Cycle route quality through field surveys

Practical examples using the European Certification Standard (ECS)



25 November 2026
Webinar

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EuroVelo.com

Welcome

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Introduction

Alexandra Fournier
EuroVelo & Projects Officer at ECF

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EuroVelo and ECF: who we are and what we do?

- Initiative coordinated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), the voice of civil society on cycling in Europe
- Created in 1997, EuroVelo will be **30** next year!
- **17** routes in **39** countries, 19 by 2029
- **92,500+** km of cycle routes - **55,300+** km of fully developed routes (60%) - **42,800+** km signed with EuroVelo signs (46%)
- A backbone for national cycle route networks
- Transport and tourism network
- A **professional community** on cycling tourism



EuroVelo, the European cycle route network (2026)

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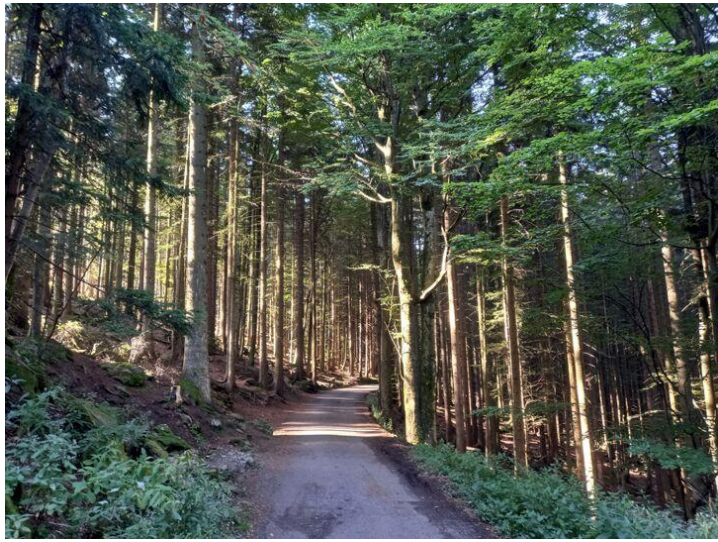
Cycle routes: a variety of realities behind one word





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VS



ECS surveys in Slovenia



© Steve Buchsbaum

Cycle route quality through field surveys

A variety of cycle routes within one network



EuroVelo 6 - ECS survey in France



EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in Portugal



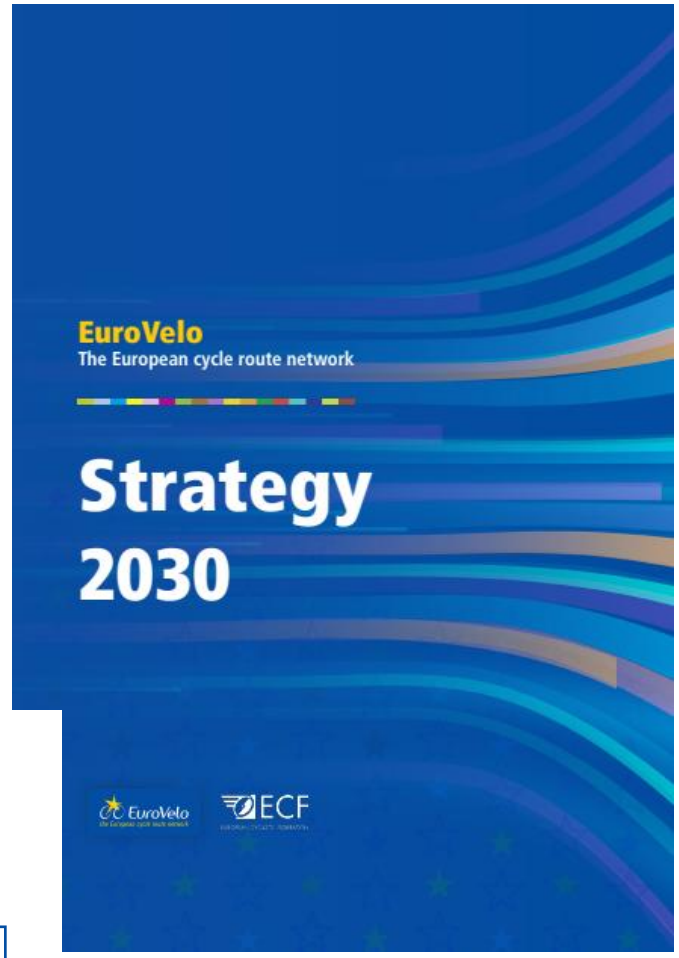
Alexandra Fournier / EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route in Switzerland



EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route in Finland

Why a focus on quality?

- ECF's mission: More and better cycling for all



EuroVelo

Vision

Our vision for EuroVelo is for a fully developed and high quality European cycle route network, which is well-connected to national, regional and local cycle route networks and other sustainable modes of transport, driving further increases in everyday cycling and cycling tourism, in line with ECF's vision to improve and increase cycling across the whole of Europe.

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Cycle route quality through field surveys

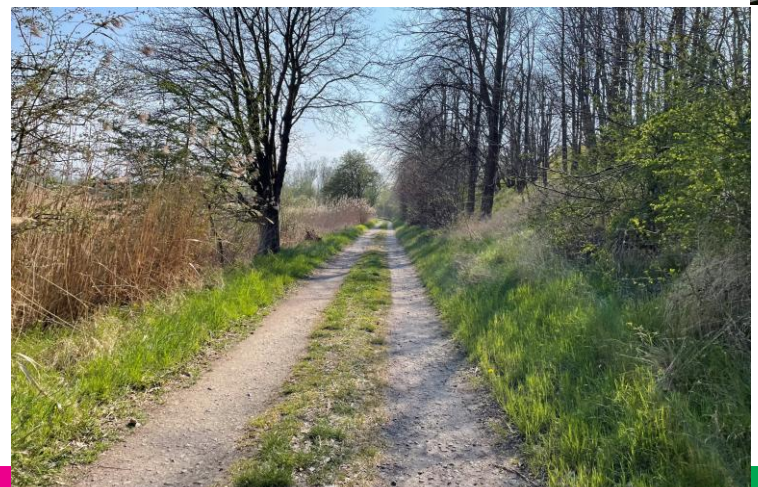
Quality depends on different practical aspects and can be subjective













A European context: how can we compare and improve the quality?

ECS born from the need for **standards** of what is a qualitative cycle route and the need for a unique and comprehensive **methodology** to assess the **quality of EuroVelo and other cycle routes.**

Flexible tool fitting:

- different contexts, levels of development and needs

Built upon ADFC methodology -
First version in 2015. Latest update: **April 2026**



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Quality is subjective: a focus on users with criteria reflecting the needs of three groups through three levels of criteria

Families and users of non-standard cycles



Occasional



Experienced



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Cycle route quality through field surveys

Concretely, what is ECS?

2.1 Quality criteria – infrastructure

2.1.1 Continuity

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: The route does not contain any physical disruptions that make it impossible to travel on, such as fences, barriers, permanent flooding, big hole, etc. There are no legal disruptions (i.e. sections where entry is forbidden). All natural (river, cliff etc.) or artificial (railway, motorway, tunnel, etc.) barriers can be crossed with adequate cycling infrastructure or service (bridge, underpass, ferry, bus service, etc.). Cyclists are not required to dismount more than 10 times per daily section for a total of maximum 500 m.

IMPORTANT CRITERIA: If there are stairs on the route (e.g. to access a bridge), they must qualify as "easy", i.e.: Have an incline (height to horizontal length ratio) of 25% or lower, be equipped with a comfortable wide ramp or channel, and have enough clearance (distance from wall or other obstacles) to push a loaded cycle.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: The route is free of any disruptions (e.g. stairs, steps, gates or chicanes with less than 1.3 m clearance) and of slopes with a gradient of more than 6% in any direction that would make it impossible to ride for families with trailers and users of non-standard cycles. Cyclists are not required to dismount at all.

2.1.2 Route components

Segments where cyclists ride on the carriageway are assigned to one of five traffic categories: from very low to very high traffic according to tables 1 and 2 (see below, in section 2.1.3 Traffic category depending on speed and volume of traffic). Segments where cyclists are physically separated from motor vehicle traffic (cycle tracks, cycle and pedestrian tracks, greenways etc.) are considered traffic-free.

