certain challenges:

- Initial Investments: Upgrading facilities to meet the requirements, such as installing secure parking or purchasing repair tools, may require an upfront investment. With Velo Popas, criteria are particularly extensive and strict and leave little room for interpretation, so the investment might be even higher then with other schemes.
- Staff Training: Employees may need guidance on how to assist cyclists effectively and maintain the new amenities.
- Regular Maintenance: To retain certification, facilities must uphold standards and adapt to any updated criteria.





6. Further Information

- For details on the Velo Popas certification and requirements, visit the official website at https://velopopas.ro/en/certification/.
- Information of the certification process and the contract can be found here: https://velopopas.ro/en/certification-procedure/.

Summary

Across Europe, various cycling-friendly labels have been established to cater to the growing demand for cycling tourism. Programs, such as the "MPR" label in Poland, "Accueil Vélo" in France, "Bett+Bike" in Germany, Bienvenue velo in Wallonia and other national initiatives aim to provide cyclists with essential services, such as reliable accommodation, meals, and amenities that meet the specific needs of bike travellers. These schemes help promote cycling tourism by offering cyclists well-supported travel options across different regions, ensuring a consistent and enjoyable experience. The organization of the schemes is usually a combination of authorities and businesses, making them both public and private. Often, they are supported by tourism organizations or other public associations, while private companies, such as accommodations or other tourism service providers are also involved.

However, the diversity of these cycling-friendly programs presents challenges for both tourists and service providers. Each scheme has its own set of standards and requirements, which can create confusion for travellers seeking cross-border cycling routes. Service providers, too, must navigate multiple certification systems and adapt to varying expectations across regions. This complexity underscores the need for a more cohesive approach to cycling tourism across Europe.

The Hungarian government agency Aktív- és Ökoturisztikai Fejlesztési Központ (AÖFK), which focuses on the development of active and ecotourism, formulated the "European Cyclists Are Welcome" declaration in 2020. It dresses these challenges by providing a strategic framework to promote cycling as a sustainable and healthy mobility option. It calls for the expansion and integration of cycling infrastructure, the prioritization of





cycling in transportation policies, and the establishment of a unified, cohesive system that supports cycling tourism. The paper emphasizes collaboration among European countries and cities to harmonize cycling standards, making it easier for both cyclists and service providers to navigate the growing network of cycling-friendly programs. By supporting these initiatives and encouraging the sharing of best practices, the declaration aims to create a seamless, cross-border cycling experience that enhances accessibility, boosts local economies, and strengthens cycling tourism across Europe.¹⁰

Comparison of schemes

1. Accreditation Process:

All analysed schemes offer a similar application process. In all cases, a self-assessment is needed (e.g. via a provided forms) to apply. In the second step, criteria are checked by local managers or other organisation representatives. If all criteria are met, a contract is signed, and signs/stickers/other PR materials are delivered. The costs for companies are quite similar across the considered bicycle-friendly schemes. Most schemes charge an annual fee, for example, for listing on their website and providing logos for the companies. Additionally, there is usually a fee for the accreditation process. In some cases, these fees are combined, and only one fee is required. Typically, the fees are payable for one year.

2. Scope and Coverage:

- Accueil Vélo and Bett+Bike are established networks that cover large parts of their respective countries, with a broad range of accommodations and services catering to cyclists.
- MPR in Poland, while growing, is more regionally focused, targeting smaller businesses and local tourism infrastructure.

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 $^{^{\}rm 10}$ https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/Declaration_Final.pdf





- Bienvenue vélo has an established, well-working regional scheme.
- Bed+Bike Denmark, while covering the entire country, has limited partner
 establishments in the northern regions. Its activity has significantly declined,
 prompting discussions about replacing it with a different label to better meet the
 needs of cycling tourism.
- Velo Popas, a newly established initiative, currently has a limited number of participating establishments. However, through its collaboration with other Eastern European cycling-friendly schemes, it embraces a broader, cross-border approach to promoting cycling friendliness, fostering regional cooperation and connectivity for cyclists.

3. Requirements:

- Accueil Velo, Bienvenue velo, Bett + Bike, and velo popas, generally require more investments from businesses, such as offering indoor bike storage, healthy breakfast, tools for repairs, drying rooms, and providing cyclists with maps.
- MPR is more lenient in its requirements, making it easier for smaller businesses to
 obtain certification. It emphasizes essential services like bike storage, and local
 route information, as well as services that are already present in most businesses,
 such as one night only stays or contact to local service providers, but without the
 stringent standards found in other countries.

The excel sheet in the annex compares the requirements for hotels and accommodation to gain an overview of their strictness.





4. Market Focus:

- France, Belgium and Germany have long-established cycling tourism markets and thus have developed well-integrated, nationally recognized programs that attract both local and international cyclists.
- Poland and Romania are increasingly focusing on international cycling tourism, with many businesses catering to not only local, but also international cyclists and travellers.

