

Findings from a study on **European Cycle Friendly Service Network Concept**



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Content:

1. Background
2. Analysis of existing systems in Europe
3. Evaluation and comparison of the existing systems with the major findings of the study
4. Proposed common activities on the European level, based on the study findings
5. Proposed steps of further implementation

Summary

Attachments

Czech Cyclists Welcome criteria

1. Background

Thousands of businesses offering cycle friendly services in Europe

Europe is world's largest tourist destination which applies also for cycle tourism. Cycling for leisure and cycle tourism represent some of the most popular forms of active travel for individuals, groups and families in many European countries. Europe as prime cycle tourist destination features favorable geographical conditions as well as dense network of cycle routes – especially the EuroVelo routes that connect our continent from North to South and from West to East – which are essential for further development of this form of sustainable tourism. But the infrastructure must be accompanied with adequate services along the routes or in major European cycle tourist destinations. Besides the interest of domestic cycle tourists, an increasing trend in cycle tourists from abroad can be observed Europe-wide. In order to accommodate the needs of cycle tourists there need to be provided basic services tailor-made for cyclists and cycle tourists. There should also be enough information available online and in printed form which would inform the clients about the services they need.

Following this trend there have been several national or regional certification schemes in Europe created since the mid-1990s. The certifications reflected the needs of cycle tourists mainly along the long distance cycle routes. Until now thousands of businesses in the accommodation and catering industry or tourist attractions or shops are offering cycle friendly services in more than 17 European countries. Through desk research, expert interviews and structured interviews we have identified the main certification schemes that run in Europe.

Benefits of cycle friendly certifications

- improving conditions for sustainable forms of tourism
- development of tourist offers in tourist regions, introduction of new tourist attractions
- targeted promotion of lodging and catering services for cycle tourists
- participation of businesses in the promotion of tourist regions

The standard of services for cycle tourism is growing rapidly in EU countries. Besides established cycle destinations such as Netherlands or Denmark, the offer of cycle tourist products and services is growing in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, Belgium and also in the countries of Southern Europe such as Spain and Italy. Most recent developments show rapid improvement of services for cyclists and cycle tourists also in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The most significant overall trend is towards increasing quality of services for cycle tourists. The implementation of such certification systems represents an active collaboration of state, regional and municipal organizations with SME's and cycling NGO's.

In order to further develop cycle tourism in Europe and to increase its competitiveness it is necessary to take measures to improve **services** and to bring their quality up to the level of the TOP cycle tourist European countries.

2. Analysis of existing systems in Europe

Certification scheme **Cycle friendly service** evaluates tourist services such as gastronomy, accommodation, camp sites and tourist attractions or shops catering to needs of cycle tourists. In all mentioned categories cycle tourists are able to store safely bicycles, have access to basic tools necessary for simple repairs and information about cycling in the region.

The certification criteria vary by the type of establishment and to some extent also by country. In some countries there are two categories of criteria: **obligatory criteria** that *must* be fulfilled and **additional criteria** that are *optional*. The certified establishments are typically **labeled** with a logo that features either a bicycle and/or bed plus name of the organization/scheme.

The study conducted among ECF members and other organizations managing cycle friendly certification in Europe identified *similar criteria for certified cycle friendly establishments in Europe* such as

- bicycle parking and storage
- accommodation just for 1 night
- basic bicycle repair tools for simple repairs
- amenities to wash and dry clothes and equipment
- Information on cycle services in the region (printed, web)





We have researched within the **EuroVelo coordination project**, which was in part dedicated to **European cycle friendly service system concept**, altogether **13 certifications**. We sent out **structured questionnaires** by e-mail to 18 European organizations dealing with certifications in their countries: *Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxemburg, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and UK*.

In the end we received **13 answered questionnaires** from following countries and organizations.

