



Minutes – Annual National EuroVelo Coordination Centres and Coordinators' Meeting

Dates and times:

Thursday 18th September 2014, 12.00 – 18.00

Venue:

Carat Hotel, Weil-am-Rhein, Germany.

Attendees:

- mm Bodor, European Cyclists' Federation (ECF)
- Alper Ekmekci, Envercevko, Turkey
- Andrzej Zalewski, National EuroVelo Coordination, Poland
- Balazs Szollossy, KMSZ, Hungary
- Benjamin McEldowney, ECF
- Bjorn Johannsson, Icelandic Tourist Board, Iceland
- Boris Camernik, Danube Competence Center, Serbia
- Camille Thome, Departements et Regions Cyclables (DRC), France
- Christian Weinberger, Ecoplus, Austria
- Colm Ryder, Dublin Cycling Campaign, Ireland
- Daniel Mourek, Nadace Partnerstvı, Czech Republic
- Doug Corrie, Irish Sports Council, Ireland
- Ed Lancaster, ECF
- Eric Nijland, Landelijk Fietsplatform, Netherlands
- Evgeny Apostolov, Bulgarian Cycling Association, Bulgaria
- Feridun Ekmekci, Envercevko, Turkey
- Francis Mons, Association Francaise des Veloroutes et Voies Vertes (AF3V) France
- Gabi Bangel, Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club (ADFC), Germany
- Gerard Darnes, Vies Verdes de Girona, Spain
- Gilbert Perrin, Region Wallonne, Belgium
- Giulia Cortesi, Federazione Italiana Amici della Bicicletta (FIAB), Italy
- Gust Muller, Letzebuenger Velos-initiativ (LVI) Luxembourg
- Jesper Poerksen, VisitEastDenmark, Denmark
- Jesus Freire, ECF
- Kaethi Diethelm, EuroVelo Council (Chair)
- Lukas Stadtherr, SwitzerlandMobility Foundation, Switzerland
- Marc Linsig, AF3V, France
- Marek Zamana, National EuroVelo Coordination, Poland
- Maria Csikai, Kerekparos Magyarorszag Szovetseg (KMSZ), Hungary
- Marit Espeland, Norwegian Public Roads Administration, Norway
- Martyn Brunt, Sustrans, UK
- Monique Goldschmit, Letzebuenger Velos-initiativ (LVI), Luxembourg
- Raitis Sijats, Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia
- Tomislav Panenic, Danube Competence Center, Croatia

Introduction

Kaethi Diethelm (KD), the Chair, opens the meeting and welcomes everyone to the Basel area. She explains that she involved in EuroVelo (EV) for many years now and it has been inspiring in recent times to see so much EuroVelo signposting appear on her daily commute, especially now with the addition of EV15.

In her role as chair of the EV Council, it has also been great to see the progress of EV coordination with this now stable yearly meeting. A sign of this maturity was the introduction this year of national contributions to the funding of central coordination, which will be a topic of discussion later in the programme.

There is much still to develop together; so once again, she welcomes one and all to the Basel area.

Agenda for the day

Adam Bodor (AB) gives information about the coming days' programme and introduces the day's agenda:

- Section 1 – NECC/Cs - A chance to share experiences
- Section 2 – ECF's services to its national coordinators
- Section 3 – New routes and extensions
- Later - Any other business

Who's Who

Introductions of all present.

Section 1: NECC/Cs

KD Introduces Lukas Stadherr (LS) to present SwitzerlandMobility Foundation as host NECC.

Presentation from the host NECC/C

LS thanks Gabi Bangel for letting Switzerland be 'host', even if the meeting is just within German territory!

LS introduces himself - working in Olten for 12 years on the SwitzerlandMobility product, which combines cycling, walking, mountain biking, rollerblading and canoeing tourism offers. A small town but right in the middle of Switzerland so a good base for coordination.

[See LS presentation.](#)

Questions for LS

Jesper Poerksen, Denmark – Where did the financing come from?

LS -Until 2008 it was mainly public financing. They then went to market in 2008 to attract commercial partners. National cycling plan was based on the model of 1 canton (of 26).

First came the cycling development work and then addition of the walking, mtb products on top of this structure. "What worked in 1 canton could work in all 26. What worked for cycling could work for MTB. What worked for Switzerland could work for Europe?"

