

Within the framework of the IronCurtainCycling project, an international partnership consisting of Hungarian and Slovenian partners had worked for 3 and a half years to create a common cycling tourist destination in the border region. As a result of the complex developments, a coherent cycling network was established along the EV13 cycling route, several cycling-friendly service areas were formed, and joint cross-border packages were created. Thanks to the activities of the project, the Slovenian-Hungarian border region became even more attractive for bicycle tourists.

The results of the IronCurtainCycling project can be traced back to two main activities. On the one hand, through the development of joint products and services, the previously isolated tourist attractions in the SI-HU border area have become more visible and competitive, and they have also become active elements of local and cross-border tourism. As part of the service development, the partnership created joint tourism offers, developed a mobile app, released a cycling map, and organized various events. Local service providers and tour guides were able to participate in special trainings and workshops, which contributed to the closer cooperation between different tourism actors, thus ensuring the provision of quality services. In addition, complex bicycle service centres have become available in the Hungarian and Slovenian region. As part of this, modern bicycle rest areas and rentals, e-bike charging stations, as well as cycle-friendly accommodations and the Iron Curtain open-air museum were created. Another significant result of the project is the signposting of the Hungarian-Slovenian section of the EV-13 international cycling route, and also the regional cycling routes. Moreover, a new cycling connection between the two countries have been established. Thanks to a unified and coherent route network, cross-border tourism packages will remain attractive in the long run. Overall, the project has contributed to the development of high-quality services and visitor-friendly infrastructure in the border region, which is expected to attract a large number of tourists to the area after the pandemic will be over.

Main achieved results

Development of an attractive, connected Slovenian-Hungarian cycling route network connected to the Iron Curtain (EuroVelo 13) international cycling route

An integrated network of cycling routes across the Slovenian and Hungarian borders has been established, with a total length of 344.3 km. The developments covered the following areas:

- In cooperation with the Infrastructure Directorate of the Republic of Slovenia, the 79.3 km-long EV13 international cycling route between Martinje and Pince was signposted. 13 km of access roads leading to the settlements along the EV13 route was signposted.
- 20 signposts were placed on the 42 km-long cycling route near Ptuj and Ormož.
- In the area of Murska Sobota, a total of 50 signposts were placed on the 60 km-long cycling network.
- 81 signposts were erected on the routes of the 90 km-long regional cycling network in Zala county.
- In addition, 5 Iron Curtain memorial sites were signposted during the project: Apátistvánfalva; Határköpark (Szalafő-Pityerszer); Barátság Park (Bödeháza); Riganóci Őrtorony (Bödeháza); Lovászi légópince.

- During the signposting of the routes leading to the Iron Curtain memorial sites, 29 signposts were placed on the 25 km-long section in Vas county and 12 signposts on the 35 km-long section in Zala county.



Signposting in Slovenia



Signposting in Hungary

Development of joint tourism services in order to increase the attractiveness of the connected Iron Curtain Hungarian-Slovenian cycling network

Within the IronCurtainCycling project, different tourism services have been developed. These are the following:

- Building on the cycling and green routes, the partnership developed the concept and publication of regional thematic routes, in which a total of 7 themes were identified: Iron Curtain Alternative Route, Route of Towns from the Drava to Zala, Aquila Thematic Route, Cycling Thermal Route, Kerka Thematic Route, Guard-Goricko Cycling Route and Mura Cycling Route (<http://www.icc.zala.hu/dokumentumok>, IronCurtainCycling EN_DE.pdf).
- The four-language cycling tourist map has been completed, which includes the project partnership area, the connected cycling networks, important elements of the natural and cultural heritage of the area, as well as the major tourist attractions.
- The partnership has developed a modern, user-friendly mobile application (Cycling Slovenia-Hungary) that interactively presents the service packages identified and developed within the project, the important elements of the regional routes, and the major tourist attractions.
 - Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=hu.infotec.ironcurtaincycling>
 - iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/cycling-slovenia-hungary/id1472497433>
- Rental stations were built in the following settlements: Rakičan, Murska Sobota, Krog.
- Resting places were established in the following settlements: Gáborjánháza, Szijártóháza, Lovászi, Bakovci, Krog, Prosenjakovci, Genterovci, Lendva, Dolga Vas, Svetinje, Ormož, Jeruzalem.
- Resting places with e-bike charging stations were built in the following settlements: Centiba, Hotiza, Csesztreg, Kistolmács, Lenti, Páka.
- e-bike charging station were built in the following settlement: Apátistvánfalva.
- 59 bikes and 19 e-bikes were purchased.



Resting places in Slovenia (Bakovci, Jeruzalem) and in Hungary (Kistolmács)



Normal and electric bikes

Establishing a qualified and cooperative tourism service network in the Hungarian-Slovenian cross-border region

Thanks to the success of the project, a total of 461 people took part in various events:

- Study trip to Burgenland (20 June 2018) and to the region (27 June 2018).
- Tour guide trainings (10 times) from 10 December 2018 to 26 January 2019.
- Local workshops: 21 September 2018 and 2 October 2018 in Óriszentpéter; 9 October 2018 in Ormož, 7 December 2018 and 14 December 2018 in Murska Sobota; 23 May 2018 and 13 June 2018 in Lenti, 5 July 2018 and 10 July 2018 in Lendava.
- 2 Border Region Workshops (April 5, 2019 in Lenti and February 5, 2020 in Rakičan).



Workshop with service providers



Tour guide training

Other infrastructural elements

- The “Határköpark” outdoor exhibition was established in Szalafő.
- Accommodations in the form of glamping houses were built in Čentiba.
- The Lendvadedes-Dedeskecskés-Dolga Vas road connection was built, which is 1.93 km long.



Határköpark in Szalafő



New accommodations in Čentiba



Newly built road between Slovenia and Hungary

In order to promote the EuroVelo13 cycling route, the cycling and the natural and cultural values of the border area, several events and various promotional activities were implemented

- Tours and family days.
- International EuroVelo13 conference and open day.
- Photos and short film (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvzaYE03_-w).
- Online marketing campaigns.
- Participating in fairs.
- Publications and brochures.
- Stamping system.



International EuroVelo13 conference and open day

Partners co-operated in the project implementation:

- Zala County Government, Hungary
- Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj, Slovenia
- Institute for Culture, Tourism and Sport Murska Sobota, Slovenia
- Self Government Office of Vas County, Hungary
- West Pannon Regional and Economic Development Public Nonprofit Ltd, Hungary
- Municipality of Lendava, Slovenia
- National Infrastructure Developing Private Company Limited, Hungary

Project duration: 15.08.2017-14.02.2021

Total budget of the project: 2.291.422,99 Euro

*The project was supported by the Interreg V-A Slovenia-Hungary Cooperation Programme
and co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund.*