Crossings are classified as safe, dangerous or very dangerous, based on the risk and potential severity of an accident.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: The route does not contain any sections with very high traffic. No more than 50% of the length of a daily section features high traffic. The route does not include any crossing classified as very dangerous.

IMPORTANT CRITERIA: The route does not contain any sections with high traffic. No more than 50% of the length of a daily section features moderate traffic.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: The route does not contain any sections with moderate traffic. No more than 50% of the length of a daily section features low traffic. The route does not include any crossings classified as dangerous. The (effective) width allows for a smooth traffic of non-standard cycles everywhere, i.e.:

- One-way cycle lanes are at least 1.5 m wide if motorised traffic speed limits are 50 km/h or less, and 2 m wide if above 50 km/h.
- One-way cycle tracks are at least 1.5 m wide and two-way cycle tracks are at least 2.5 m wide.
- One-way cycle and pedestrian tracks are at least 2 m wide and two-way cycle and pedestrian tracks are at least 3 m wide.

2.3 Quality criteria – public transport access

2.3.1 Public transport

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: Carrying a non-dismantled bicycle on public transport to access the route is legally and physically possible at least every 150 km. There are at least two reliable services a day during the local cycling tourism season each allowing to carry a minimum of four non-dismantled bicycles.

IMPORTANT CRITERIA: Carrying a non-dismantled bicycle on public transport to access the route is legally and physically possible at least every 75 km. There are at least four reliable services a day during the local cycling tourism season each allowing to carry a minimum of four non-dismantled bicycles. If there are stairs to access the platform or enter the ferry, they must qualify as "easy", i.e.: Have an incline (height to horizontal length ratio) of 25% or lower, be equipped with a comfortable wide ramp or channel, have enough clearance (distance from wall or other obstacles) to push a loaded bicycle.

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: Carrying trailers and handbikes on public transport to access the route is legally and physically possible at least every 75 km. There are at least six reliable services a day during the local cycling tourism season each allowing to carry a minimum of four non-dismantled cycles. Cyclists are not required to carry their cycle up/down stairs to access the platform or enter the ferry (i.e. there is a lift wide enough for non-standard cycles or a ramp).

The accessibility of public transport stops and stations considered for the above criteria shall meet the continuity criteria on the respective level (e.g. if a train station is considered for the additional criteria, platforms must be accessible by ramps or lifts, not only stairs).

2.4 Quality criteria – services

2.4.1 Accommodation

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: At least one camping, budget or standard accommodation is available on every daily section. Accommodation considered should be available for one-night stays.

IMPORTANT CRITERIA: At least budget or standard accommodation is available on every daily section (choice is not limited to camping).

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: At least one accommodation included in a cycling-friendly label is available on every daily section.

2.4.2 Food, drinking water and rest areas

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: It is possible to find reasonably priced food and drinking water on every daily section (i.e. there is at least either a standard restaurant/bar or a snack-bar/café – including supermarkets).

IMPORTANT CRITERIA: There is at least one complete rest area (i.e. including at least table and benches and shelter) on every daily section. There are toilets available at least every 15 km (public or in restaurants/cafés).

ADDITIONAL CRITERIA: It is possible to find a reasonably priced warm meal on each daily section (i.e. a standard restaurant/bar). Food (either standard restaurant/bar or snack-bar/café) or a complete rest area is available every 15 km. Drinking water is available every 15 km.



A list of criteria: the standards

The criteria categories of ECS

Infrastructure

Safety

- Route continuity and obstacles
- Traffic safety: route components, width and traffic volumes
- Surface
- Elevation
- Signing

Attractiveness

Public transport access

Services

- Accommodation
- Food, drinking water and rest areas
- Cycle repair and charge
- Cycle parking

Promotion & Marketing

- Information along the route
- Online communication
- Guidebooks and printed maps

EuroVelo the European cycle route network
ECF EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION
Life
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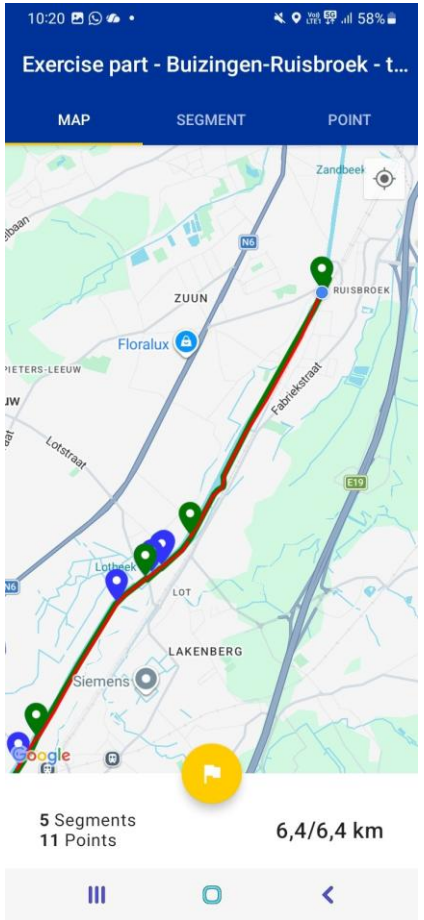
Concretely, what is ECS?

- **An ECS Survey app**: only trained Route Inspectors are allowed to undertake ECS surveys





