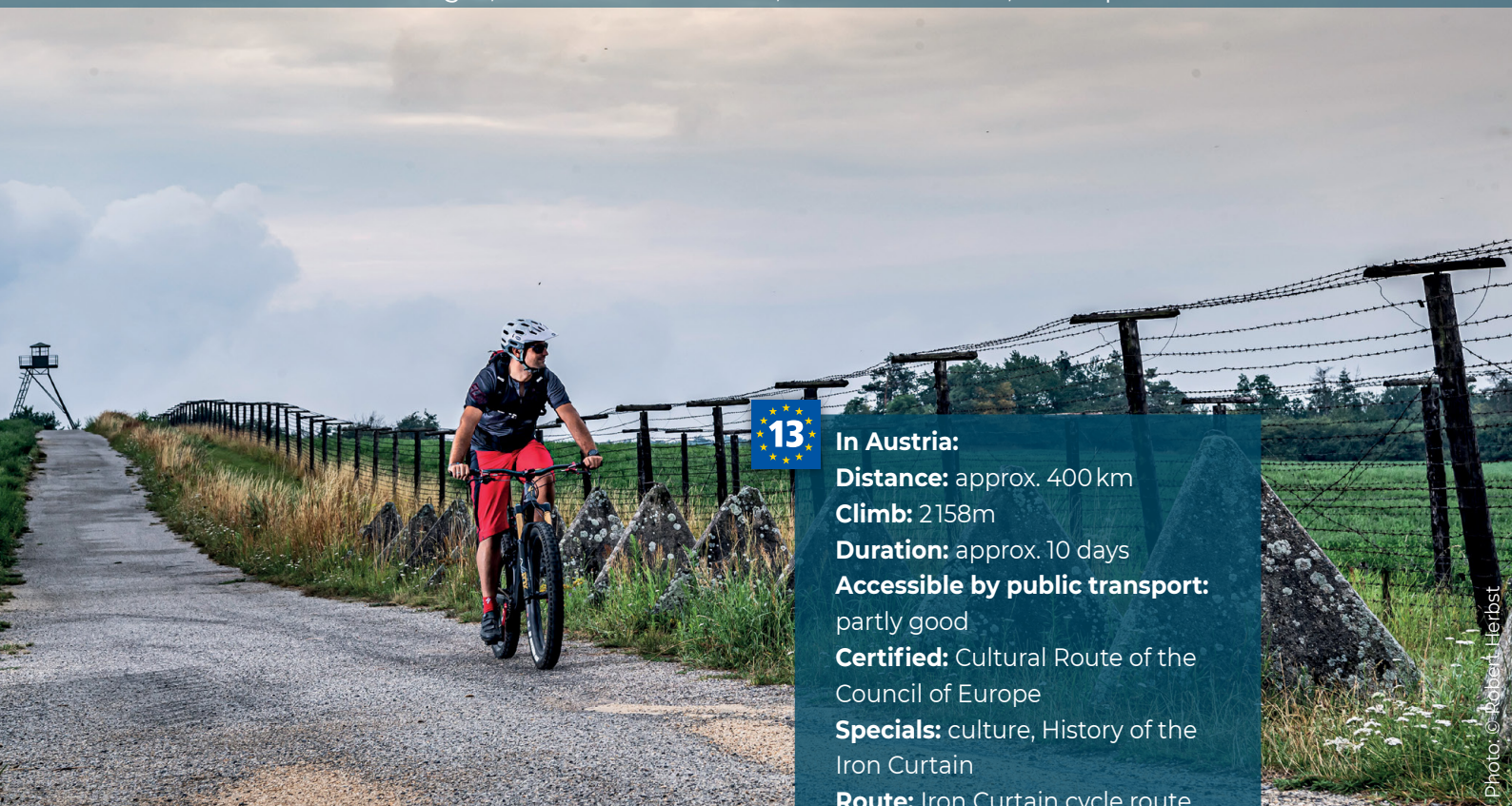




EuroVelo 13

Experience the history of the division of Europe

10550km length, **20** crossed countries, **14** UNESCO sites, **3** European seas



In Austria:

Distance: approx. 400 km

Climb: 2158m

Duration: approx. 10 days

Accessible by public transport:
partly good

Certified: Cultural Route of the
Council of Europe

Specials: culture, History of the
Iron Curtain

Route: Iron Curtain cycle route

Photo: © Robert Herbst

www.eurovelo.at

Key:



Recommended railway stations www.oebb.at



Bett+Bike
www.bettundbike.de



Place of interest (see text)

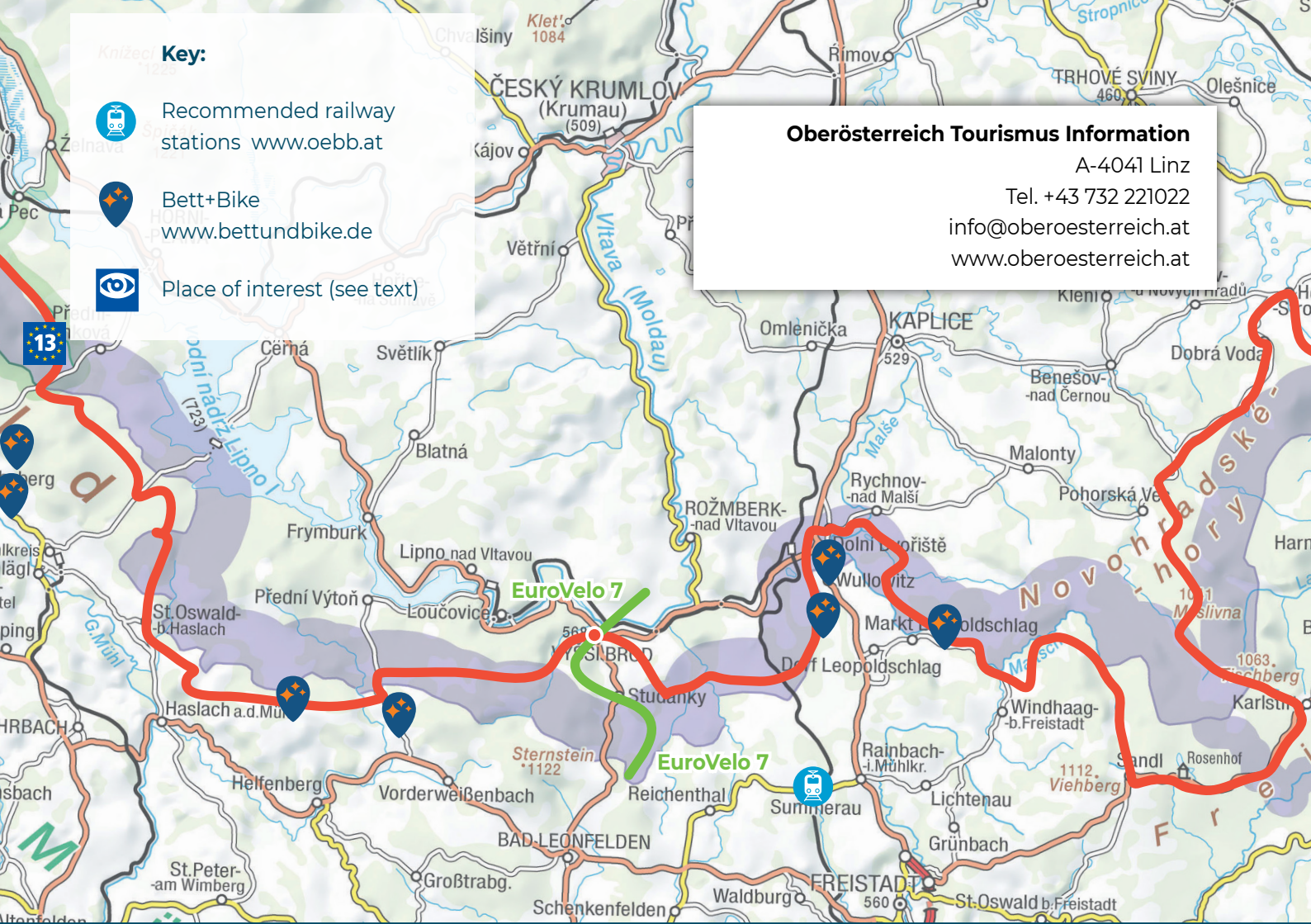
Oberösterreich Tourismus Information

A-4041 Linz

Tel. +43 732 221022

info@oberoesterreich.at

www.oberoesterreich.at



Waldviertel Tourismus

A-3910 Zwettl

Tel. +43 2822 54109