1. **Germany** – ADFC – nationwide scheme
2. **Lower Austria** – Weinviertel Tourismus GmbH.- regional scheme
3. **Czech Republic** – Nadace Partnerství - nationwide scheme
4. **Slovakia** – Nadacia Ekopolis - nationwide scheme
5. **Poland** – Fundacja Partnerstwo - nationwide scheme
6. **Croatia** – NGO Bicikl - nationwide scheme
7. **Switzerland** – Swiss Mobil - nationwide scheme
8. **Netherlands** - Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform - nationwide scheme
9. **Denmark** – AktivDanmark - nationwide scheme
10. **France** – France Velo Tourisme - nationwide scheme
11. **Italy** – FIAB - nationwide scheme
12. **UK** – CTC - nationwide scheme
13. **Hungary** – Happy Bike Ltd.- regional scheme

Western Europe

The German certification **Bed and Bike** (www.bettundbike.de) was launched by German cycling club ADFC already 16 years ago in the largest European cycle tourist destination - **Germany**. This certification has most certified businesses totaling more than 5.300. Other long established certification scheme includes the **UK Cyclists welcome** (www.ctc.org.uk) run by one of the oldest cyclist's organization in Europe, the CTC. The **Dutch** system **Fietsers Welkom!** (www.allefietserswelkom.nl) developed by Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform deals with accommodation facilities mainly. In **Italy** the

Albergabici **system** (www.albergabici.it) is a certification scheme for accommodation run by FIAB. In **France** until recently there have been several regional certifications that were united only in 2011 under one umbrella as national scheme **Accueil Vélo** (www.francevelotourisme.com) by organization France Vélo Tourisme. In **Switzerland** the cycle friendly certification is not promoted separately but as part of overall project supporting active mobility and travel called **SwissMobil** (www.schweizmobil.ch). In other European countries and regions like **Luxembourg** or **Flanders** the German model of Bed and Bike was utilized to start a cycle friendly certification scheme..



Central Europe

Also based on the German example, a similar certification to Bed and Bike was developed in **Lower Austria** as **Radfreundliche Betriebe** (www.weinviertel.at) which is currently being updated. In 2005, a similar certification to Bed and Bike and radfreundliche Betriebe was developed by the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (Nadace Partnerství) in the **Czech Republic** as **Cyklisté vítáni** (Cyclists Welcome, www.cyklistevitani.cz). The Czech know-how under the umbrella of Environmental Partnership Association EPA contributed to launch of a **Slovak** cycle friendly certification **Vitajte cyklisti** (Cyclists Welcome, www.vitajtecyklisti.sk) and a **Polish** bike-friendly certification **Przyjazny rowerom** (www.przyjaznyrowerom.pl). In **Hungary** there is a regional certification scheme called **Happy Bike** (www.happybike.hu) run by private organization of the same name.



South Eastern Europe

There are also several certification schemes running in South-Eastern Europe based on Bed and Bike model in **Montenegro** and **Serbia**. In **Croatia** there has been older certification scheme **Bike & Bed** (www.mojbicikl.hr) run by NGO Bicikl. In **Slovenia** the certification features as cycle friendly accommodation instead of stars number of bicycles (www.slovenia.info) .



Northern Europe

In Scandinavia there is cycle friendly certification in **Denmark** managed by NTA **Active Denmark** (www.aktivdanmark.dk). There is an active interest in developing a cycle friendly certification in **Finland**.



Out of 17 questionnaires we received **13 questionnaires** back mostly from ECF members representing the major certification schemes throughout all Europe. Our main task within this project was the collection and evaluation of data from existing and running systems such as Cyclists Welcome – UK, Cyclists Welcome – CZ and SK, Bett&Bike – D and B (Flanders), radfreundliche Betriebe – A (Lower Austria) and SchweizMobil including smaller systems: Loire a Velo - F, HB – Hungary, GTZ – Serbia, Sleep and Bike - Croatia Slovenia or Denmark etc. which we fulfilled.

The questionnaire, which was agreed in advance with ECF, contained following **questions:**

- When was the scheme started?
- What was the status of certification (private, public initiative or NGO initiative)?
- What is current situation of the scheme (stable, growing, declining)?
- Was the scheme supported by the EU, state, region? If yes how much? When?
- What is main income of the system? Membership fee? Contribution for the promotion?

- The system is financially self sustaining (from fee and promotion contribution, booking etc) or you need additional subsidy? If subsidized, how much, by whom?
- Type of service (accommodation, gastronomy, tourist attractions, shop)?
- Safe place to park the bike (during day, overnight)?
- Basic cycling information (board with map and basic information), advanced cycling information (brochures, fliers, personal advice, organized cycling tour)?
- Accommodation for one night only?
- Basic bike repair kit and spare parts, bike repair service?
- First aid kit?
- Wash & dry clothes service?
- Opening times during entire cycling season?
- Local, regional cuisine / specialties, cyclists menu?
- Lunch packet (take away)?
- Luggage transfer?
- Booking of the next accommodation?
- Bike/pedelec rental, pedelec charging?
- Display of logo?
- Information on route - signs about the service, information in catalogue, on the web?
- Formal agreement / contract?
- Regular monitoring visit?
- Number of partners in 2011?
- Membership Fee
- Contribution for Marketing

3. Evaluation and comparison of the existing systems with major findings of the study

The 13 answered questionnaires represent the most developed and most significant organizations and countries that have been developing the cycle friendly certification schemes in Europe.