Doug Corrie, Ireland (DC) – how does SwitzerlandMobility manage its relations with commercial partners?

LS- There is a process in place for partnerships - manual available on switzerlandmobility.org
There are several criteria for partners to auto-evaluate, which are then backed up by customer feedback. A similar approach to what we see in Germany and France from *Bett&Bike / Accueil Vélo*.

Colm Ryder, Ireland – How many staff do you have?

LS- This varies as different consultants are employed – but 7 people are working full time on SwitzerlandMobility.

Gabi Bangel, Germany- How long did it take for national tourism board to fully accept the idea?

LS- A long time, of course! But since they have been involved (for approximately the last 5 years) - they have been extremely involved.

Christian Weinberger, Austria (CW) –

Some business figures – what has the impact of SwitzerlandMobility been on general cycling / walking participation numbers? LS - estimates a 5-10% rise per year but one must take into account a multitude of other factors.

Presentation from the newest NECC/C

Doug Corrie (DC) gives a presentation focusing on the creation of a new national coordination centre in Ireland – it will be a brief introduction of current status and the member groups.

[See DC Presentation](#)

Additional points - EV2 will most likely be completed first, as some infrastructure is already in place and new development projects are already underway.

We should note the suitability of Irish country roads for cycling (as shown with EV1 in Donegal), so fewer sections of dedicated cycling facilities will be necessary than one might imagine.

DC proposes two topics for discussion

- Land ownership issues (e.g. acquiring private land for cycle routes)
- Ideal management structures for cycle route development.

It is agreed to return to the second topic before lunch.

Questions and comments for DC

CW– There is (comparatively) a lot of public land in Austria, so this is less of a problem. But in these cases the key is not to force conflict with the insurance policies of landowners. Provision of sufficient insurance and guarantees to landowners can help to win them over.

Martyn Brunt, UK (MB) – could go into a lot of detail on this topic – Sustrans has come to many different arrangements for many different problems over the years. Dealing with these issues is necessary, yet very resource heavy.

MB - very impressed with the structure of the NECC, involving players from so many different sectors. How did you make it happen?

DC - It looks very good on paper, but this is the initial phase, and a lot of the arrangements have been made at distance. Cautious to speak too soon before meetings with all partners present become a regular event.

AB - remarks on land purchase: compulsory purchase orders are used in Hungary and local communities must buy land. This takes a lot of money and a lot of time but provides a sustainable solution afterwards.

MB considers this a last resort politically.

Jesper Poerksen – explains that in Denmark, land has a certification for the route only, which is officially stamped, while the land remains the landowner's property.

DC – a 'right of way' sounds like a similar concept.

KD, LS – similar in CH where right of way is retained regardless of owners.

Bjorn Johansson, Iceland (BJ) – In Iceland, any land not within townships or cities gives the public the 'right to roam'. Interested to see how this will translate to cycle paths and route development.

Presentation on progress in Serbia

Boris Camenic (BC) takes the floor to introduce the organisation in Serbia which has applied to become the NEC.

[See BC presentation](#)

Questions to BC

Raitis Saijats, Latvia – what about EuroVelo 11? In many countries, including Latvia, the route seems very theoretical, and in terms of tourism promotion it is still 'before birth'.

KD points out that routes can be removed from, as well as added to, the network!

AB agrees that although this issue hasn't come up much so far it is maybe time for more discussion – given the success and the pace of development that some routes are seeing, there is space for evaluation of less successful routes.

Presentation on progress in Spain

Jesus Freire (JF) presents the ECF's recent efforts to encourage the formation of a Coordination Centre in Spain.

[See JF Presentation.](#)

Presentation on establishing route itinerary committees

Camille Thomé, France (CT) introduces route itinerary committee, which have been set up to devolve decision making to relevant committees for each route itinerary.

[See CT Presentation](#)

Presentation on new EuroVelo signing

Daniel Mourek (DM) and Christian Weinberger (CW) present of signposting EV13 in [Czech Republic](#) and in [Austria](#)

DM raises issue of closing EuroNight services – time for action to save night train to Copenhagen. Added to AOB

KD asks for general questions on the management topic (see DC, BC, JF and CT presentations).

Colm Ryder to CT – It seems a very logical system – what are the considerations in choosing suitable stakeholders?

CT – Take EV1 as an example – the focus is on county level instead of regional. Avoid cities unless a big pull, such as Nantes on EV 1 or Paris on EV 3. Address investors on the regional level, while addressing cycle friendly services on the county level – important to separate relevant competences.