info@waldviertel.at

www.waldviertel.at



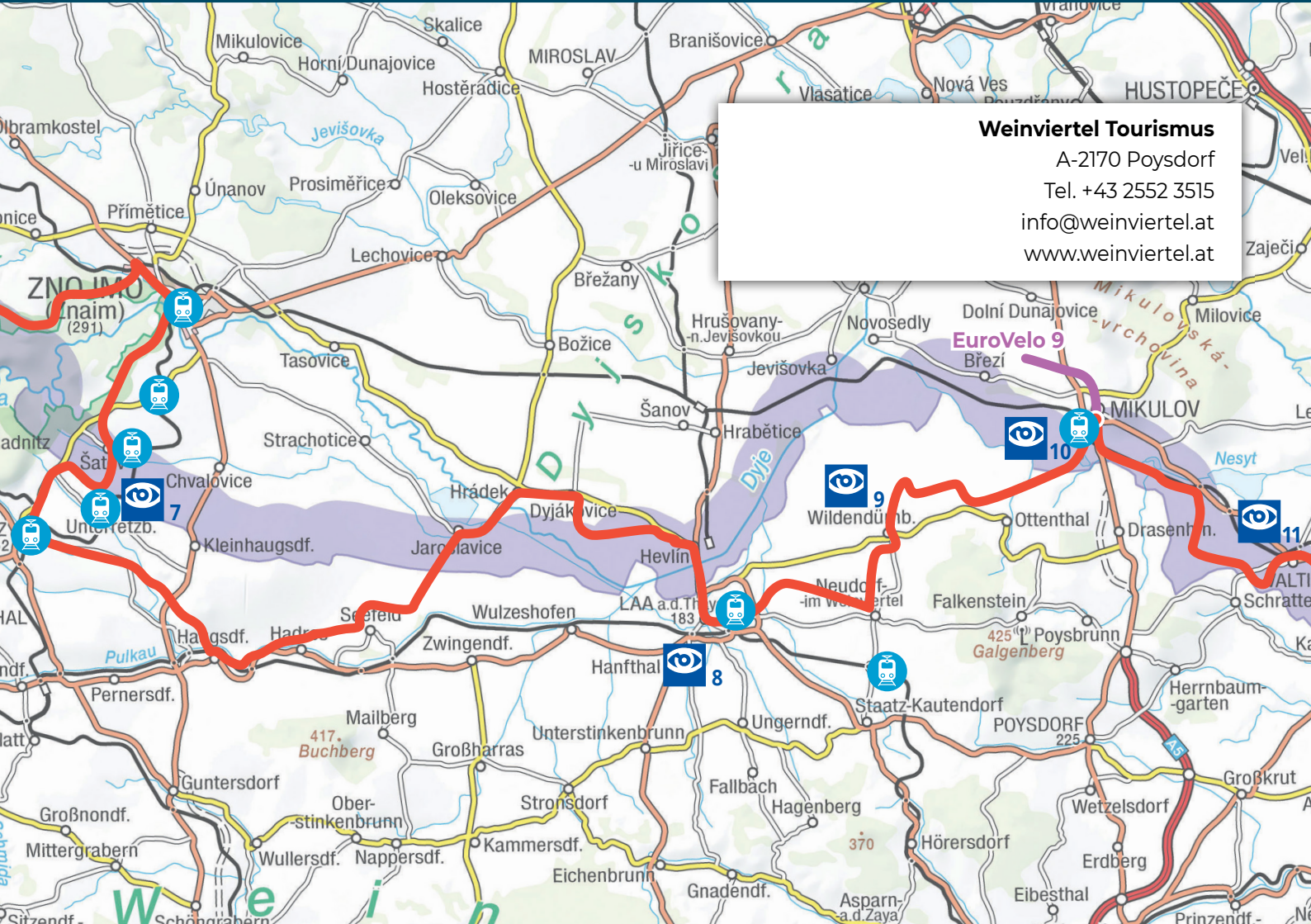
Niederösterreich-Information
A-3100 St. Pölten
Tel. +43 2742 9000-9000
office@noe.co.at
www.niederoesterreich.at

Niederösterreich-Information
A-3100 St. Pölten
Tel. +43 2742 9000-9000
office@noe.co.at
www.niederoesterreich.at