When did these certifications start?

The oldest system was developed in Germany (the Nr.1 European cycle tourist destination) by ADFC. Most of the other certifications were inspired by this model and they were started after 2000. In 2003 in Italy and in Hungary, in 2004 in Denmark. In Central Europe the Czech certification Cyklisté vítání was launched in 2005 together with Croatia which triggered its further development in Slovakia and Poland (2008). From the same year the certification exists also in Switzerland. Relatively new is Dutch certification Fietsers Welkom! (2010) and Lower Austrian radfreundliche Betriebe which was relaunched in the same year. The French certification Accquiel Vélo is the most recent initiative, the result of a merger of several regional certifications on a national scale (2011).

Who is managing the certifications?

Most of the certifications are managed by **NGO's**, *members of ECF*. This is the case of German Bett und Bike (ADFC), Italian Abergabici (FIAB), British Cyclists Welcome (CTC), Czech Cyklisté vítáni (Nadace Partnerství – Czech Environmental Partnership foundation), Slovakia (Nadacija Ekopolis – Slovak Environmental Partnership foundation), Croat Bed and Bike (Bicikl), Polish Przyjazny rowerom (Fundacja Partnerstwo – Polish Environmental Partnership foundation), Dutch Fietsers Welkom! (Stichting Landelijk Fietsplatform). Other certification schemes are developed by **public tourism organizations** such as Lower Austrian Radfreundliche Betriebe (Weinviertel Tourismus GmbH), Danish Cycling Denmark (Aktiv Danmark) or French Accueil Vélo (France Velo Tourisme). The Swiss certification which is embodied in SwissMobil project is a **public private partnership** (Stiftung SchweizMobil) and Hungarian Happy Bike is managed **privately** (HappyBiuke Ltd.)

Scope of the evaluated certifications

The majority of certification schemes are of **nationwide scale** with the exception of Austria and Hungary. In France the regional certifications were merged into a national scheme only recently.

Support for the certifications

Only the certifications in Germany, the UK and Italy have not received any support in form of funding at the beginning of the certification. In other countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, they have been supported by various EU funds (Interreg funds, CBC or structural EU funds) at least at the beginning of the project stage. Other funds (Norwegian financial mechanism or private funds) were used in case of Poland, Slovakia or Switzerland. In other countries like the Netherlands or Croatia state money or GIZ money was used to launch the system.

Current status of the certifications

Despite the economic crisis which hits also the tourism sector in most of the countries, the certifications are either **growing** (Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Italy, Germany, Netherlands or Switzerland) or are at least **stable** (Slovakia). **Decreasing** trend has been captured in Denmark, Poland and in Hungary.

Income and sustainability of the certifications

Most of the systems are **self-sustainable** or are at least aiming for it in the short term horizon. The Slovak system is not self sustaining and needs private contributions. Those certification schemes supported by the EU money have to prove sustainability even after the project is over. Most of the certifications generate income which is used for promotion from **membership fees** or from **promotion** (online or printed). The Membership fee varies from category to category and ranges from 35EUR in Croatia to

over 200EUR in France and in Switzerland. On average the fee ranges between 65-150 EUR depending on category of certified service (higher for accommodation establishments, in some countries like Germany, Austria or Czech Republic also depending on category of accommodation and number of beds or rooms, lower for gastronomy and other establishments). The fees also vary for new establishments and those which are already in the system (annual fee in Germany, Czech Republic, Netherlands). In some countries to membership fee there is added also contribution for promotion (Croatia and Poland)

Number of certified services

The longer established systems show higher numbers of certified services. The German system Bett und Bike registers the most certified businesses – 5.347 mostly in accommodation category (at the end 2011). The Italian Abergabici which has been running for 9years has 1750 only in accommodation category. Both systems are still growing. **More than 1.000 certified businesses** are also registered in Switzerland (1.100 in category accommodation services) or in the Czech Republic 1.035 (in accommodation, gastronomy and tourist attractions). **More than 100** cycle friendly services are certified in Netherlands, France or Croatia. **Less than 100** in Denmark, Poland, Slovakia, Lower Austria or Hungary.