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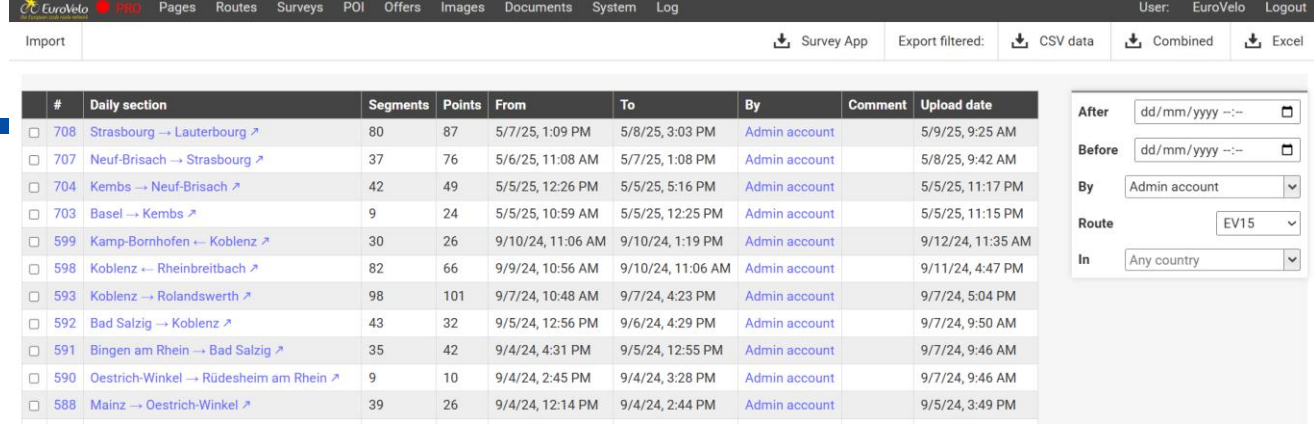
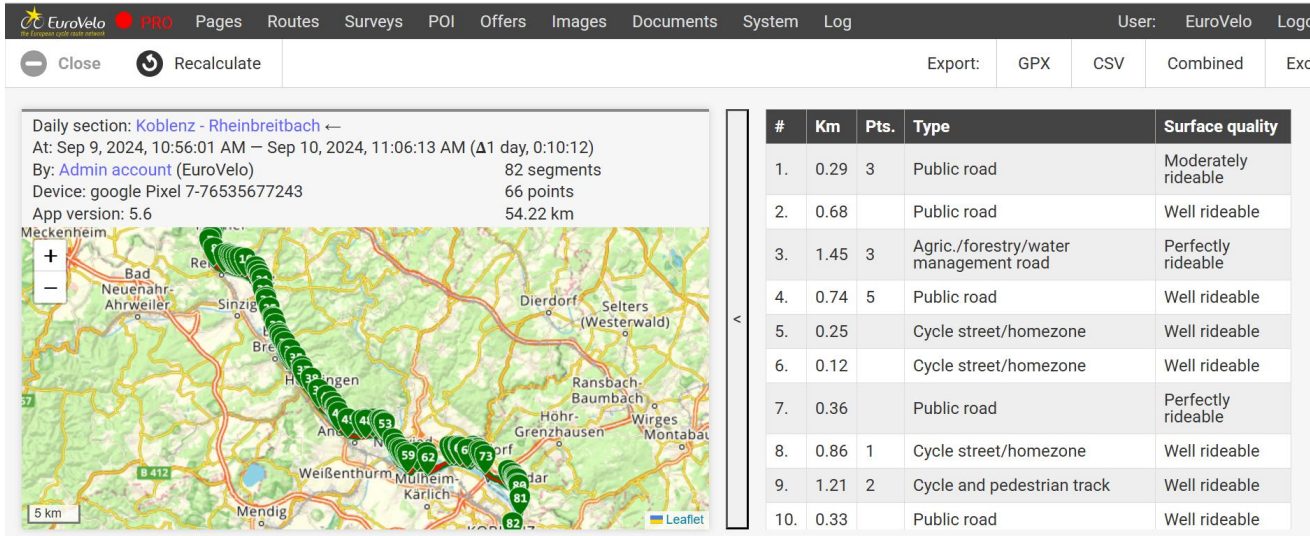
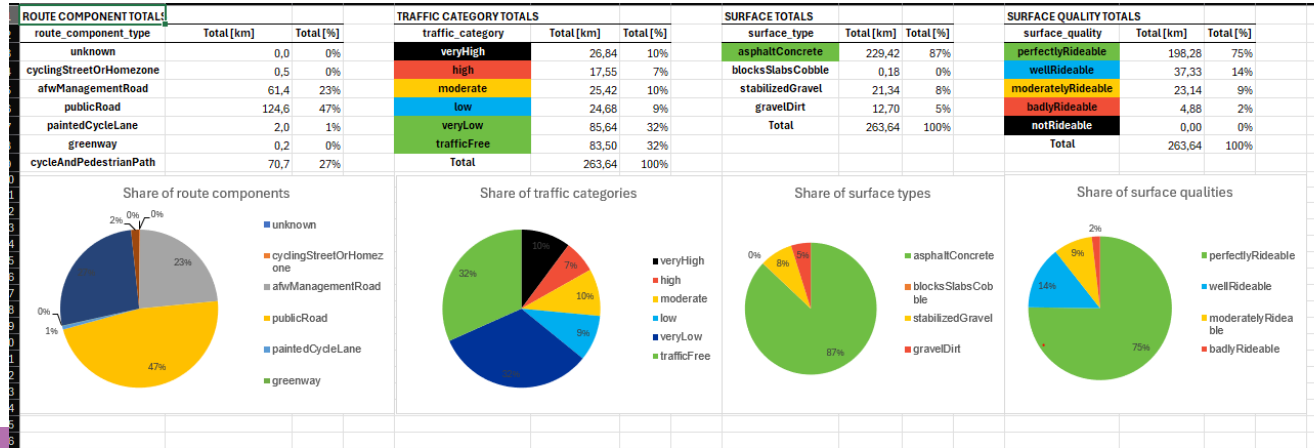
Cycle route quality through field surveys

Concretely, what is ECS?

- An ECS Database - customed system integrating analysis tools







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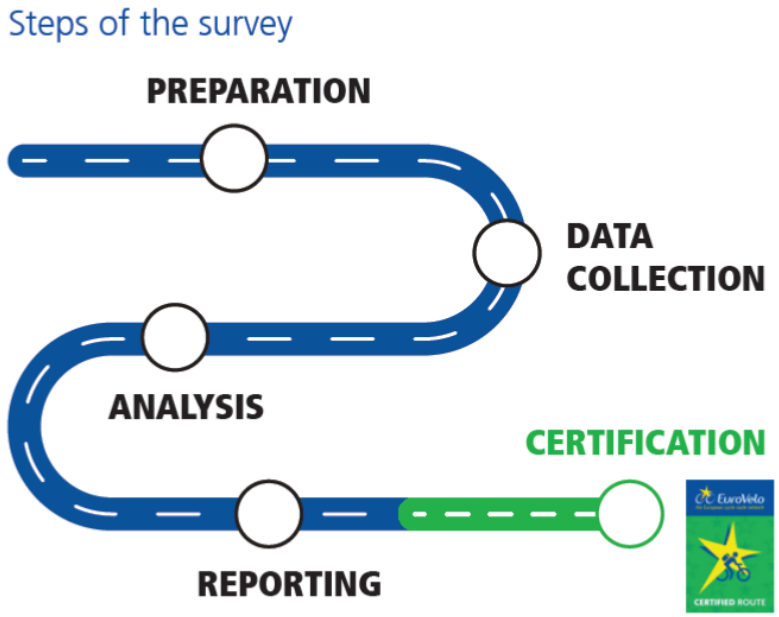
ECS survey in practice



1. Preparation:

- **ECS licence contract** with ECF
- **EuroVelo Route Inspectors** training / recruitment
- Defining the **objectives and ambition:** communication with ECF (GPX tracks, survey structure)

2. Data collection

- ECS App (on-site survey)
- Additional desktop research

3. Data correction and ECS analysis

4. Reporting:

- Route Evaluation Report, Action Plan, etc.

Additional: EuroVelo Certification application

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An important distinction: Survey vs EuroVelo Certification

Survey:

- Process of **collecting and evaluating route data** described in ECS manuals
- Summary of areas for **improvements**
- But it **can also be used outside the EuroVelo network /** at an **early development stage** to identify **investment needs**
- A survey is always required for the certification of EuroVelo routes

Certification:

- Only for **EuroVelo routes** (min. 100 km)
- Requires a specific application with detailed Route Evaluation Report
- Fixed fee of 5,000€
- Confirmation that **the route meets a certain level of ECS quality criteria**
- Valid for 5 years

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What are the uses of ECS?

- **Planning stage**: Identify the best itinerary for a cycle route between several options
- **Developed route stage**:

Provide **detailed knowledge** of the cycle route's conditions: identify strong and weak points

Help public authorities **improve the quality of a route**: identify development needs and **plan priority investments**

- Enable applying for **EuroVelo certification**
  - ✓ Communication tool for end users



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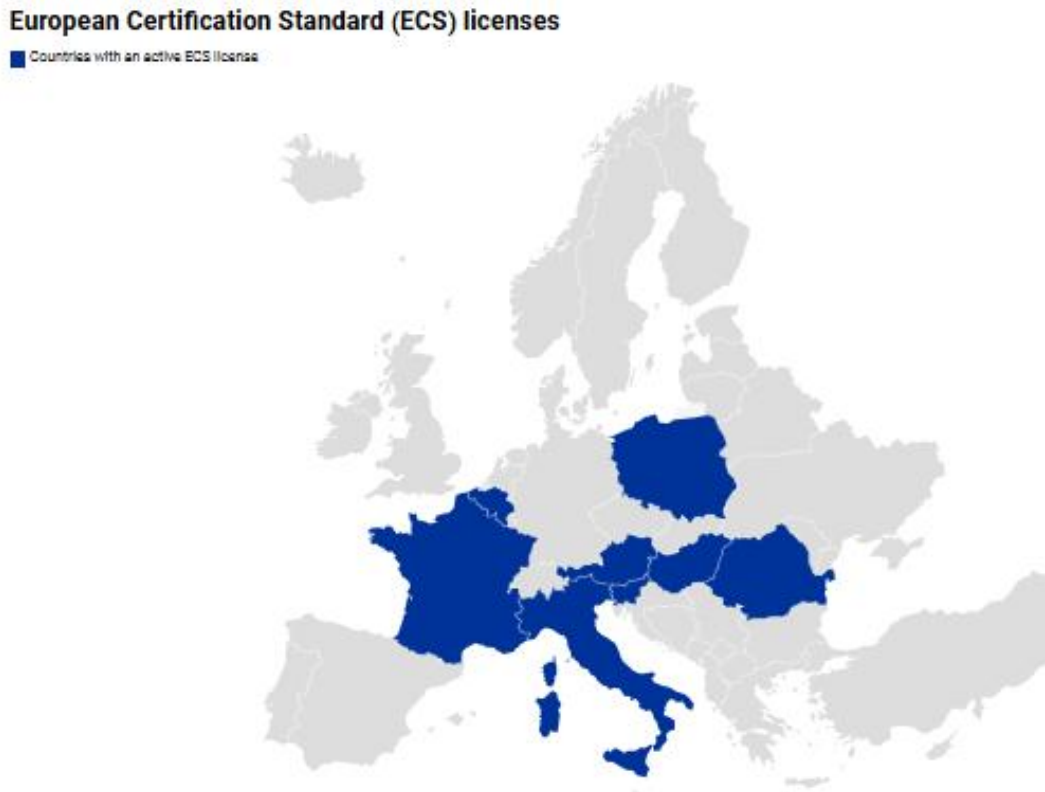
For whom is ECS?