Niederösterreich-Information
A-3100 St. Pölten
Tel. +43 2742 9000-9000
office@noe.co.at
www.niederoesterreich.at

Niederösterreich-Information
A-3100 St. Pölten
Tel. +43 2742 9000-9000
office@noe.co.at
www.niederoesterreich.at

Niederösterreich-Information
A-3100 St. Pölten
Tel. +43 2742 9000-9000
office@noe.co.at
www.niederoesterreich.at



Weinviertel Tourismus

A-2170 Poysdorf

Tel. +43 2552 3515

info@weinviertel.at

www.weinviertel.at

EuroVelo 9

Břežl

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11

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Poysbrunn

Gaigenberg

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AS

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Asparn

a.d.Zaya

Eibesthal

Prinzndf

N

EuroVelo 13 runs along the Austrian border with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, where the contemporary history of the East-West division of Europe can be experienced as you cycle along the former death strip, now the “Green Belt”. As historically interesting and naturally beautiful as the route is, the often hilly topography requires a certain level of fitness.

For almost 40 years the Iron Curtain divided Europe into East and West, until it was torn down in 1989. A wide strip along the border was depopulated, militarised and had become an impassable barrier. The renaturalisation, has turned the area into a habitat for rare and endangered animal and plant species and thus into the European Green Belt.

Coming from the Bavarian-Czech border, you can visit the Cistercian monastery in Vyssi Brod (CZ), the “Museum of the Green Belt” in Leopoldschlag



Photo: © Waldviertel Tourismus, St. Kerschbaum

and the “Green Belt Center” in Windhaag/Upper Austria.

Other highlights along the route include the Harbach healing moor-baths, the Kuenringerstadt of Weitra and

its brewery, as well as the “Iron Curtain” exhibition in the castle and the “Iron Curtain” open-air museum at the border crossing of Kadolec / Nove Hrad. Along the route you can also pass the Renaissance town of Slavonice, Austria's smallest town, Hardegg, and the cross-border National Park.

As the next stops on EuroVelo 13, we recommend the bunker complex and the remains of the Iron Curtain near Satov (CZ), the historic wine town of Retz with its underground labyrinth and Laa an der Thaya,

which boasts a historic town centre and renowned thermal baths.

We continue through the **Galgenberg** cellar alley to the historic town of Mikulov, where you can take in its castle and the nearby “Gate to Freedom” monument nearer to Sedlec. The route continues through the UNESCO cultural landscape near Lednice (CZ) and onto Valtice, which has its own Iron Curtain Museum.

Finally, we go through one of the most exiting wetlands in Central Europe, the **March/Thaya floodplains** from Hohenau to Devinska Nova Vez. To get there you cross the spectacular “Bridge of Freedom” to **Schlosshof**, the second largest baroque palace complex of the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy. On the Slovakian side, you cycle via **Devin /Thebes Castle** at the confluence of the Morava and the Danube, from

where a ferry goes to Hainburg. Hainburg is located only a few kilometers from Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. Alternatively, you can choose the Austrian parallel route between Hohenau and Schloss Hof. From Bratislava, the route leads along the border to the historic **bridge near Andau**, on to **Lake Neusiedl**, the historic city of **Sopron** and finally south to Lutzmannsburg and Szentgotthard (HU).





HIGHLIGHTS



Weitra: “Iron Curtain” exhibition

www.schauplatz-eiserner-vorhang.at



Photo: © Waldviertel Tourismus, www.ishootpeople.at



Reingers – Transitions of forests and ponds in the border region of the Waldvier- tel and South Bohemia

Forests characterize the landscape of the Waldviertel and South Bohemia. Forest

clearings and ponds in between give the landscape an illuminating charm. One of these places is Leopoldsdorf, a town in Austria's northernmost municipality, Reingers. Soon the beauty of the pond in the middle of the village is replaced by the breathtaking scenery of the forests of „Bohemian Canada“. The Iron Curtain once stretched through these forest areas as a deadly barrier. The first barriers were built in 1951



Photo: © Ernst Miglbauer

and dismantling began at the end of 1989.



The transformation of the cross-border Route of the “Thayabahn” into the “Thayarunde” for cyclists

The Thaya Valley Railway between Waidhofen an der Thaya and Slavonice was opened in 1903. Only open between the two cities for 15 years, it reached the end of its lifespan as a functioning railway line in 1918.