Categories of certified services

In all countries the accommodation category including camp sites is represented. This is why the certifications were created to enable the long distance cycle tourists to find **adequate accommodation** along the route. Only certified accommodation services are registered in Croatia, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland. In some countries the accommodation category is extended by gastronomy – restaurants and pubs (Germany, Austria) and attractions (Czech Republic, Slovakia). The last group of countries certifies accommodation, gastronomy, attractions and shops (UK, France, Netherlands, Poland or Hungary).

Criteria for certified businesses

The **mix of criteria** that certified establishments must (obligatory) or should (optional) meet has been researched in detail for all above mentioned categories

- Safe place for parking
- Information for cycle tourists
- Accommodation for one night only
- Basic bike repair kit and spare parts, bike repair service
- First aid kit
- Wash & dry clothes service
- Opening times during entire cycling season
- Local, regional cuisine offers/specialties, cyclists menu
- Lunch packet (take away)
- Luggage transfer

- Booking of the next accommodation
- Bike/pedelec rental, pedelec charging

It is obvious that certain requirements only apply for certain categories (e.g. accommodation for one night only for accommodation establishments). Based on 13 responses, the following **criteria are obligatory in the accommodation category** (incl. camp sites) in all countries:

- Accommodation for one night only
- Safe place for parking (overnight storage)
- Information for cycle tourists (board with map and basic information, brochures, flyers, personal advice)
- Basic bike repair kit (free)

The minimum criteria are based on conditions for certifications in Switzerland and Germany, in other countries many more items are obligatory or optional for certified services and include:

- Spare parts for sale (at least basic parts like tubes)
- Booking of the next accommodation
- First aid kit (basic)
- Open during whole cycling season
- Pedelec charging
- Bike wash (self service)
- Wash & dry clothes service
- Local, regional cuisine offers/specialties, cyclists menu
- Lunch packet
- Cyclists menu
- Safe place to park bicycles (daytime)
- information on route signs, in catalogue or on website about the service

In some countries only obligatory items are requested (Switzerland) in other countries a mix of obligatory and optional items (certain amounts of optional requirements) are requested (e.g. Germany, Austria, Czech Republic)

Criteria obligatory in the gastronomy category (restaurants, pubs) for countries where relevant:

- Information for cycle tourists (board with map and basic information, brochures, flyers, personal advice)
- Basic bike repair kit (free)
- First aid kit (basic)
- Open during whole cycling season

Other ***criteria in the gastronomy category is optional*** or obligatory depending on the country

- Safe place for parking (daytime)
- Open during whole cycling season
- Local, regional cuisine offers/specialties, cyclists menu
- Lunch packet
- Cyclists menu
- Safe place to park bicycles (daytime)
- information on route signs, in catalogue or on website about the service

Criteria obligatory in the category tourist attractions where relevant

- Safe place for parking (daytime or night)

Other ***criteria obligatory or optional in the category tourist attractions*** where relevant

- Information for cycle tourists (board with map and basic information, brochures, flyers, personal advice)
- Basic bike repair kit (free)
- First aid kit (basic)
- Open during whole cycling season

Criteria obligatory or optional in the category shops where relevant

- Bike repair service
- Bike wash
- Basic bike repair kit (free)
- First aid kit (basic)
- Safe place to park bicycles (daytime)

Extra categories

In France there are 3 special categories that apply to camp sites and tourist attractions and are either obligatory or optional:

- Drinking water fountain available for cyclists (inside)
- Public toilets available for cyclists (inside)
- Baggage room available for cycle tourist

Requirements for displaying the certification logo or symbol of the certification at place

The visibility of the certified establishment is important information for the customer as well as for the certified service. In all researched countries, except in Italy, UK and Switzerland, it is requested and obligatory to display the logo or symbol of the cycle friendly certification at place in all relevant categories.

Formal agreement/contract with certified establishments

In all researched countries, except in the UK, it is requested to have Formal agreement/contract with certified establishments in all certified categories (with exception of France for gastronomy).