- Cycle route managers (of EuroVelo or other cycle routes)
- Infrastructure authorities (national, regional, etc)
- Consultancy companies specialised
- EU funded projects managers
- National EuroVelo Coordination Centres (NECCs)
- Associations lobbying for more investments in cycling infrastructure

Using ECS tools **requires the purchase of an ECS licence directly from ECF** (usually per country), or to obtain authorisation from the active ECS licence holder.



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Cycle route quality through field surveys

ECS key figures

- **10 years methodology**
- Ongoing ECS app **licenses** in **8 countries**
- **184 EuroVelo Route Inspectors from 29 countries** with active certificates
- 319 persons trained in total, through 15 training sessions
- **20,000+ km** of cycle routes surveyed with ECS
- ECS principles included in **UNECE work on cycling infrastructure**

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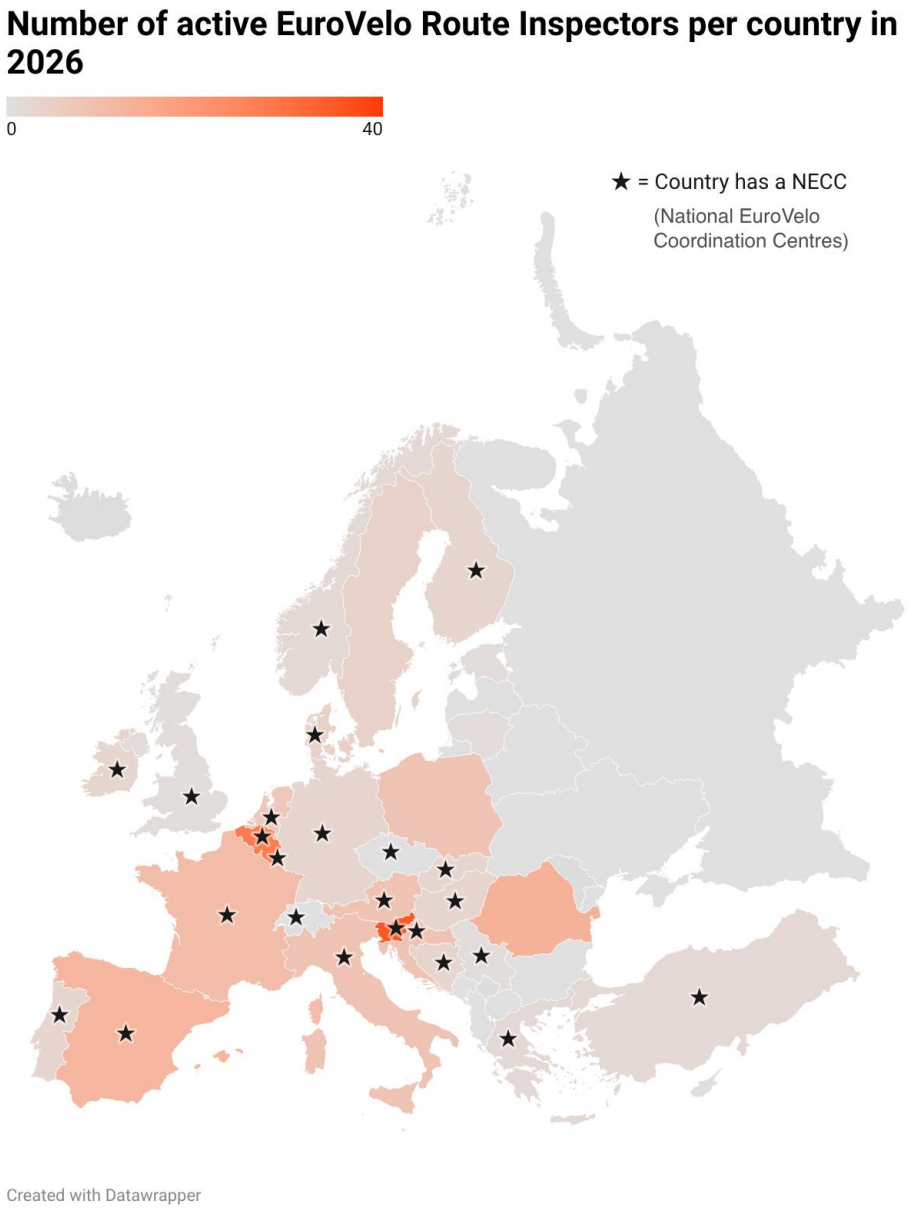

Advantages and specificities of ECS

- Based on a **physical survey by bicycle**: focused on the user's perspective
- **Clear methodology** & **easy to adapt** to specific needs of the organisation requesting the survey (focus on certain aspects of the cycle route or more general)
- **Developed at European scale**:
  - Easy comparison with other countries/regions/etc.
  - High potential reach for European users
- **Mutualisation of future developments and improvements** of the methodology at European level (reducing the costs for innovations)



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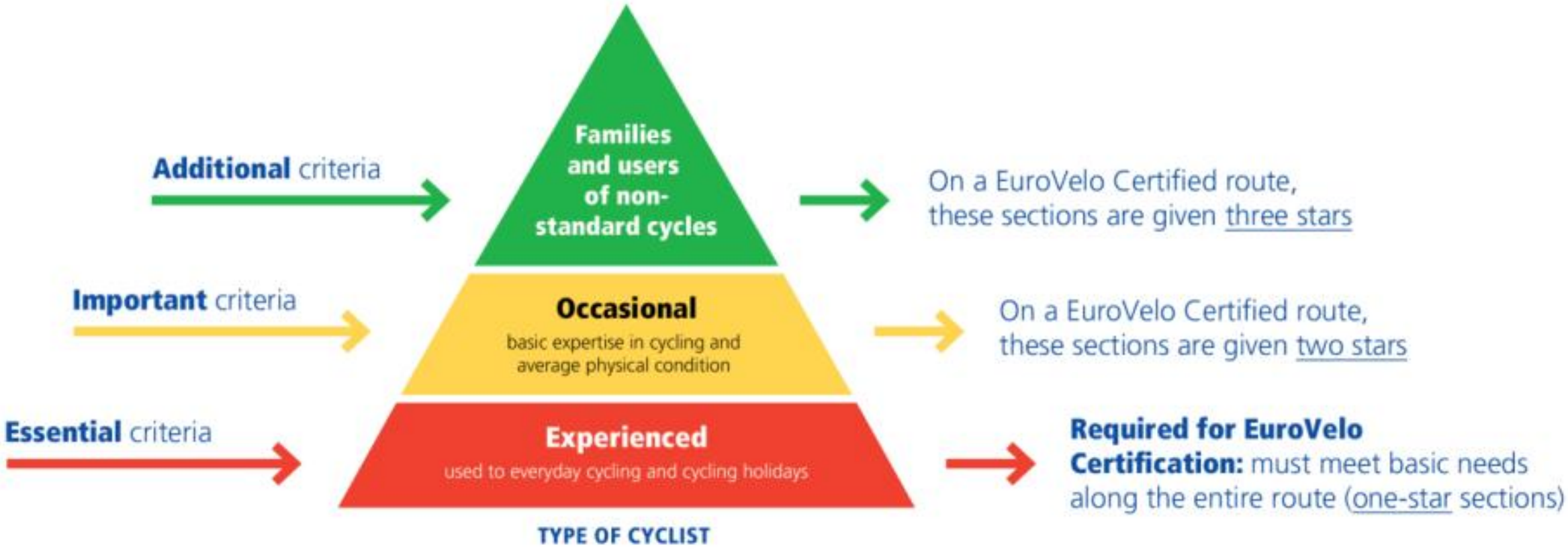
Three user groups - 3 levels of criteria



Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

a.fournier@ecf.com

Support us to connect Europe by bicycle!