The new state border, as well as the impending war that led to the construction of the Iron Curtain, the railway line remained desolate. However, in 2011, work began on converting the railway into a cycle path. Six years later, the Thayarunde was opened

as a top cycle route between Waidhofen and Slavonice. Amazingly, in the former Waldkirchen train station, old railway wagons are being converted into original overnight accommodations - certified as bike-friendly hotels with Bed+Bike certification.



Views from the oldest city wall in Austria in Drosendorf



Photo: © Ernst Miglbauer

It is the only completely preserved city wall in Austria built at the end of the 12th century. In 1278 the city had to be defended for sixteen days against the army of King Ottokar Premysl, as it made its way towards the Battle of Marchfeld. Today a circular promenade route leads around the medieval town on the Thayaschleife.



Nationalpark Thayatal www.np-thayatal.at



Retz www.retzer-land.at



Border crossings from the Waldviertel to the Weinviertel near Retz and Retzbach

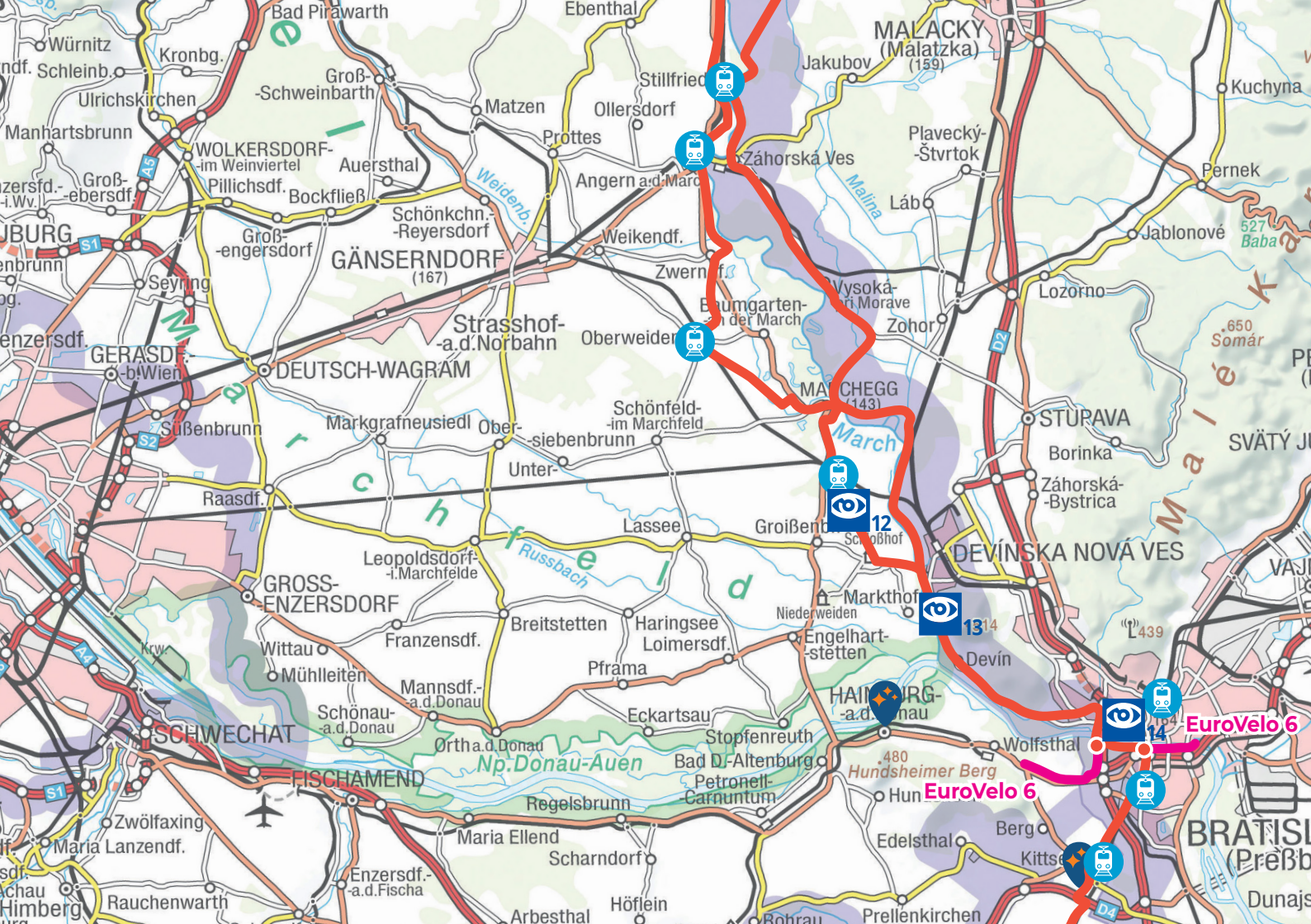
For the first time along its entire route from northern to