Evaluation of certified businesses

Quality control is important for the success and sustainability of cycle friendly certifications in all countries. On the other hand these controls are also connected to extra cost. **Regular monitoring visits** are obligatory for relevant categories in all researched countries except in Switzerland (not relevant) or are optional (Austria, Italy and Hungary)

- **Proposed minimal criteria on the European level**

Based on the 10 evaluated cycle friendly certifications managed by following organizations:

- **Germany** – ADFC – nationwide scheme
- **Lower Austria** – Weinviertel Tourismus GmbH.- regional scheme
- **Czech Republic** – Nadace Partnerství - nationwide scheme
- **Slovakia** – nadacia Ekopolis - nationwide scheme
- **Croatia** – NGO BiciKl - nationwide scheme
- **Switzerland** – Swiss Mobil - nationwide scheme
- **France** – France Velo Tourisme - nationwide scheme
- **Italy** – FIAB - nationwide scheme
- **UK** – CTC - nationwide scheme
- **Hungary** – Happy Bike Ltd.- regional scheme

that responded to a question on the **interest in common harmonized European criteria**, the following countries are ***in favor of having harmonized common obligatory criteria***: Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, Hungary and UK. Other countries, like Croatia, Switzerland or Slovakia, are favoring ***harmonized common optional*** criteria. France is against harmonized criteria in Europe.

Based on the feedback from the questionnaires, the following **minimal criteria for cycle friendly establishments on the European level are proposed**:

- *Accommodation for one night only*
- *Safe place for parking (overnight storage)*

- *Information for cycle tourists (board with map and basic information, brochures, flyers, personal advice)*
- *Basic bike repair kit (free)*

Common working group for cycle friendly certification on European level

The above mentioned organizations were also asked whether they would be interested in having a **common permanent group** on this topic and **regular exchange of experience**. All countries except Switzerland would like to have common permanent group on cycle friendly certifications and regular exchanges of experience on this topic on European level, either as obligatory or optional.

Communication of the cycle friendly certifications on the European level

Common web site for cycle friendly services

Further questions were dealing with common communication of the certification on European level. All partners agreed in their opinion that **common (umbrella) website** that would direct customers to national websites should be either obligatory or optional. The question whether to have a **common website for booking of individual services** was responded rather as optional (France was against).

All partners support also having a **common external communication** (in long term) of the cycle friendly certifications (as obligatory or optional) on the European level

Common design element in the logo or common logo (in long term)

The logos of all researched systems in Europe vary to some extent but also bear some resemblance. **Characteristic feature** is either (smiling) **bicycle** in all forms (historic, modern, female or male), **symbol of sleep** (bed) with **tag line** (name of the certification or the organization behind it). Since the logos are most visible part of the brand of each certification and since the logo is also disclosed in most cases at the service place, the organizations seem to be interested in sharing some design element in their logo or even having a common logo in long term.

4. Proposed common activities on the European level based on the study findings

Based on the evaluated responses from 13 countries, the following activities and the desk-based research it can be stated that a large **database of certified establishments** is not easily accessible for cycle tourists in various countries. To plan your cycling holidays requires knowledge of each national or even regional certification and lots of clicking, not to speak of the knowledge of several languages. In some cases the **websites** of similar certifications are linked but not on the most visible sections of the websites (mostly under links, partners). In order to speed up the navigation of customers to relevant web sites the current web sites could be linked in a simple way.

- **Linking various websites and database sharing**

The aim should be to make accessible **basic info about the establishments** in various countries (**data export** by national cycle friendly Managers) plus to **provide information on each web site about other certification schemes in Europe** – see example of the Czech web site www.cyklistevitani.cz.

How to proceed with data export – each national cycle friendly Manager **would make available data on certified establishments** in XLS or XML formats:

- ID (clear identifier in coordinator s database),
- name of establishment,
- address (street, number, town),
- tel 1,
- tel 2,
- e-mail,
- web,
- type of establishment (accommodation, catering, camp site, tourist destination),
- GPS position.

Access to available data can be protected by access code.

As an example CZ information:

<http://www.cyklistevitani.cz/cyklistevitani/admin/export/cyklistevitani.xml>

- **Collaboration among various brands of cycle friendly systems**

In order to collaborate among various brands of cycle friendly systems it is necessary first of all to agree on common goals, tools of communication and to define target groups. One of the goals for the working group on cycle friendly services should be to agree on common criteria for each category of cycle friendly services, tools for communication (web sites, printed materials, PR and press trips) and to search for common elements for a logo. It will be also necessary on European level to work closely with large hotel and catering industry groups on the recognition of the brand as well as with important EU bodies and European associations in cycle tourism.