Follow EuroVelo on

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Practical examples of ECS usage

Florence Grégoire
EuroVelo & Projects Officer at ECF

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ECS usage on EuroVelo routes: example from Austria

- **Quality analysis** part of the **Austrian NECC strategy for 2030**
  - ➢ 7-year ECS Licence purchased by Energy Agency – trust in the methodology
- **ECS surveys** since 2023
- Start with 2 Inspectors, 2 more since 2025
- Outputs:
  - **Concrete recommendations** on signage issues, high traffic speeds, bad surface quality, etc.
  - Route changes
- **Communication** with responsible authorities to implement action plans



Figure: © OpenStreetMap Contributors | eurovelo.at

Source: Velo-city 2026 presentation from Heidi Schmitt, Radlobby Austria

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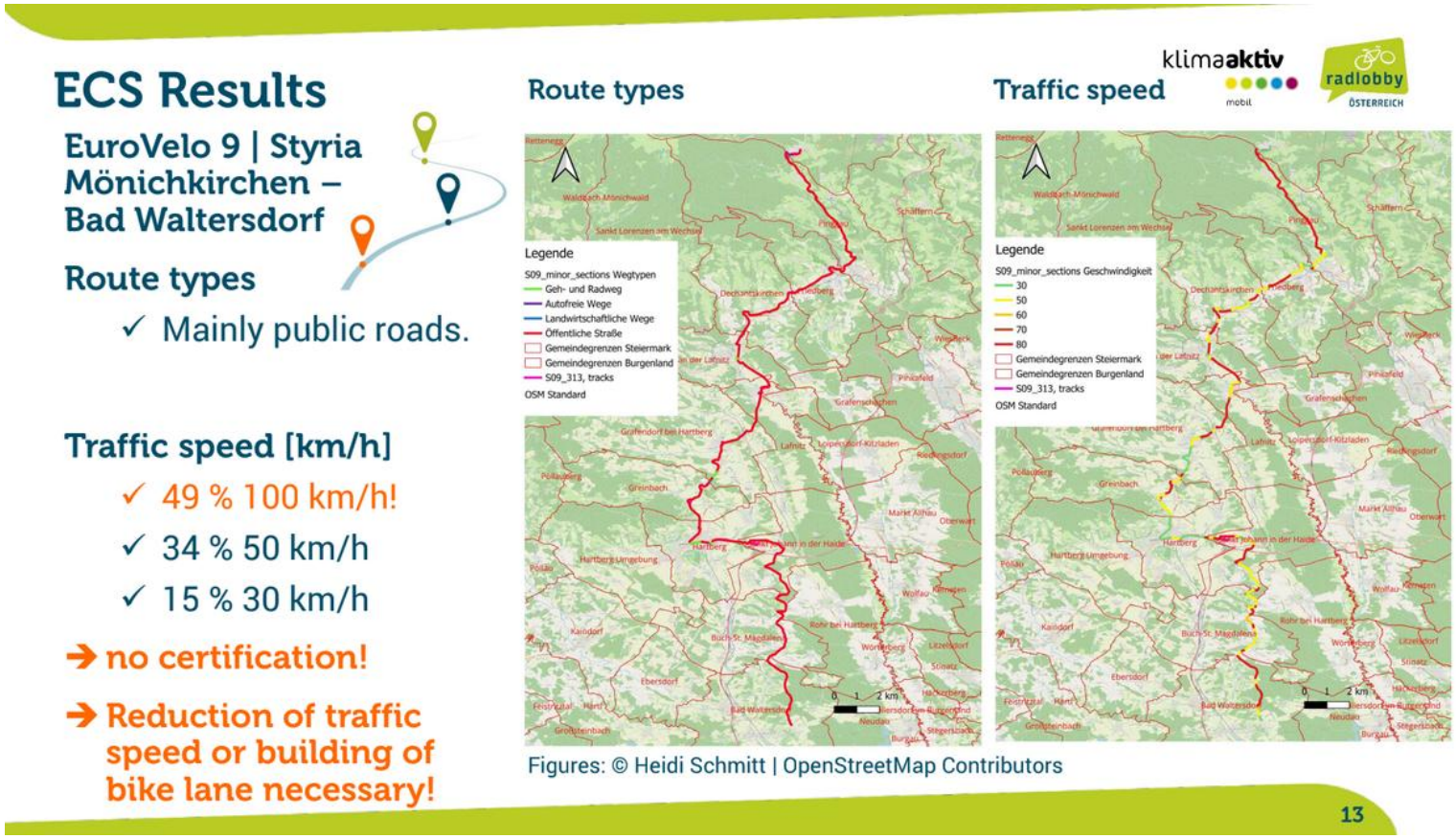
ECS usage on EuroVelo routes: example from Austria

- Survey results: possibility of generating **clear summaries and maps of main issues** per commune, region, province, etc.
- Useful to **communicate results** to responsible authorities and tourism organisations



Source: EuroVelo GIS Subgroup 2024 presentation from Heidi Schmitt, Radlobby Austria

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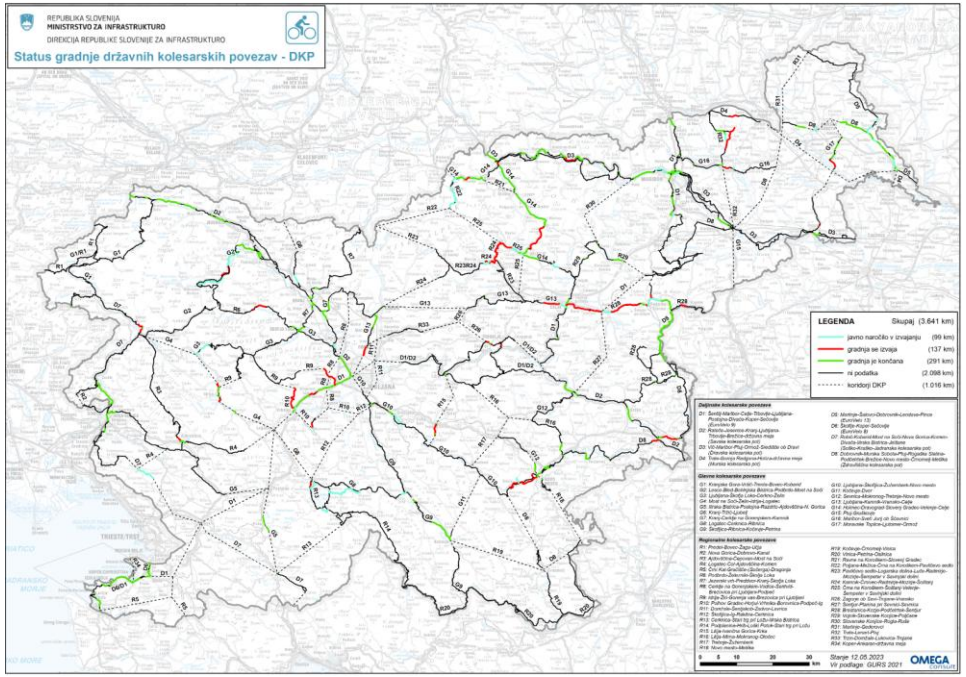
ECS usage on other cycle routes: example from Slovenia

- **Regional mobility centers** since 2025, responsible for **national cycle routes assessment using ECS**
- 2 ad-hoc trainings organised
  - ➢ **Over 40 Inspectors in Slovenia!**
  - ➢ Ongoing surveys: 24 daily sections done
- Funds from **ReMOBIL project** (Iceland Liechtenstein Norway grants)
- ECS used to **assess cycle routes quality**, but also to establish **common knowledge on quality standards**



Source: Velo-city 2026 presentation from Gregor Steklačič, Slovenian Ministry of Infrastructure and Energy