southern Europe, cyclists enter the wine regions on the Iron Curtain Trail near Retz and Retzbach. The coexistence of forest and wine, each with their very different geological foundations, is unmistakable. But the division is not that simple. This is because the neighboring community of Hardegg, with 90% forest, is already part of the Weinviertel (literally translated to the "Wine Quarter") - and no

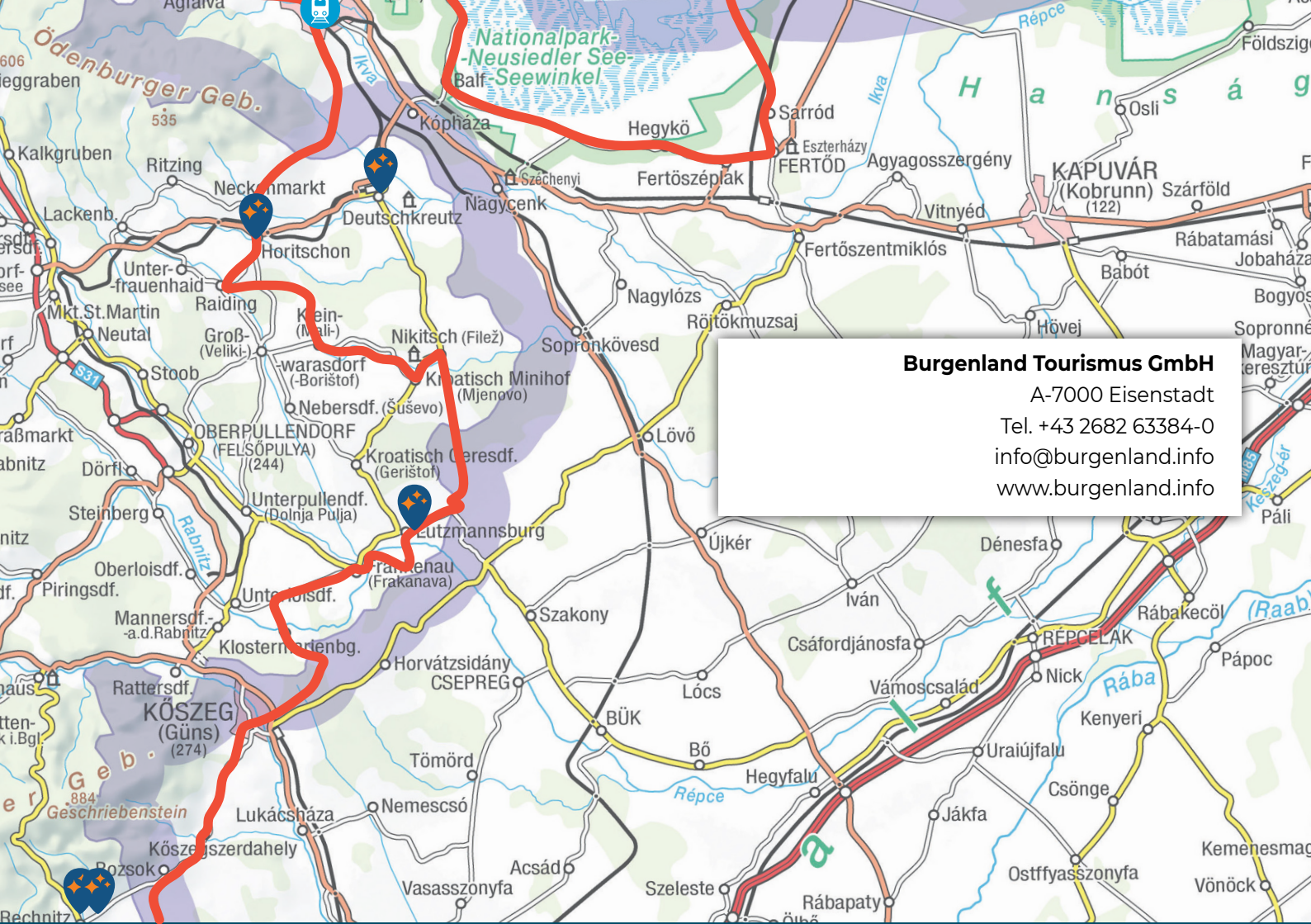


Photo: © Weinviertel Tourismus, Mandl









Burgenland Tourismus GmbH

A-7000 Eisenstadt

Tel. +43 2682 63384-0

info@burgenland.info

www.burgenland.info

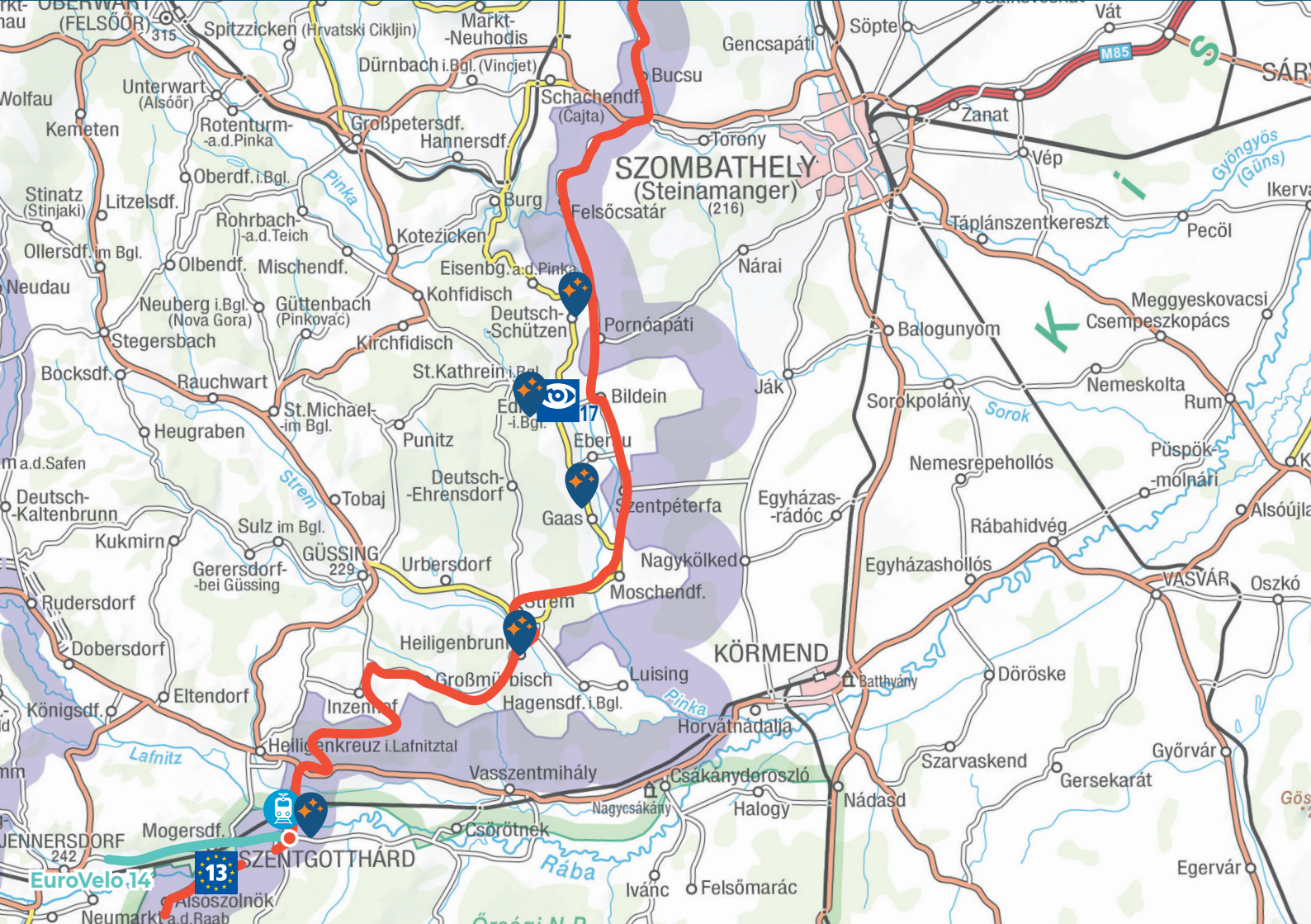




Photo: © Waldviertel Tourismus, Studio Kerschbaum

longer part of the Waldviertel. With climate change, wine producing regions may move more into the Waldviertel in the future.



