

Communication Strategy

Vision 2020



EuroVelo communication strategy

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1. Introduction

Communication is at the core of the EuroVelo Management Team activities – representing an objective by itself (informing cycling tourists, members and the policy environment) as well as a tool to reach the target groups. Furthermore, EuroVelo communication has to account both for the general strategic objectives of the European Cyclists' Federation and the strategic objectives of EuroVelo.

The communication has to consider internal communication (inside ECF / EuroVelo and its members) as well as external communication (the professional cycling policy environment, funders, cycling industry, partners and the “cycling community”). However, a communication strategy should not be broken down to specific strategies for each communication channels (such as for social media). Instead, the communication strategy shall formulate a clear common vision of the project, identify responsibilities and outline general principles for the communication in general and the varied communication channels in particular.

A clear deductive communication strategy, the first for EuroVelo, may enable to more efficiently use existing tools while exploring new ones. In that sense, the strategy also serves as an orientation to the work of the EuroVelo Management Team when employing these tools.

2. SWOT-Analysis

The SWOT-Analysis aims at identifying the current nature of EuroVelo communications. This analysis permits to situate the perception (*image*) of EuroVelo to sharpen its profile and build the identity of the brand. The strategic implementation of the different tools and channels is

aiming at overcoming the weaknesses and prevent the threats from harming the project. By seizing the strengths of EuroVelo, these objectives can be supported, eventually also opening up the potential opportunities.

2.1. Strengths

- Multilingual and -cultural team and capacities in the ECF
- Information/resources available through member organisations
- Increased recognition of the importance and benefits of cycling tourism in general
- A generally good image of EuroVelo (cf. Evaluation 2015)
- EuroVelo is a success story
- Clear design (cf. corporate design manual)
- High reactivity and flexibility

2.2. Weaknesses

- No clear communication strategy yet
- Incoherence on various issues:
 - differences in EuroVelo infrastructure and services (road quality, cycle friendly services etc.)
 - differences in EuroVelo online communication (different route statuses and developments on .com)
 - seasonality (varying weather suitability for cycling in Northern and Southern Europe)
 - influx of information predominantly by French, German and British partners
- Limited access to local and regional information of the routes (changes, local events and other related news)
- Low ECF budget (no money for pictures, videos etc.)
- Dependence on NECC/Cs
- Lack of business intelligence in the tourism market
- Limitations of the website: the potential of developing the site is limited by the current technical opportunities; the maintenance is dependent on the reactivity of the provider

2.3. Opportunities

- EuroVelo's identity is currently double: a tourist product and a means to advocacy, thus potentially creating beneficial synergies.
- The diversity of organisations and in infrastructure can become a pool of shared practices. Good examples can be shared and spread through the network. In that sense, EuroVelo builds bridges.

- Growing acknowledgement of the benefits of cycling tourism by policy-makers, industries and the general public
- Growing market
- Incomes and cooperations with private sector : new incomes
- A professionalized NECC/C system can cover a quality partner structure
- UN International year of sustainable tourism in 2017
- The development of cycling tourism in countries of Eastern and Southern Europe
- Becoming the “gateway” to cycling tourism in Europe from a non-European perspective
- The mobilisation of women and other underexploited groups
- Digitalisation: more interactivity on the channels can lead to better services, attracting a broader spectrum of users
- New inputs by interns’ experiences and ideas

2.4. Threats

- Confusions between the functions of the two different EuroVelo websites
- Confusions about the role EuroVelo plays (ex. builder of infrastructure, European certification agency for all cycling routes, travel agency etc. cf. Communication Evaluation 2015)
- Growing EU-skepticism: danger of a general prudence regarding the support of European projects; bad image of EU could spread to EU funded projects
- Victim of own success: jealous partners and competing organisations
- No growth of NECCs limiting the success
- Lacking intern continuity
- Other tourism industries / Competitors: trying to undermine the success of EuroVelo and cycling tourism, copying idea
- Website service provider risks, dependence on these tools → lack of digitalization

3. EuroVelo identity and brand

The question of identity relates to the spontaneous affection to what EuroVelo is about. This emotional connection to the brand (perception as *image*) is fostered by the messages which will be lined out, but also requires a coherent emotional and visual identity.