Not all regions and counties accepted this approach – especially financial contributions. They want the results but not to pay. Sometimes counties are members of the committee's without their region's presence. Coordination staff are part of regional bodies and paid for from coordination fund.

LS adds – Swiss approach is to start work before having agreements of all regions, in any case when a critical mass is reached, the others cannot ignore.

CT- Agrees - jealousy can help!

Eric Nijland – Ask if one organisation refuses to pay coordination charges, what to do with the missing link? A minimum is required as would be poor marketing to show that they are missing. A balance has to be found surely?

MB – Sustrans tried this approach by leaving a ‘black hole’ on the map – it was filled very quickly!

MB – Question to DM - Very difficult to add EuroVelo symbols to road signs – problems with Department for Transport in the UK when routes are not traffic-free/ or Sustrans-owned.

AB proposes that we return to this topic under AOB

Lunch

The status of the ECF services for NECC/Cs

ECF staff give presentations on several topics.

See Ed Lancaster (EL) presentation on [Status of EuroVelo services](#) and [EuroVelo Web manual](#) and Ben McEldowney and Jesus Freire presentation on [Web & Social Media strategy](#)

Questions from the floor

CW - Where can we get advice for website development?

EL – The EuroVelo web manual is designed as a basis for this. JF adds that we are starting to include provisions for national websites in EU funding bids e.g. EV12 and EV5 this coming year.

Colm Ryder – Raises issue about EuroVelo.org website appearing to have been hacked as shown in Google search results. Asks what is being done about it?

BM – We are aware of this issue and unfortunately it is rather a thorn in the side of our web developers. They have already removed the content twice but the vulnerability remains. They are looking at other methods of protecting the site at the moment.

DM - Should subportals such as Rhinecyclerroute.eu and EuroVelo13.com be promoted separately?

JF- The structure gives the opportunity to do both. Good practice is to promote EuroVelo.com in general information and subportals in route-specific literature. Either way the sites are linked and interdependent.

Maria Csikai (MC), Hungary - Website should do more to provide advice/legal information for cycle tourists in each country.

AB, EL, JF and BM agree, AB asks NECCs to think more about what services the website can provide, feedback is always welcome.

Draft EuroVelo Monitoring Manual

AB gives a presentation on monitoring

[See AB presentation](#)

CW offers Radlobby's data on their monitoring processes

Andrzej Zalewski highlights the importance of comparing monitoring and analysis across Europe. A standardized method helps give results credibility on national level. Not only measurement but prediction of results from infrastructure.

CT to AB – Will you take the EuroVelo 6 manual into account?

AB confirms that he will but certain points are not as relevant for less developed countries.

MB also offers Sustrans' full support and data collected since 1995.

AB starts sign up for a future Monitoring working group – MB, CW, AZ, MC.

Eric Nijland – In joint regional/national/international route, who takes the credit for success?

AB says it is exactly a point for monitoring at all these levels.

Gilbert Perrin (GP, Belgium) agrees - a survey should take into account which route 'brand' people are following.

The recognition and financing of EuroVelo

AB gives a presentation on the [recognition and financing of EuroVelo](#)

Big news is the proposal for a dedicated budget line for EuroVelo in next years' CEF budget including (5 million increasing year on year) [in the end this budget line was not approved by the European Parliament's Budget Committee]

CR notes that he finds it harder to access decision makers in EU funding, than on the national level. AB offers the ECF's support on this issue – with the advantage of writing from an EU perspective.

Raitis Sijats – describes cycling being simply cut out of budget in Latvia. By lobbying efforts they regained this budget from the Ministry of Environment. European dimension adds weight, Michael Cramer's visit got national politicians interested. Finally substantial funding was approved in Latvia for the current period.

The national contributions

[See EL presentation](#)

CW Response – Still unsure where to find the funds for the national contribution on a sustainable basis; Integration of the national coordination into Radlobby and launch of website will help, but difficult to persuade tourism partners.

DC emphasises that finding the funding once is fairly easy, but year-on-year not guaranteed.

GP asks participants to put this level of spending into context with institutions' spending on European road congress etc. It really is a negligible amount in comparison with other costs.

DM requests seamless inclusion of all partners in EU funding calls as a result of their funding the coordination.

Coffee break

The End