5. Fees and Investment:

- Bett+Bike, velo popas and Accueil Vélo in France tend to have higher certification fees, reflecting the larger scale of their programs and the more extensive requirements for accreditation. On the other hand, those programs offer the most resources and guidance and are well established with dedicated human resources offering a high visibility to the SMEs.
- Poland's MPR and Bienvenue Vélo have no fees and more accessible entry points
 for smaller businesses, making it easier for them to participate. Funded through
 public money, these schemes typically do not need to charge for their services and
 are not required to operate as efficiently as profit-driven initiatives.

Conclusion

Each cycling-friendly label serves its unique purpose within the context of its country's tourism landscape. France's Accueil Vélo program and the participating countries in the Bett+Bike network offer comprehensive and well-established initiatives with extensive reach, catering to both domestic and international cyclists. Similarly, Bienvenue Vélo is a well-developed program; however, its scope is limited to a regional level. Poland (MPR), by contrast, provides a simpler, more localized certification scheme, making it an attractive option for smaller businesses in Poland's emerging cycling tourism market.





Romania has a very extensive scheme but is also still gaining momentum with a currently limited number of participating SMEs.

Notably, the coexistence of public and private initiatives across Europe reflects an interesting dynamic in cycling tourism development. In some cases, private stakeholders aiming for profit have positioned themselves effectively where the tourism sector has been less organized, filling crucial gaps in the market. This highlights the potential for collaborative efforts between public and private actors to strengthen cycling infrastructure and services further.

While regional labels, like those in Belgium, can work well in smaller countries with defined regions, establishing national labels is generally preferable. National labels provide clearer branding, reduce confusion for cyclists and service providers, and ensure consistency across broader areas, which is particularly important for larger countries or those with emerging cycling tourism sectors.

In conclusion, while the cycling-friendly certification programs vary in terms of structure, requirements, and scope, all of them contribute to the development of cycling tourism by ensuring cyclists have access to essential services and amenities. These labels not only support cyclists on their travels but also help local businesses tap into the growing market of cycling tourism, creating a more sustainable and connected tourism sector across Europe.





Summary of local workshops

Introduction

Within the BBU project, regional workshops were held from March to June 2024 by project partners. These workshops brought together stakeholders to address regional challenges and opportunities related to infrastructure improvements, SME collaboration, and marketing strategies. A key focus of the workshops was the exploration of regional and national cycling-friendly schemes, assessing their implementation and effectiveness in addressing local needs. The key findings from these discussions are briefly summarized in this report, providing valuable context for the comparison of these schemes.

The report synthesizes these findings to underscore regional differences, common challenges, and best practices. By integrating insights from the workshops, it highlights how cycling-friendly schemes are perceived and utilized in practice, offering actionable recommendations to strengthen cross-border cooperation, improve cyclist services, and position the South Baltic Area as a prime cycling destination. Since the workshops were organized regionally by the above-mentioned project partners Visit Lolland Falster, Region Blekinge, Association Klaipeda Region, City of Barth and Zachodniopomorskie Region, they focused solely on the partner areas and do not reflect nationwide challenges or highlights.

Infrastructure Development

Germany:

- Highlighted challenges include uneven cycling infrastructure and inadequate facilities like e-bike charging stations and secure parking. Infrastructure gaps in northern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern were noted as a priority.
- Successful initiatives like "star tours" (based at a single location with day trips in various directions) reduce one-night stays and enhance convenience.
- Poor signage along EuroVelo10 requires improvement.





Denmark:

- Infrastructure is robust in regions like South Jutland, supported by long-term planning and collaboration between public and private stakeholders.
- Investment in seamless connectivity between cycling routes and public transport (e.g., integrating bicycles into buses and trains) has been key.
- Regional efforts focus on combining infrastructure with eco-friendly tourism, such
 as glamping and luggage transport services.

Lithuania:

- Infrastructure lags behind other regions, with disconnected cycle paths and insufficient signage.
- Participants criticized aggressive driving culture and limited government prioritization of cycling over car infrastructure.
- Proposed solutions include installing repair stations and integrating alternative routes for better connectivity.

Poland:

- Focus on "Cyclist-Friendly Places" (CFP) certification to ensure high-quality infrastructure and services, including safe storage and repair facilities.
- Gaps in route continuity due to inconsistent municipal funding complicate infrastructure development.
- No website for the entire EuroVelo 10/13 route in Poland.
- Demand for cohesive, high-standard routes was emphasized.

Sweden:

- Established infrastructure in regions like Skåne serves as a model, but Blekinge and northern areas require significant upgrades.
- Stress on circular cycling routes and local stakeholder collaboration to strengthen inter-regional connectivity.





 Infrastructure needs include well-placed rest areas and integration with public transport systems.

SME Collaboration and Service Improvement

Germany:

- SMEs face challenges like limited cooperation, lack of marketing resources, and the financial burden of accommodating one-night stays.
- Suggestions include joint marketing initiatives, increased visibility on platforms, and creating a network to facilitate shared services.

Denmark:

- Local businesses collaborate effectively to create cycling packages and provide services like luggage transport, enhancing the tourism ecosystem.
- Strong networks among SMEs and DMOs contribute to successful partnerships.