The communication about what EuroVelo is about (*identity*) has been quite diversified:

- EuroVelo is the European cycle route network
- EuroVelo is a project of the European Cyclists’ Federation
- EuroVelo as a federally structured organisation (with NECC/Cs)

Even though the identity has been communicated on a targeted basis, confusions about its identity still remains (cf. feedback of the EuroVelo communication evaluation 2015). The question of identity needs further discussions among the relevant stakeholders.

Nevertheless, it is possible to use some traits for the creation of the (visual) identity that is also reflected in the messages. These traits are specified in the Corporate Design Manual:

- EuroVelo is a transport network, as such it incorporates dynamics, flexibility and exchange
Visual elements can include: movement, bicycles, varied landscapes
- EuroVelo is a European network, as such it incorporates diversity
Visual elements can include: blue (for Europe), cultural references, the EuroVelo map
- EuroVelo is made and used by humans. It connects humans directly through an accessible means of transport.
Visual elements can include: smiling, communities, warm colours

4. General goals

The general and specific goals are in line with the general EuroVelo strategic objectives (<http://www.eurovelo.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/EuroVelo-Strategy-2012-2020.pdf>)

- Increase the **awareness** about the existence of the EuroVelo network
- Increase the **profile** (vision, identity) of EuroVelo as European Cycle Route network: become the first reference regarding cycling in Europe : dynamic, future-oriented, successful and diverse
- Increase the **awareness** about the importance of cycling tourism and cycling
- Increase the **knowledge** about cycling tourism in Europe
- Change the **perceptions** and **behaviours** to get more people cycling more often

5. Principles

The EuroVelo communication follows some basic principles guaranteeing a coherent communication infrastructure, establishing benchmarking possibilities and orienting the general efforts in terms of communication.

5.1.1. Subsidiarity

The EVMT provides information to cycling tourists coming from and to Europe, wishing to experience cycling tourism in Europe, often on transnational itineraries. The information has a European and an overview character, eventually linking to more in-depth information on the national websites. The reasons are multiple: cost-efficiency, staff-efficiency, the preference by member organisations and the current status of EuroVelo routes (not finalised in large parts).

Even though the current status of EuroVelo does not allow to go beyond this kind of service provision, it is strongly likely that interactive, integrated and geolocated information systems could easily replace the geographically defined approach. It is therefore necessary to develop stronger ICT-cooperations with the NECC/Cs in order to make an attractive offer to cycle tourists while bearing in mind the private competitors and possible synergies with the private sector.

5.1.2. Interactivity

EuroVelo is all about people! Users, route developers and policy maker are part of a system that will prove to be more successful, sustainable and close to the human needs than conventional ones. As such, EuroVelo has to account for the processes in which the transport and tourism system is produced and reproduced. The mistakes of authoritative top-down approaches regarding policy and project implementation (such as for the automobile system) are an opportunity for the bottom-up approach of cycling tourism. The realization of better cycling tourism infrastructure, services and information shall be designed from the users eyes. All services thus need constant and sincere implication of the end users in all processes.

5.1.3. Integrability

EuroVelo as a system needs both stability and change. The challenge is to find the right balance also in terms of communication. The current and dynamic period of growth of the network will presumably be followed by a consolidation phase. Decisions of the presents are limiting the choices of the future (cf. path dependence) – EuroVelo should therefore strategically exclude undesired developments or barriers. These can consist in design, technological or media channel aspects. For instance, decisions on the future orientation of the website have to account for the integrability of several modes of interfaces (mobile phone, tablet and potentially watches or glasses in the long-term) and languages among others.

5.1.4. Diversity

A distinctive strength of EuroVelo is its cultural and linguistic diversity. By framing this diversity as lever towards greater knowledge, skills and exclusive experiences, potential incoherencies can be overcome when applying common measures. This diversity is closely linked to the dynamics of the network characterized by constant information flows, flourishing ideas and high flexibility.

5.1.5. Simplicity

Proverbs as “Less is more” (Mies van der Rohe) or “Keep it short, simple (and stupid)” reflect both the need to synthesize relevant messages to targeted audiences, as well as the higher value of cultivating a simple, but convincing idea. Quite similarly to the integrability principle, innovations should bear in mind to be easily applicable and understandable in order to be convincing. Due to the various levels in its internal organization and the multiplicity of actors involved in the EuroVelo project, clear structures and messages can foster the unobstructed

functioning of the organisational processes. We explain complex things in simple ways.