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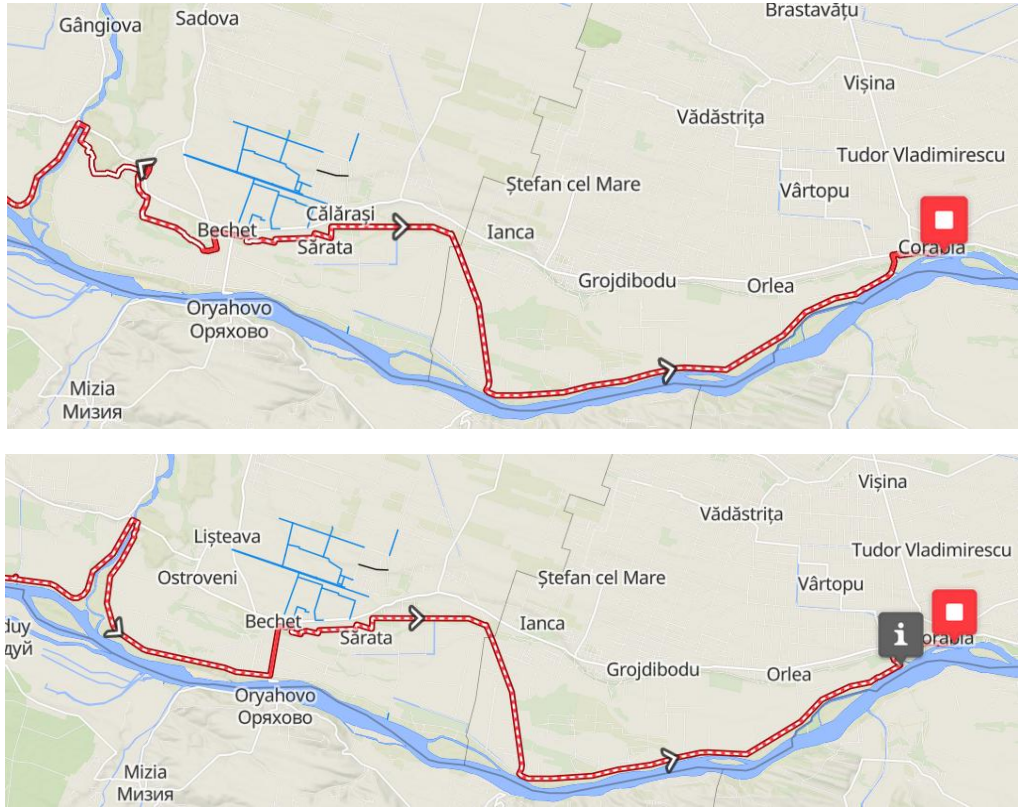
ECS at an early route development stage: example from Romania

- Initial itinerary for EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea surveyed in 2025
  - ➢ **Critical issues identified**
  - ➢ **Identification of better corridor** but issue of crossing private properties
- Feasibility study: plans to survey alternative route

ECS useful to compare alternative itineraries and find the best one from a user's perspective and a costs perspective



Source: « Official route » vs « Ideal route » from Bike in Time on RideWithGPS

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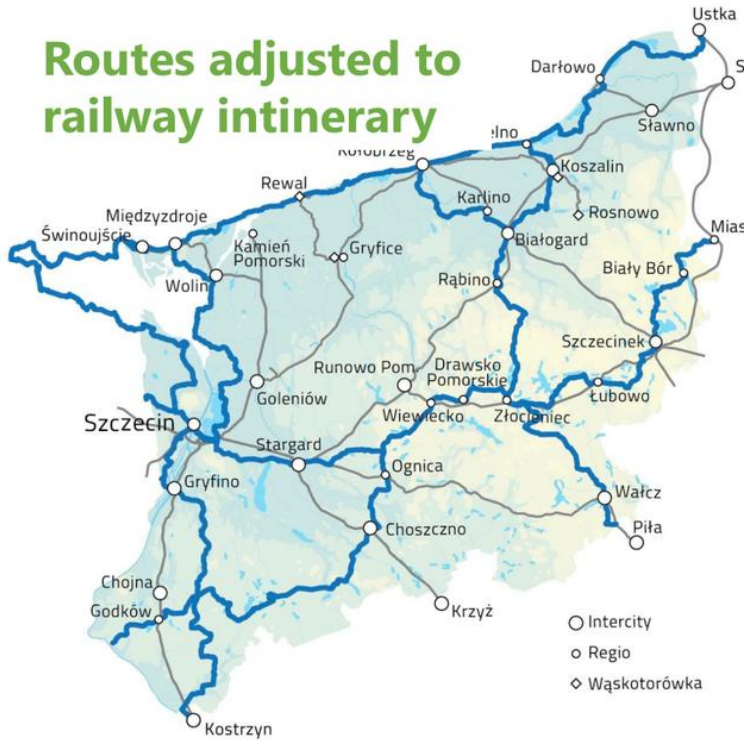
ECS as a cycle network improvement tool: example from Poland – it goes also beyond infrastructure







Source: Velo-city 2026 presentation from Wanda Nowotarska, Head of the Regional Cycling Office, West Pomerania, Poland

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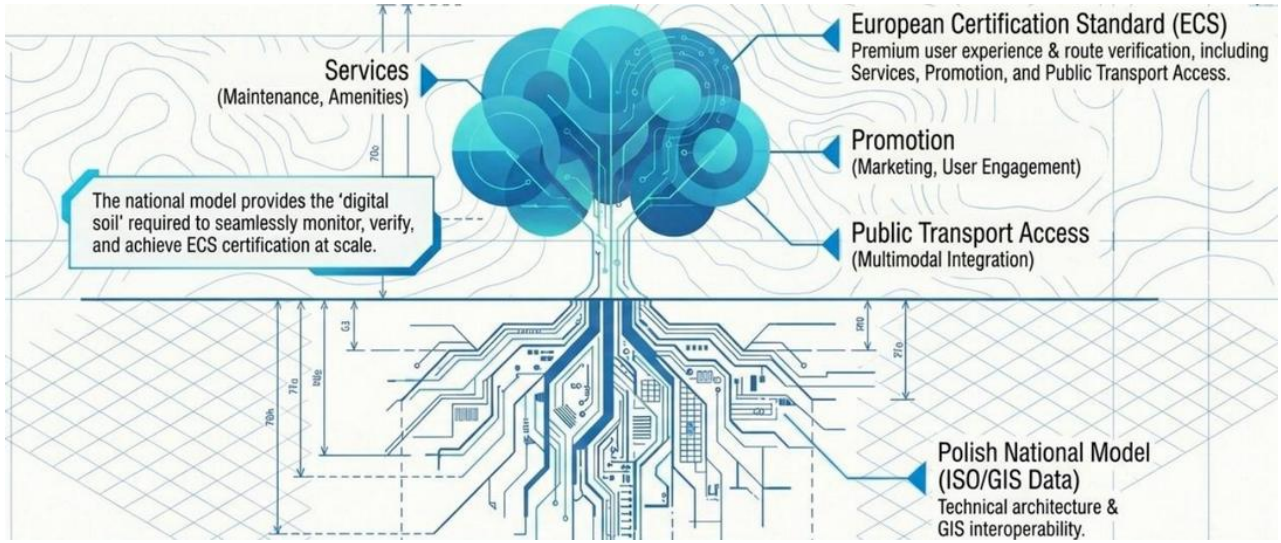
ECS as a cycle network improvement tool: example from Poland

- New Polish National Model for describing cycle routes
- **ECS logic and criteria** integrated into the model
  - ECS can guide the creation of a DB in countries that are lacking it
  - Establishment of initial standards
  - Technical framework
  - Flexibility and adaptability to local context



Source: Velo-city 2026 presentation from Sylwia Skuta, Polish Tourism Organisation

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ECS usage for EuroVelo Certification: example from France

- **EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in France (*La Vélodyssée*) certified in 2024**
- Survey results = basis for a process of assisting territories in the resolution of **critical issues identified in the ECS survey**
- Justification of resolution, providing evidence through pictures, work plans, etc.
- **EuroVelo Certification label awarded for 5 years**
  - List of attention points to follow-up on in order to ensure a continued high quality for the route



La Vélodyssée has just been awarded the EuroVelo Certification! The EuroVelo Certification guarantees that cycle routes meet high quality standards. This label certifies that the routes are well developed, that the services are adapted to cycle travel and that the signposting is clear for all types of cyclist. Find out more: **https://www.lavelodyssee.com/certificati EuroVelo**

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ECS usage for EuroVelo Certification: example from France

PHOTO DE LA NON-CONFORMITÉ



PHOTO APRÈS CORRECTION



Source: Rapport de résolution du Plan d'Action pour la Certification EuroVelo, La Vélodyssée, 2024