Lithuania:

- SMEs operate independently, with limited awareness or willingness to collaborate.
 Better communication and shared platforms are needed to address gaps.
- Service providers expressed interest in capacity-building programs to understand cyclist needs better.

Poland:

- CFP certification promotes collaboration among businesses by setting clear standards for services like secure parking, one-day stays, and repair assistance.
- SMEs require support in international promotion and aligning with EuroVelo10 standards.





Sweden:

- Regional networks of SMEs collaborate on local digital platforms, but broader integration across regions is necessary.
- Packages combining cycling, accommodations, and attractions are recommended for tourist engagement.

Marketing and Visibility

Germany:

- Marketing efforts focus on utilizing digital platforms like social media and websites to promote cycle-friendly services.
- Tailored campaigns targeting niche cycling tourism markets were suggested.

Denmark:

- DMOs lead promotional activities by showcasing cycling as a year-round activity and collaborating with tour operators.
- Creative initiatives, such as bike rental partnerships and event-based tourism, have proven successful.

Lithuania:

- Visibility issues stem from a lack of national promotion, compounded by international safety concerns (e.g. geopolitical tensions).
- Participants recommended focused campaigns to rebuild trust among foreign tourists.





Poland:

- Media campaigns and CFP branding are critical to motivating businesses to upgrade and market their services.
- Strong emphasis on creating a recognizable cycling identity for regions.

Sweden:

- Effective use of online platforms like Komoot and national cycling guides (e.g., Naturkartan) promoes regional routes and facilities.
- Marketing efforts need to align local and regional messaging for a cohesive image.

Public-Private Partnerships

Germany:

 Public authorities play a limited but essential role in funding infrastructure and fostering regional collaboration.

Denmark:

- Regional authorities are instrumental in aligning public and private efforts for longterm maintenance and expansion of routes.
- Partnerships focus on integrating cycling with other modes of transport, such as rail and ferry systems.

Lithuania:

- A fragmented national approach hinders collaboration between municipalities and ministries, leading to inefficient development.
- Proposed solutions include designating a central coordinating body for EuroVelo
 10 routes.





Poland:

- Collaboration between local and voivodeship authorities addresses gaps in infrastructure, with co-funding for key projects.
- Long-term strategies to involve SMEs and DMOs in promoting cycling routes were highlighted.

Sweden:

- Cross-regional partnerships aim to connect cycling routes with public transport and create seamless travel experiences.
- Public authorities are encouraged to invest in mapping tools and marketing to unify regional efforts.

Target Groups and Customer Preferences

Germany:

- Tourists prioritize secure bike storage, flexible one-night stays, and e-bike charging. Long-term cooperation with package tour operators is key.
- Younger tourists demand more flexible and budget-friendly services.

Denmark:

• Families and retirees are core demographics. Cyclists appreciate comprehensive packages, including luggage transport and accommodation flexibility.

Lithuania:

 Cyclists prioritize safety, good infrastructure, and clear signage. Repair services and bike rental options are in demand.





Poland:

- CFP certification identifies varying tourist needs, from high-end services to budget-friendly options like camping.
- The seaside area in Poland is the main holiday destination, which results in limited access to services from day to day.
- Transit cyclists often face challenges with limited accommodation options.

Sweden:

• Two main groups identified: hardcore cyclists (long distances, minimal services) and leisure tourists (short trips, attractions, and food-focused).

Conclusion

The Baltic Biking Upgrade workshops demonstrated both promising developments and areas for growth across the EuroVelo 10 route. While regions like Denmark and Sweden exhibit established practices, Lithuania and Poland are advancing rapidly, building foundational infrastructure and fostering collaboration to unlock their potential in cycling tourism. Common across all regions is the enthusiasm to strengthen SME networks, enhance marketing strategies, and invest in cyclist-friendly infrastructure. With these shared efforts, the South Baltic area can emerge as a cohesive, world-class destination for sustainable cycling experiences.

Disclaimer

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All foreground intellectual property, i.e. outputs created within a South Balticproject, must be made publicly available.

Annex: Criteria of various cycling-friendly schemes

Y- mandatony	A- additional			
x=manuatory			•	
ADFC Bett + Bike		bienvenue velo	velo popas	Acceul Velo
Germany, Denmark,				
	Delegal	Dalaina Wallana	Di-	France
italy, Belgium	roland	beigium, waliona	Komania	rrance
X			X	
v			v	x
				X
^	^			^
v		^		
		v		X
^			A (or possibility to cook)	×
			Δ.	X (refreshments offered)
v			^	X (refreshinents offered)
^			v	X (itinerary planning)
		^	^	A (Itilierary planning)
	X (repairshop contact)	X	X	X
		X		
A		Α	X	X
A	X			
		X	A	X (5 km)
	X			
				X
At leat 3 additional				
		A	A	
A		A	A	
A				
A				
			А	
		A		
			A	
A		Α		
A		A		
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A		A A	A	
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