5.1.6. Positivity

Last, but far from least, it is all about the positive motivation that has followed the project from the very beginning. Through a positive, motivated and convincing approach in all processes EuroVelo paces many other organizational models out. From the creation story to the daily experiences of cycling tourists – EuroVelo has a great story to tell about its world. The cognitive and emotional association by all implied actors of EuroVelo to a highly successful, iconic and in many regards beneficial project could not be judged too importantly. These are the true drivers of the project and will prove its fate.

6. General communication objectives and messages

The communication objectives of EuroVelo are a driver of the general objectives of EuroVelo and therefore aligned to them.

6.1. Economic – help create lasting economic growth with more and better jobs.

Objectives

- It is estimated that the network will generate €5 billion direct revenue per year if it is fully developed.

Communication objective 1a)

Provide key stakeholders with information on the economic benefits of the network.

- Strengthen the leading position of Europe amongst tourism destinations.

Communication objective 1b)

Promote Europe as an attractive tourism destination for cyclists to tourists and policy makers.

- Establish and maintain cycling facilities that require larger work forces but less material.

Communication objective 1c)

Raise awareness and knowledge on the beneficial impact of cycling on employment and rural infrastructure to policy makers.

Messages

Cycling and cycle tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular contribute considerably to sustainable economic growth, thus creating jobs and new revenues.

- Cycling and cycle tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular create more jobs and have better investment return rates than any other form of tourism.
- The cycle routes are not only accessible during summer, but also in spring and autumn. This extends the tourist season, fostering economic growth in the tourism industry.
- Cycling and cycle tourism is an essential element of the new economy (circular, sharing and digital economy): through its bottom-up approach, easy integrativeness and potential for individualisation (such as personal preferences, behavioural patterns etc.) it can foster rapid qualitative economic growth

6.2. Environmental - reduce the environmental impact of tourism and transport.

Objectives

- Promote cycling as an environmentally sustainable form of leisure and mobility activity.

Communication objective 2a)

Raise awareness and knowledge on the sustainability of cycling, especially in comparison to alternative modes of leisure and mobility.

- Encourage cyclists to combine public transport and cycling.

Communication objective 2b)

Inform cyclists on the public transport facilities for bikes throughout Europe.

- Wherever possible use existing facilities. New facilities, where necessary, should have minimal impact on the environment.

Communication objective 2c)

Showcase the subsidiary and integrative approach to development of the EuroVelo network to policy makers and public authorities.

- Promote effective spatial and land use planning that allocates more space for cycling.

Communication objective 2d)

Raise awareness on the benefits of cycle friendly spatial planning and direct best practices towards relevant policy makers and public authorities.

Messages

Cycling tourism is s an extremely sustainable form of tourism and/or mobility, particularly if combined with public transport.

- Cycling tourism preserves land surface and biodiversity though integrated mobility schemes
- Cycling tourism enhances soft skills related to environmental awareness

6.3. Regional and rural development.

Objectives

- Connect both famous and 'less well known' tourism destinations.

Communication objective 3a)

Promote the diversity of the network, highlighting the suitability for different target groups.

- Improve the well-being of local communities by providing cycling facilities.

Communication objective 3b)

Raise awareness and knowledge of local stakeholders on funding opportunities for cycling infrastructure, as well as potential partners.

Messages

Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular are acknowledged to strengthen local and regional structures.

- Local and regional economies benefit from cycling tourism through the usage of little and underexploited routes, sometimes only accessible by bike.
- The cycling infrastructure is less dependent on big scale investments and thus more flexible to a broader range of actors, inciting investments in more rural areas.
- Cycling tourism connects both famous and 'less well known' tourism destinations

6.4. European cohesion and mutual understanding.

Objectives

- Remind citizens about the history, culture and nature of Europe through cycling.

Communication objective 4a)

Provide cyclists with information on the historic, cultural and natural attractions along EuroVelo routes.

- Stimulate direct face to face interactions between people.

Communication objective 4b)

Promote the social dimension of cycling.

- Encourage more women and families to take up cycling.

Communication objective 4b)

Promote family friendly itineraries, create and disseminate women related information.

- Provide opportunities for disabled people to use the routes.

Communication objective 4c)

Create and disseminate information for people with special needs.

Messages

Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular are acknowledged to contribute to European exchanges, intercultural awareness raising and a sense of unity in diversity.

- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular remind citizens about the history, culture and nature of Europe
- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular stimulate direct face to face interactions between people
- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular encourage more women and families to take up cycling
- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular provide opportunities for disabled people to use the routes

- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular provide excellent educational opportunities in varied domains as environmental, health or general sustainability education

6.5. Public health - Improve the health of European citizens.

Objectives

- Motivate the population to pursue healthy leisure and mobility activities.

Communication objective 5

Highlight the health benefits of cycling to (potential) cyclists and policy makers and encourage sustainable lifestyles.

Messages

Cycling tourism is acknowledged to contribute to a healthier way of life, not only through cycling itself but also through the soft skills acquired.

- Cycling tourism in general and EuroVelo in particular motivate the population to pursue healthy leisure and mobility activities
- Cycling tourism enhances learning about gastronomy and food production (in rural areas), about happiness through physical exercise and about planning own activities

6.6. Exchange of experiences – Stimulating and high quality cycle routes.

Objectives

Communication objective 6

Provide and target information on cycling infrastructure, promotion and services for key stakeholders.

Messages

The EuroVelo network is acknowledged to contribute to the improvement of cycling infrastructure, services and information in Europe.

- EuroVelo is a competent and reliable partner.

- EuroVelo acts as an information hub serving a variety of national, regional and local actors throughout Europe

6.7. Experiencing Europe by bike

These objectives and messages represent a transversal objective category, by individually targeting messages in a more emotional way.

Communication objectives

- Promote the assets of cycling in Europe
- Inform about cycling products and attractions along the network
- Create a sense of positive affection to EuroVelo

Messages

- Cycling tourism allows people to intensively and directly experience **nature, culture and history**.
 - No other mode of transport allows tourists to visit off-the-track attractions and landscapes
- Cycling tourism enhances the feeling of **freedom** through the **flexibility** and **accessibility** that this mode of transport offers
 - No other mode of transport allows to follow the own rhythm and interest on holidays as much as cycling
 - Cycling on holidays is a means of self-realisation
 - Cycling holidays are very flexible regarding timing (throughout the year), money to spend and destinations to choose
- Cycling tourism is a great way to share **common experiences**, especially for families and friends
 - No other mode of transport on holidays allows to socialize as much
 - Cycling tourism is a fun and exciting common experience creating communities
 - EuroVelo brings people from various backgrounds together

7. Identification of target audiences

The EuroVelo communication has to account for a number of different actors with different geographical, thematic and temporal interests. The target audiences have been differentiated and associated to specific requisites according to the communication evaluation 2015 and internal assessments. The target audiences have been differentiated by sector.

1. **Governmental policy environment** (European institutions and agencies and other public authorities) demonstrate economic, social and environmental benefits of cycling, its growing importance (future-orientation) and the various reasons for

benefiting from it as an actor, convince to invest in cycling policies

2. **Non-governmental policy environment (NGOs, federations etc.):** demonstrate economic, social and environmental benefits of cycling, its growing importance (future-orientation) and the various reasons for benefiting from it as an actor, search for potential partners (for projects and common communication tools)
3. **Private sector (bicycle industry, tourism market etc.):** demonstration of the benefits related to investments in cycling tourism in general and in EuroVelo in particular, showing that the ECF is a professional and experienced actor, search for potential partners (for projects and common communication tools)
4. **Media (printed press, specialised blogs, online magazines etc.):** provision of good stories and argumentation lines, establishing tools for broader media coverage
5. **Cycling market (cyclists, potential cyclists):** provision of information on itineraries and destinations, increase motivation for cycling tourism, increase willingness to disseminate the messages (ambassadors), incitation to discover new destinations, incite community creation

8. Communication axis, channels and tools

The communication evaluation of 2015 and internal assessments have led to the recommendation to continue differentiating between two axis of communication: a “professional” axis and a “public” axis. The differentiation includes the strategic use of the different channels and tools, aligned to the two axis.

The tools are assessed according to two essential criteria for communication: *Employability*: the time it takes to use the tool and the technical and/or linguistic requirements *Success*: the success relates to the reach out of the tool in quantity and the quality based on the feedback received.