One way how to collaborate among existing brands for cycle friendly establishments in Europe is to work with current researched certifications and try to derive similarities and basics in each system.

- **Promotion**

Main way of promotion of the **cycle friendly certifications on the European level** can be through a **common web site** (longer term) or of **sub site on existing web site** such as **www.eurovelo.com** (2012), on **www.visiteurope.com** and **www.visitgreenways.cz**. It is still a competitive advantage in the worldwide cycle tourism market that Europe can offer on tailor-made services, which are only slowly being developed in North America or Australia. In Canada or the USA, businesses are being certified based on European know-how. Only businesses that are certified as cycle friendly should be promoted as part of the cycle tourism destination on the European level. Customers should have an easy access to information on cycle friendly establishments not only online but also in maps and guidebooks (EuroVelo and others) along the main long distance cycle routes throughout Europe or in major cycle tourist destinations of our continent.

5. Proposed steps of further implementation

This topic was first discussed during a workshop at the **Berlin ITB on 10th March 2011**. The developed and mutually agreed concept will be sent out for discussion to European organizations (youth hostel federations, ETC etc.) and experts for comments. Also based on researched certifications schemes in Europe and interviews with ECF members we are **proposing following steps for the implementation of a European Cycling Friendly Service Network**:

- Establishment of **common working group** for cycle friendly certification on the European level, which will enable regular exchange of experience under ECF leadership and with representations of EGWA, ETC and other European authorities
- **Assistance** to new certification schemes in countries where these schemes do not exist yet, through ECF members (e.g. Finland, Bulgaria, Romania, Spain).
- Establishment of a common sub site for cycle friendly services under **www.eurovelo.com** (2012) and other related web sites of European Associations such as European Greenways Association (EGWA) and European Travel Commission (ETC) and with WTO.
- Agreement on **minimal criteria** for cycle friendly establishments **on the European level** as proposed for each category of service.
- Sharing of common existing **databases** of ECF members.
- Start **collaboration among existing brands**.
- **Promoting certification** of cycle friendly certifications in **EuroVelo maps** and **guidebooks** assuring regular updates and provision of database for publishing houses of cycle guide books.
- **Online promotion on European portals** for cycling tourism and active travel such as **www.eurovelo.com**, **www.visiteurope.com**, **www.visitgreenways.org** and **www.europemobil.info**.
- Promoting certification **to the travel industry** (travel fairs, conferences, familiarization trips) and journalists (press trips).
- Elaboration of study on **economic sustainability** of existing and new cycle friendly certification schemes.
- Elaboration of **benchmarking study** for schemes outside Europe.



Summary

The certification schemes in Europe started with German certification Bed and Bike in 1995 and the creation of similar schemes was accelerated in the new millennium. There is ongoing interest in the introduction of new schemes in countries where these standards are missing. The cycle friendly certifications strengthen **competitiveness of European SME's in the tourism sector**, help to streamline their **marketing activities** towards end clients and **promote sustainable forms of tourism** and mobility in general. Important is also **know-how transfer** from most advanced countries with strong cycle tourism tradition to newly emerging markets. Here especially the German ADFC played a leading role in introducing the certification process to countries such as Austria, Belgium, Luxemburg, the Czech Republic, Slovakia or Poland and in countries of South Eastern Europe.

The certifications will continue to emerge and it is advisable that this process is **observed and assisted by ECF** and their members. There are countries in Europe with long established and well developed tourist services like Switzerland or France that consider most of the criteria for certification as absolute standard that should be complied by every business almost automatically. But in most European countries it is still necessary to stress the special needs of cycle tourists. Cycle tourism represents rapidly growing market in Europe and as part of active travel it represents a **comparative advantage for European tourism** in competition with other regions. As such it should be therefore developed and promoted under **similar, unified criteria** as other European projects and accompany the activities of the EuroVelo routes and the ECF, as well as the EGWA associations. These standards should be also acknowledged by national and regional tourism authorities and the promotion of cycle tourism on the national level should be based only on certified cycle friendly establishments. As such, the scheme can be developed as a **European certification** with ECF assistance aiming at close collaboration of existing brands in mid-term horizon. In the meantime a **working group for cycle friendly services** should be established for regular exchanges of experience at the European level. Strong cycle friendly service systems will positively influence the cycle tourism market and will help create new, innovative cycle tourist products. The main benefactors will be not only the end customers but also European tour operators and travel agencies and the entire travel industry.