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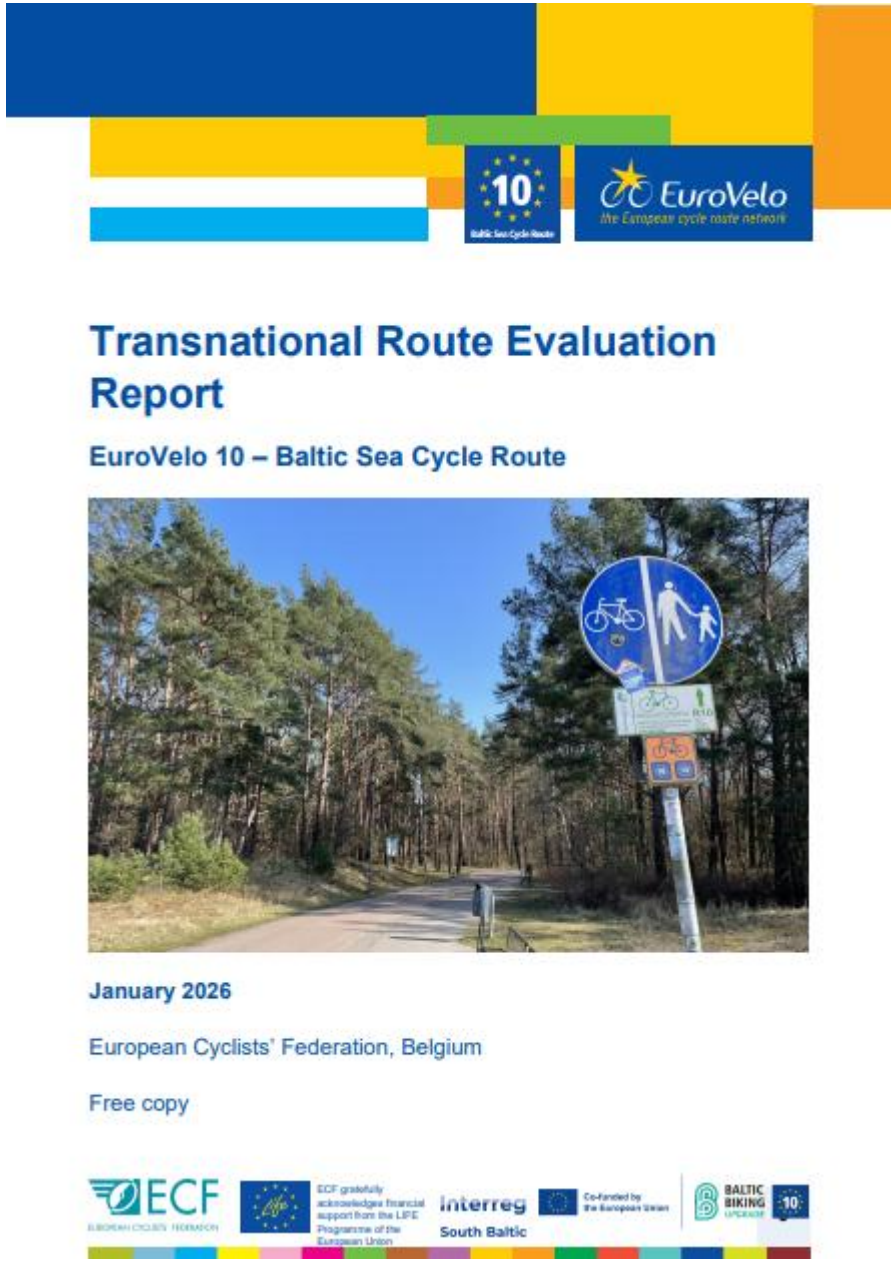

ECS included in EU projects

- ECS trainings and surveys can be included in EU projects
  - ➢ Big help for gathering funds
- Latest example: **BikingBalticUpgrade (BBU) project**
  - ➢ +2,600 km of EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route surveyed
  - ➢ Main strengths: majority of route is traffic-free and 82% on perfect or good surfaces
  - ➢ Lists areas for improvements

EuroVelo the European cycle route network

ECF EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION

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17170	54,31699841 13,34387637	Moderately rideable; Insufficient width; Chicanes or poles x1.	
17171	54,31508576 13,34386569	Moderately rideable; Insufficient width. 80 cm each	

Cycle route quality through field surveys

In Route Evaluation Reports, any issue preventing the route from meeting ECS criteria is identified and localised

Examples from the BBU report



Narrow painted bikelane between Bunkeflostrand and Kämpinge



Physical disruption forcing the cyclist to dismount and carry the bike over the railway.

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ECS surveys by ECF team

- ECF can take care of field surveys and/or data analysis (consultancy work)
- Latest example: **EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route recertification** in Switzerland, France and part of Germany

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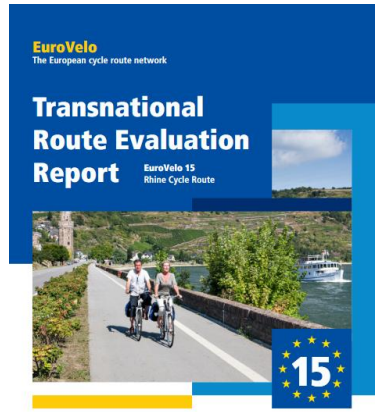
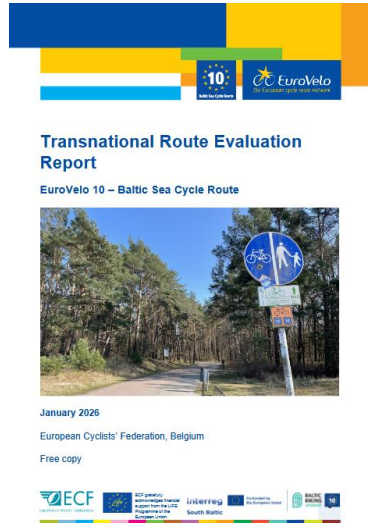
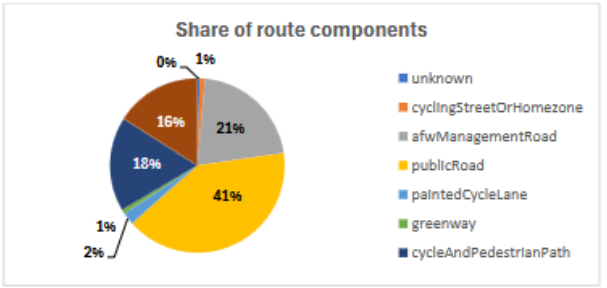
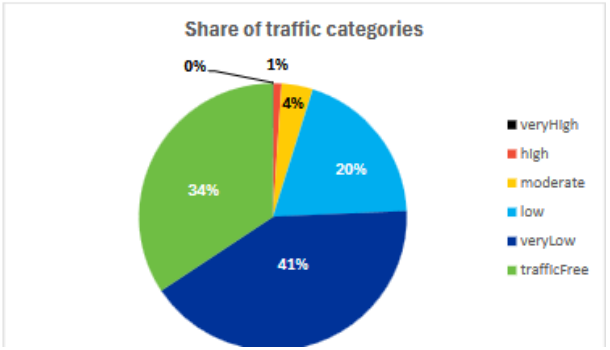
Route Evaluation Reports and Certification Reports available online

- **No example yet with the 2026 methodology**
- **See https://pro.eurovelo.com/resources :**
- Examples with the 2021 methodology:
  - EuroVelo 10 – Baltic Sea Cycle Route
  - EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route
- Older examples:
  - EuroVelo 8 – Mediterranean Route
  - EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic-Black Sea
- Certification reports examples (2021 methodology):
  - EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route
  - EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in France









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Cycle route quality through field surveys