In Hanfthal, a lot revolves around the Plant-based all-rounder

Hemp is the globetrotter among cultivated plants. After setting off from China to Euro-

pe 4,000 years ago. It arrived in Hanfthal ("Hemp Valley"), among other places, in 1356. Today, a lot of things revolve around the plant based all-rounder. Insulating materials are made from its fibres and hemp oil is cold-pressed from its seeds. Hemp honey, hemp chocolate and hemp crackers are also available for cycling provisions in the "Hanfland" shop.



Kellergasse Galgenberg near Wildendürnbach

Until 1828 there were gallows on the hill north of Wildendürnbach. Today the Galgenberg, in the vicinity of the South Moravian wine region, is known not only for its excellent wines, but also for its idyllic cellar alley with 184 press houses and wine cellars. In 2013 it was chosen as the "Kellergasse of the Year". Kellergasse means "Cellar Alley".



Photo: © Ernst Miglbauer



The “Gateway to Freedom” in Mikulov commemorates the tragic end of the pursuit of freedom

In the death strip between Czechoslovakia and Austria, 129 people died in escape attempts between its construction and 1989. Since 2014, the “Gate to Freedom” memorial on EuroVelo 13 near Mikulov has commemorated those who died on the border. The steel plates with the engraved



Photo: © Ernst Miglbauer

names of these people reminds us of the tragedies of the failed escape attempts in the border strip between Moravia and Austria. Mikulov was chosen as the location of the memorial by the citizens' initiative Paměť (Remembrance) because this is where the striving for freedom of many people ended with their death.



The boundless cultural landscape of Lednice-Valtice, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Seven years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the cultural landscape around the Lednice-Valtice Castles was awarded with the title of UNESCO World Heritage Site. Inspired by English garden art, it was created in the Thaya floodplains at the



Photo: © Hans Miglbauer

beginning of the 18th century under Prince Johann I of Liechtenstein. A small castle is built right in the middle of the border between Austria and Moravia, but entirely on the land of the Lords of Liechtenstein, who are well established in both countries. With the founding of the new neighboring republics after the First World War, the border took on its current course.



Schloss Hof

Photo: © Schloss Schoenbrunn Betriebsges.m.b.H., Hurnaus



Schloss Hof

www.schlosshof.at



Castle (ruin) Devín/

Theben visitbratislava.com/de/setzt/burg-devin



Bratislava

www.visitbratislava.com/de



Nationalpark Neusiedlersee Seewinkel

www.nationalparkneusiedlersee.at



Sankt Margarethen/ Sopronköhida – The beginning of the fall of the Iron Curtain on Hungary's border with Austria in 1989

On May 2, 1989, the dismantling of the border barriers on

the Iron Curtain began on the Austrian- Hungarian border. At the end of June 1989, the pictures of the then-foreign ministers Gyula Horn and Alois Mock cutting through the border fence using bolt cutters near Sankt Margarethen/ Sopronköhida spread across the world. On August 19, 1989, over 600 GDR citizens took advantage of the brief opening of the Iron Curtain to cross



Bratislava

Photo: © Matej Kovac



Photo: © NP Neusiedler See - Seewinkel

unhindered into Austria. The refugee movement to the West after the “Pan-European Picnic” became one of the defining events of the turning point year that was 1989.



Bildein – The village without borders

The municipality of Bildein on the border with Hungary is small but powerful: the 5- kilometre-long border experience trail draws attention to various former border stations such as watchtowers, bunkers and border bridges. The award-winning “history house” introduces the history and stories of Austria’s newest federal state, accompanied by contemporary witnesses. To reflect, we recommend stopping at the bike-friendly Lendl’s Bakery. The café-pastry


shop, which was awarded the “Golden Coffee Bean” by Gault Millau in 2005, also serves delicious “Bildeiner Lebkuchen”



Photo: © Adella Glocknitzer

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