The assessment ranges from zero to three pluses (0 / + / ++ / +++)

Key words

NB: some words can be separated such as “Fahrradtourismus”)

- Regarding cycling tourism:
EN: cycling tourism, cycling holidays, cycling Europe, cycling + country, holidays by bike, bike holidays, cycling trip, bike trip
FR: vélotourisme, cyclotourisme, tourisme à vélo, vacances à/en vélo, excursion

à vélo, vélo + pays, vélo Europe

DE: Fahrradtourismus, Fahrradurlaub, Fahrradausflug, Radfahren Europa, Radfahren + Land

ES: turismo en bici(cleta), cicloturismo, vacaciones en bici, excursiones en bici, bici Europa, bici + país

IT: cicloturismo, turismo bicicletta , vacanza bicicletta

- Regarding cycling tourism advocacy: cycling tourism, cycling business, cycling tourism market / economy

8.1. Professional axis

The EuroVelo network is developing a policy argumentation line highlighting the growing importance and benefits of cycling tourism. The EuroVelo network is aimed at being seen as an iconic example of successful policy implementation to reach the policy-specific targets outlined above. Through the implemented projects along the EuroVelo routes, the produced evidence can progressively feed this argumentation pattern.

target groups

Governmental and non-governmental policy environment, private sector, media

8.1.1. EuroVelo.org

8.1.1.1. Description

In addition to EuroVelo.com, which caters for people wishing to cycle the routes, the ECF has also developed EuroVelo.org for professional working on developing the EuroVelo routes. The website is a source of the latest news on the realisation of the network, guidance and advice, as well as best practice from across Europe. The website also contains the Overview Route Database of the EuroVelo routes and provides an online platform for individual route development projects.

8.1.1.2. Aims

The website is considered to be a vital source of information for the National EuroVelo Coordination Centres and Coordinators and other partners, and will therefore be kept as up-to-date as possible. It is the central hub for best practice sharing meaning that all information is first placed on this website and then eventually communicated via other channels (mail, newsletters, social media).

Benchmarking

- 4 – 6 articles per month

Target groups

The maintenance of the website is an essential source of legitimation towards the member organisations, the professional cycling community and the policy environment. Through the promotion of its projects, funders can be convinced of the benefits linked to the investments.

8.1.1.3. Tools

- **Overview Route Database**
purpose: exchange and collect information on the route sections
usage: little used
identified problems: knowledge about ORD (?), lacking resources of members (?), interface (?)
Employability: +
Success: +
proposed solution: (?)
- **EuroVelo documents and archive portal** (download section)
purpose: provide all EuroVelo manuals, studies, best practices, guides, press information and maps to professionals
identified problem: could be slightly more up to date
Employability: +++
Success: ++
- **Forum**
purpose: exchange and collect information
identified problems: is not used anymore
Employability: +
Success: 0
proposed solution: abandon

8.1.2. Newsletter

The EuroVelo newsletter is a slowly but constantly growing channel for the dissemination of news to a professional audience (policy makers, cycling community, member organisations). Accordingly, the content is predominantly filled with summaries of EuroVelo.org articles and a press review. To make the newsletter more attractive as a product, the picture of the month animates readers to get involved.

The newsletter can continue being promoted as the exclusive information channel for a professional audience: targeted, extensive and relevant information from a European perspective. Communication tools such as the newsletter and social media posts should also refer more to transport and health topics alongside the cycle tourism topics. Proposed that the non-tourism coverage should be approximately 25% of all content. It is also possible to include non-tourism messages in tourism articles. Synergies with the ECF newsletter have been and shall continue being exploited through reciprocal mentioning, when relevant.

Benchmarking

- 20% increase of subscribers per year

8.1.3. Twitter

8.1.3.1. Description

The EuroVelo twitter account is a channel for professional and policy-related communication, used on a daily basis. As such it is both used to obtain and communicate relevant information.

8.1.3.2. Aims

The twitter account provides up to date information on the professional cycling tourism world (all levels: European, member states, regional, local): the projects, laws, policy proposals by public authorities etc. EuroVelo collects relevant news, posts them and frames them in a cycling friendly way without offending national partners, competitors or political enemies. EuroVelo is aimed at providing the best overview on cycling tourism issues in Europe. Better than others, it provides transnational information often lacking on other channels. The twitter account is seen as an information hub on cycling tourism from non-European actors. The twitter account is also used to disseminate all EuroVelo articles from both EuroVelo.com and EuroVelo.org to gain momentum. Twitter is not used for cycling holiday (fun) promotion, except for EuroVelo.com articles.