Overview of our services: 2027 costs

Florence Grégoire
EuroVelo & Projects Officer at ECF

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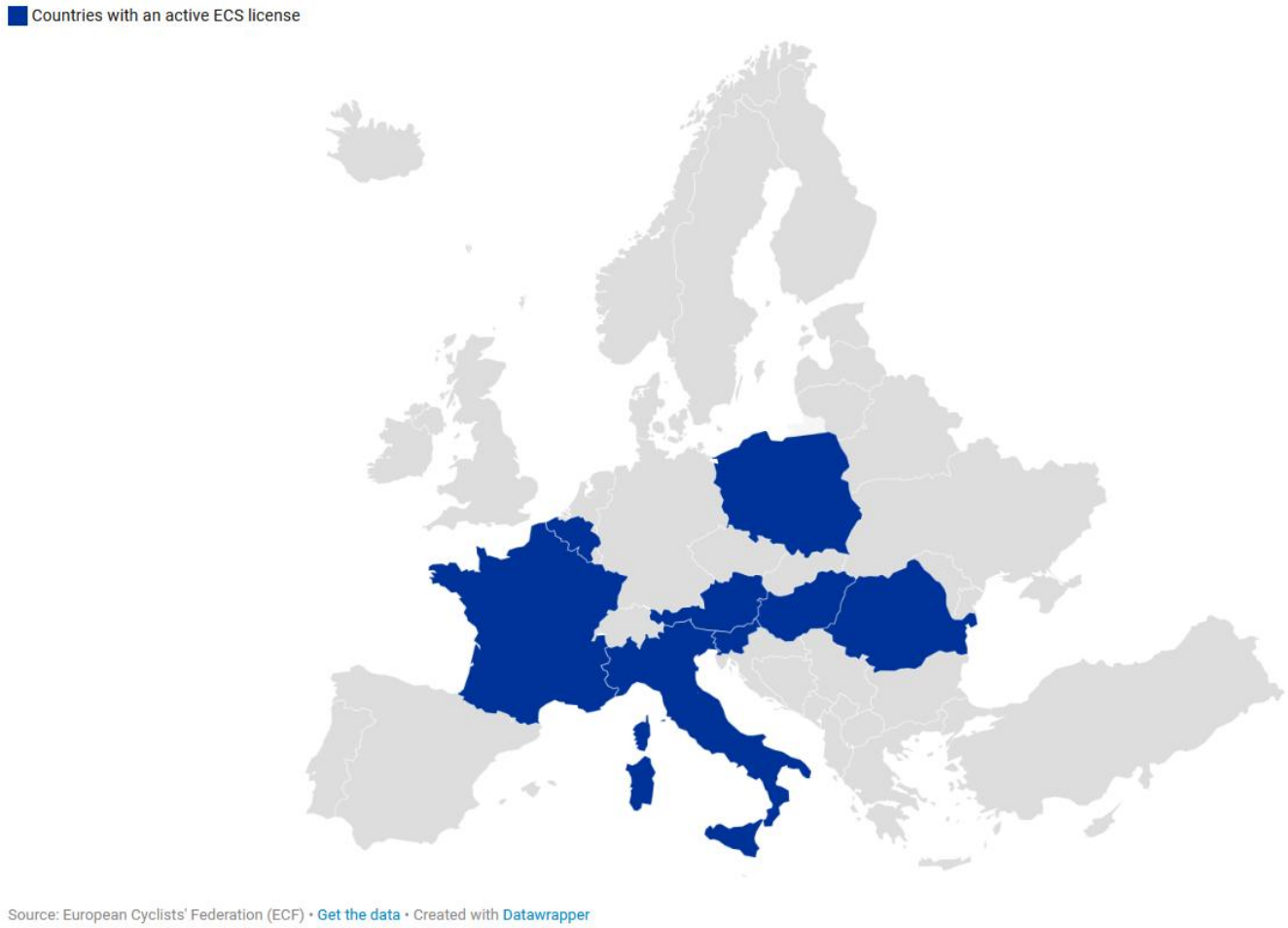
ECS Licences

- Needed to use the ECS app
- New flexible packages from 2027:
  - Light, standard, extra
  - Discount prices for NECCs
  - Prices adapted to the number of km surveyed, only EuroVelo routes or not, time of validity
  - From 1000€

Get in touch for more details!



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Cycle route quality through field surveys

EuroVelo Certification

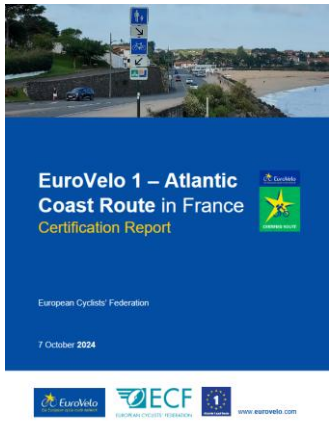
- EuroVelo routes, starting from 100 km
- Based on survey data max 3 years old
- Label valid for 5 years
- Standard fee: 5,000€ in 2 instalments
- Reduced fee possible for short sections
- One-star, two-star, three-star certified sections
- Quality recognition ; route highlighted on EuroVelo maps and comms ; clear info for users
- Current EuroVelo certified routes: EuroVelo 1 – Atlantic Coast Route in France (2024) & EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route in Switzerland, France and part of Germany (2025)

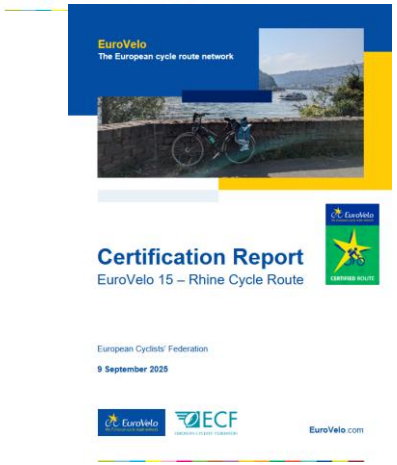
ECF gratefully acknowledges financial support from the LIFE Programme of the European Union

Certification map

EuroVelo 1 - Atlantic Coast Route in France







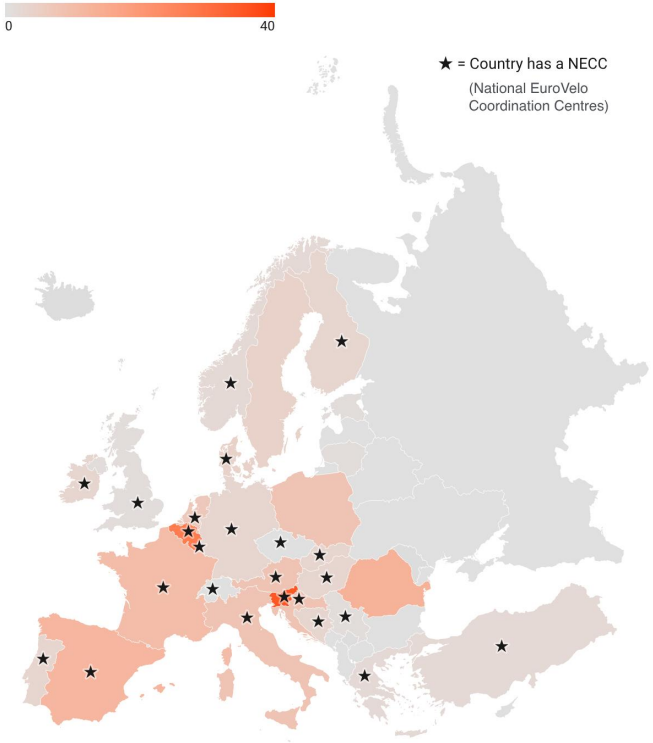
Cycle route quality through field surveys

EuroVelo Route Inspectors' trainings

- **Registrations to the 2027 regular training are open!**
  6-7 April in Brussels
  €400 for NECCs members, €650 for others (early-bird)
- **We can also bring the training to your country**
  €18,000 (VAT excluded) + travel and accommodation costs for a 2-day ad-hoc training with 2 staff members
- What the training covers:
  - Theoretical courses on ECS + test
  - Access to ECS tools
  - Half-day field trip to experience the ECS app
  - Group exercises
  - Exercise with survey results analysis tools



Number of active EuroVelo Route Inspectors per country in 2026



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Consultancy

- Types of consultancy available:
  - Tender quality check
  - Route Evaluation Report review
  - Field survey + analysis
  - Presentations on ECS
  - Support to include ECS logic into cycle route models
  - Intellectual property agreements
- 2026 ECS daily fee: 450€
- Field survey/analysis costs if done by ECF: 27€/km
  - 19€ per km for field survey
  - 8€ per km for data analysis and report writing
- Example: IP Licence in Japan – ECS as a model to implement a methodology in Japan



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Thank you!

Do you have any questions?

f.gregoire@ecf.com

Support us to connect Europe by bicycle!

Follow EuroVelo on

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