Attachment

Example from the nation-wide certification scheme in the **Czech Republic:**
Cyklisté vítáni / Cyclists Welcome/ Radfahrer Willkommen

Cyclists Welcome is a nation-wide certification scheme for the evaluation and control of long-term tourist offers and equipment of involved establishments. The certified establishments such as hotels, pensions, camp sites or tourist destinations such as castles, museums, tourist information centers etc. are labeled with a green-white logo bearing a smiling bicycle. The system for evaluating cycle friendly establishments is based on existing methodology developed in Germany and Austria.

Categories for certification:

- **Accommodation** (Hotels, B&B, private accommodation, chalets/cottages, camp sites and bungalows);
- **Gastronomy** (restaurants, pubs, wine establishments); and
- **Tourist attractions** (castles, chateaux, museums, tourist information services, open-air museums, natural sites).

What must a certified establishment offer?

- covered bicycle storage in the reach of guests, lockable storage/boxes for free bicycle and luggage parking
- basic bicycle repair tools for simple repairs
- First Aid kit
- Information board Bicyclists Welcome with news and contacts for bicycle services in the area and region

Above that the **accommodation establishments** will offer to cycle tourists

1. Accommodation just for 1 night
2. Offer of healthy breakfast
3. Amenities to wash and dry clothes and equipment

In the menu of **certified restaurants** you will encounter:

1. Offer of drinks catering to the needs of bicyclists incl. at least one refreshing "bicycle drink", fruit and herbal teas in price range not exceeding price of other non-alcoholic beverages and beer
2. Offer of at least one warm vegetarian non-fried meal during the entire opening time. The food offer must also contain meals with low content of fat (e.g. whole wheat pasta, vegetables, fruits)

Certified **camp sites** will guarantee:

1. A separate zone for tents for bicyclists and non-motorized guests

2. Preferably grass surface, smooth and flat
3. Bicycle parking near tents, no-fee policy for bicycles
4. Bicycle storage (coverable), lockable storage/boxes for free bicycle storage
5. Amenities to wash and dry clothes and equipment

In addition, certified establishments must fulfil a minimum of 3 of the following items:

1. Amenities to wash and dry clothes and equipment
2. Provision of basic spare parts for bicycles
3. Offer of Bicycle rental
4. List of Bicyclist Welcome accommodation options in the region
5. Transport of bicyclists and luggage
6. Sales of bicycling and tourist maps of the surroundings
7. Offer of one-day bicycle trips in the surroundings
8. Information/Booking service for area accommodation in bicycle friendly establishments
9. Internet access
- 10 Offer of lunch packets
11. Offer of a special Bike Menu
12. Possibility of cooking in kitchen facilities at camp sites
13. Possibility of shopping for basic groceries
14. Rental options for tents or bungalows

How does the certification work?

The Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation (Nadace Partnerství) has trained and accredited for implementation of this certification more than 50 evaluators-certifiers in all regions of the Czech Republic between 2004-2005. Once the criteria has been fulfilled by the establishment, an agreement about certification is signed which is displayed together with a logo bearing smiling bicycle at a visible place at the main gate.

Promotion of Cyclists Welcome on web portals and in printed materials, in cycle maps and guidebooks

Information about Cyclists Welcome establishments can be found at main web portals on cycle tourism such as www.cykloatlas.cz, www.cyklotoulky.cz, www.cykloturistika.cz and others. Certified establishments are also highlighted on most popular cycle tourist web sites as well as in all maps of Shocart publishing company and other publishing houses. You can also find all certified establishments at the original web site www.cyclistswelcome.eu and by using various criteria and you can evaluate the quality of services provided based on your own experience.

The most-read Czech magazines for cycle tourists recommend accommodation in Cyclists Welcome establishments and the new Catalogue Cyklisté vítání

Updated information on Cyclists Welcome in monthly magazine **Cykloturistika**, complete list of establishments in Cyklopedia. In popular „Tips for trips“ in Cykloturistika the certified establishments are regularly mentioned in all maps of routes and tourist regions of the Czech Republic. In 2011, the **second edition of Cyclist's welcome catalogue** for the **Czech Republic** and **Slovakia** was issued in printed version.