Benchmarking

- 1 – 2 articles and 1 – 2 retweets per day, except weekends
- Average retweet of 5 per tweet

8.1.3.3. Tools

- The hashtags #EuroVelo #cycling #tourism are used and aimed to be established
- EuroVelo tweets around 1 – 2 own contents per day (own articles and articles or documents found by search engines or submitted via emails from partners)
- EuroVelo retweets relevant tweets, especially from member organisations (see twitter NECC list) using the @ and country hashtag
- The language of the tweets should be more than 70% in English
- EuroVelo infographics based on EuroVelo online survey 2016

8.2. Public axis

The EuroVelo network aims at being seen as an information hub for tourists and commuters (potentially) interested in cycling in Europe. EuroVelo provides general information about cycling destinations, while integrating existing national, regional and local information sources (*subsidiarity principle*). EuroVelo promotes the diversity of its destinations, highlighting the multi-level benefits of its cycle route integration approach from local to European level. Furthermore, EuroVelo accounts to generational shifts in cycling tourism which will impact the way tourists use information and tourism products (major key words: digitalisation, internet of things, local economy, circular economy, new demographics and mobility patterns).

Target groups

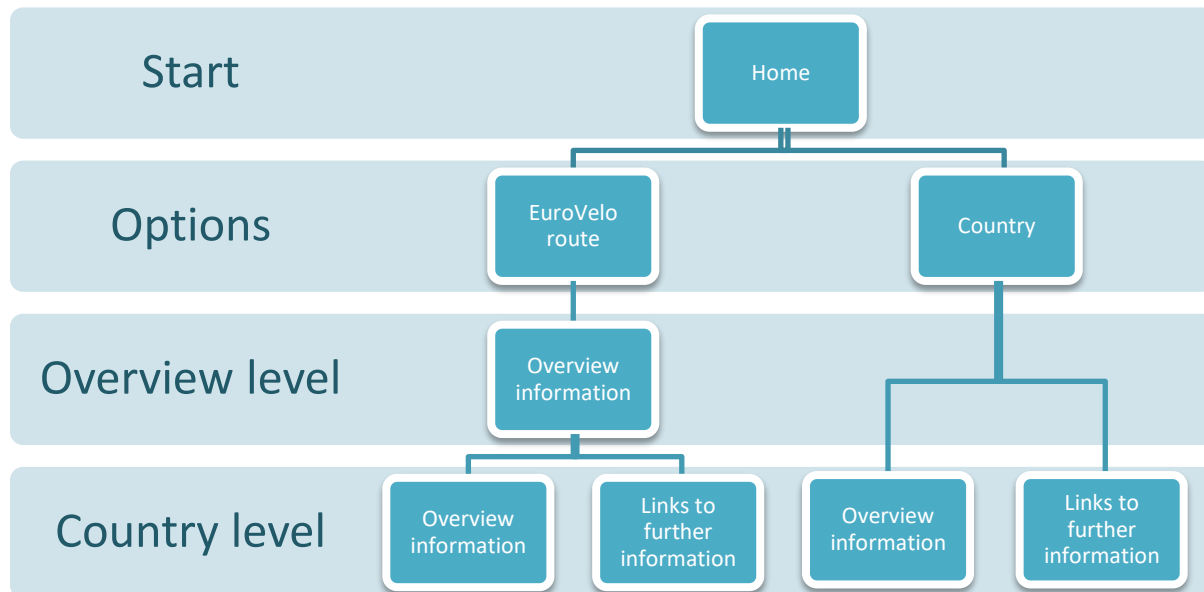
Cycling market, public media

8.2.1. EuroVelo.com

8.2.1.1. Description

The website provides overview information relating to each of the EuroVelo routes and countries, including summaries of the sections through each country and maps showing the current status of each section. It also provides practical information for cycling in every country in Europe. Furthermore the website contains the possibility of financial support by donation, wherefore the supporters can receive a EuroVelo supporters' certificate, a copy of the EuroVelo Overview Map and depending on the amount of donation a EuroVelo jersey. The website is available in three languages: English, German and French.

Overview of the EuroVelo.com structure



Advanced route subsites on EuroVelo.com

A more advanced version can be created for specific routes where there is funding available. The first subsite to be developed in this way was for EuroVelo 15 – Rhine Cycle Route. Whilst retaining the same basic structure as is used for the other EuroVelo routes, the advanced version contains more information for the user and the interface is more sophisticated. Furthermore, the advanced subsites provide links to:

- Events along the route that would be of interest to cycle tourists
- Companies offering transnational bookable offers along all or part of the route
- Books and guides

Whilst EuroVelo.com provides overview information about the EuroVelo network and the individual routes at a European level, users will be directed to national websites for detailed information about cycling the routes. In the frame of the current project, at least national websites should be developed for all of the countries covered by the project.

These national websites should ideally be integrated into existing websites of the EuroVelo partners and provide information in the national language and in English at least. Furthermore there should be a clear corporate identity which links the EuroVelo corporate design to the respective national ones.

The content of the national website content is classified as follows:

- Route description and information about the signing of the route (obligatory)
- Electronic maps / GPS tracks
- Printed material
- Public transport connections (obligatory)
- (Cycle friendly) services (accommodation, cafes, restaurants etc.) (obligatory)
- Bike rental facilities
- Bookable offers

- H) Points of interest / attractions etc.
- I) Cycle Events
- J) Pedelec information

8.2.1.2. Aims

Through country and stages descriptions, attractive points of interests and inspiring pictures, the website provides an incentive and inspiration to go on cycling holidays. Potential cycling tourists get an idea of what it means to cycle on transnational cycle routes in Europe and find it a highly innovative and convincing idea.

For people who have never gone on cycling holidays (in Europe), EuroVelo represents the gateway to cycling tourism in Europe. The EuroVelo.com Website should therefore be understood as the **central communication hub**. The new linguistic versions underline the effort to attract new types of cycling tourists: those which could best be described as non-cosmopolitan. The website aims at providing regular promotional news, keeping the route information up to date and improving the deep structure of the site through more detailed information. In the long term the site should include integrated, interactive and geo-located maps. Furthermore, the EuroVelo website should be adaptable to portable devices in the future, accounting to the large number of mobile users.

Benchmarking

- 600 000 visitors in 2016
- 10% increase of French and 20% increase of German speaking visitors per year

2 – 3 articles per month

8.2.1.3. Tools

- **Blogger interviews**
purpose: increase participation of EuroVelo user (enhance community feeling), disseminate the communication through new networks
Employability (time and technical): + + +
Success (reach out, positive feedback): + + +
- **EuroVelo country series** (interviews)
purpose: present the EuroVelo countries to differentiate and present the different cycling destination profiles in Europe
Employability: + +
Success: + + +
- **EuroVelo insider tips**
purpose: create community feeling through personal tips

Employability: + + +

Success: *N/A yet*

- **EuroVelo top destinations in Europe**

purpose: increase destination profiles and attract new potential cycling tourists by good stories and professional descriptions

planned

- **EuroVelo infrastructure news**

purpose: inform tourists about changes in infrastructure

Employability: dependent on content

→ should be route specific when problems occur and general when good news are published

→ will be included on the route pages

8.2.2. Facebook

8.2.2.1. Description

The EuroVelo facebook account is the main social media channel of EuroVelo communication in terms of in- and output as well as for the reach-out. The account is used to share own articles from EuroVelo.com and EuroVelo.org; cycling tourism and cycling holiday related articles, cycling guides, fun videos and pictures as well as interactive series (e.g. photo contests). The main EuroVelo facebook account is accompanied by other EuroVelo accounts: EuroVelo 15, EuroVelo 13, EuroVelo 6 and some minor pages and groups.

8.2.2.2. Aims

The multiplicity of facebook pages poses a challenge to a coherent and effective communication approach. The French EuroVelo 6 facebook page for instance has a larger fanbase than the general EuroVelo page even though the content is only in French, geographically limited and providing less content. Similar to the infrastructure of the EuroVelo.com Website, an informational hierarchy shall be established for facebook: the EuroVelo main account provides extensive information on cycling tourism, cycling holidays and the EuroVelo Routes whereas the route specific site focus on local and route specific news. The EuroVelo facebook page is aimed at reaching out to existing and potential cycling tourists and has therefore to mix the contents according to the different requirements mentioned in 7.1.2.

The EuroVelo route facebook sites can sometimes share content of the EuroVelo general page (such as general guides to cycling or similar), whereas the general EuroVelo page shares content from the route sites, if relevant.

For the general Eurovelo facebook page 3 posts per day with promotional (fun) content for (potential) cycling tourists are envisioned. The content is multi-media, multi-linguistic (with ca. 40% English) and geographically broad (predominantly Europe, but also oversea content).

Benchmarks

- 3 posts per day
- Several French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and other language posts per week
- 5 000 new page likes per year
- Diversification of demographics: 20% more Germans, reduction of the gender gap

8.2.2.3. Tools

- Posts (3 per day): multi-media content: articles, videos, photos, links to other organisations etc.; in varied languages (ca. 40% English) and from throughout Europe and beyond; sharing EuroVelo.com and .org articles as well as EuroVelo.com sections
- Weekend scheduling (2 per day)
- Share content from member organisations (@) and from ECF (and vice-versa)
- Interactivity: animate to comment and share; regular interactive series such as quizzes

8.3. Public and professional axis

Some channels serve both the public and professional target groups that have been identified. Even though the concrete use of the channels might be adapted according to the purpose, the general nature of the channels does not allow to clearly attribute them to one of the axis.

8.3.1. Events

Description and aims

Events are an extremely important communication tool due to their interactive character and the media opportunities that they can provide. There are a number of major tourism fairs around Europe and smaller (although equally important bearing in mind the main target groups) events tailored around specific markets and regions. Due to limited resources, EuroVelo aims at attending the major tourism fairs such as the ITB Berlin and FITUR Madrid to represent the Eurovelo project through information material and if possible with a booth.

8.3.2. Media relations

8.3.2.1. Description and aims

EuroVelo aims at establishing links with European, national, regional and local media

representatives, by raising general awareness of the project (e.g. through the press kit) and by supplying the media with high-quality news material. Journalists shall be contacted proactively more often, especially those writing on cycling tourism with a large fan base. Bloggers should have a permanent platform on the EuroVelo social media and be offered to contribute to articles.

8.3.2.2. Tools

- Establish a database of journalists that should be constantly updated
- Establish database of press, blogs and cycling tourism related website
- Issue press releases and press kits;
- Provide an online 'Press Room' including stories, general route information etc.
- Organise study tours

8.3.3. Promotional material

8.3.3.1. Description and aims

The distribution of promotional materials (including publications in paper and electronic format) remains an important means of informing potential customers about EuroVelo. Often project-bound, they are created in collaboration with project partners. EuroVelo aims at integrating the corporate design and highlight the fact of being part of the whole network. All materials should be produced following consistent visual design (see Visual identity tools below) and language style and should be available for download in electronic format (if relevant). Priority should be given to materials that can be made available online wherever possible, as they are generally more accessible and can be more easily updated.

As for the general EuroVelo communication, only general overview material shall be created and distributed. Only material easy to distribute (especially digital ones) and reproduce, ideally generating an income (as for the EuroVelo maps) shall be directly delivered to users. For specific material, the creation and distribution shall be in line with the local and regional partners along the specific route.

8.3.3.2. Tools

- flyers,
- brochures,
- guidebooks: establish new cooperations with guidebook publishers, especially digital ones
- posters,

- 'giveaways' (e.g. cycle repair kits, pens, USB Stick, t-shirts etc.)
- Maps:

The relatively time intensive sending of EuroVelo maps against a donation should be maintained, as the map of the EuroVelo network represents the central pillar of all communication.

However, synergies could be achieved by new forms of combination in the donation scheme system, for example by proposing to add other type of promotional material (e.g. flyers/brochures of sections provided by national partners). This change would implement certain storage capacities, as well as an influx of the mentioned new promotional materials.

In the long term, detailed and integrated map systems should be available. The maps can be enriched by interactive elements (user reviews, reports etc.) and certification systems (e.g. bike-friendly services scheme)

8.3.4. E-mail correspondence

The EuroVelo e-mail account is the central direct communication hub of EuroVelo. The majority of requests from journalists, partners and EuroVelo users are directed towards this e-mail account. Due to the three (and with Dutch through EuroVelo 15) languages offered on the EuroVelo.com website it is important to maintain the language capacities for answering e-mails. The fluctuation of interns might not always guarantee the provision of this service.

Regarding cycling holiday questions, users are very satisfied with the service provided. The answers are and are aimed at being polite, detailed, encouraging and positive. Through recurrent questions and answers, the EuroVelo Team has created a standard e-mail database to provide answers in a less amount of time with a better and more detailed content. EuroVelo aims at improving this database for the future, also including material for journalists and other actors.

The e-mail account also serves as feedback hub for the whole project. The EuroVelo communication evaluation 2015 has shown that the feedback is very positive for most cases. However, some clarifications can be made regarding the EuroVelo identity.