



Best practice bicycle safety – improvement fact sheet

Tourism

Overview

Data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) show that tourism is **one of the world's major economic sectors**. It is the third-largest export category (after fuels and chemicals), accounted for 7% of global trade in 2019, supports **one in ten jobs** and provides livelihoods for many millions of people in both developing and developed economies. For some countries, it represents over 20% of their gross domestic product (GDP) [1]. According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), a market which was growing twice as fast as general tourism from 2015–2017 was the so called **wellness tourism** defined “as travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one’s personal wellbeing”. Wellness tourism was valued at more than 641 billion dollars global market in 2019 and it is estimated that it will grow by 315 billion dollars during 2020–2024 [3, 12]. Recently, the notion of wellness tourism has started to include also **active travel**, including cycling [4]. Hectic work schedules and sedentary lifestyles have resulted in a decline in physical activities among people, leading to a rise in lifestyle-related problems, therefore many people wish to be active while traveling [3].

With the Covid-19 pandemic and tourism being one of the most affected sectors, **cycling**, on the other hand, is **gaining popularity**. **Cycling tourism**, defined by the European Parliament as an activity that attributes to travel between destinations by bicycle for leisure **purposes** and where cycling is an **integral part of the tourist experience**, could represent an **important factor in tourism recovery**. In Europe, cycling tourism has set some **records** despite the Covid-19 pandemic [9].

Positive effects of cycling tourism

Prior to 2020, the worth of cycling to the European Union (EU) economy was 63 billion euros, cycling tourism with its 44 billion euros represented the biggest share [5]. This **economic impact** was estimated based on more than 2.2 billion cycle tourism trips and 20-million-over-night cycle trips made every year in Europe [10]. Moreover, cycling tourism was linked to 525,000 jobs in the EU, which is more than the steel and cruise industries [5, 6]. According to European Cyclists' Federation's CEO Jill Warren, cycling tourism "helps **combat the over-tourism** of certain hotspots by taking people off the beaten path and spreading tourism around to less-visited areas. It **benefits small and medium-sized businesses**, and the **infrastructure** also **benefits local residents** and **improves rural connectivity**" [7].

In the absence of international travel in 2020, people in Europe used bicycles, with many trips done locally [5, 8]. In the time of the pandemic, cycling is seen as a **safe way to travel**, which is slow paced and offers a range of possibilities for different ages and abilities. Cycling tou-



risms can be enjoyed in a variety of **natural environments** and in a form of road cycling, mountain biking, e-biking, or bikepacking [8]. The results of the EuroVelo barometer, which tracks the use of ten long-distance **EuroVelo** routes, show an overall **growth of 2%** on the EuroVelo network during the first eight months of 2021 compared to the same period in 2019. This includes a **12% increase at weekends** suggesting that much of this growth can be connected to **tourism and leisure use** [11]. As part of the surge it was noted that the **development of new routes** triggered a **wave of tourism**, which was the case for example in Hungary and in France [5, 11].

Cycling tourism represents a **sustainable way of traveling**, that benefits not only the economy but also the environment and people's health. Cycling outdoors connects people with the nature and contributes to their physical and mental health. When cycling is combined with public transport, cycling tourism can also **reduce the carbon footprint** of the tourism sector, bringing the world closer to a decarbonised future [13].

How to boost cycling tourism

Many **infrastructural changes** which were adopted by governments and city authorities during the pandemic, have emerged as alternatives for **daily commuters**, who for example exchanged public transport for a bicycle. However, the permanent investments will also have a **positive impact** on the **domestic cycling tourism** [8]. To further boost cycling tourism **high-quality, safe and scenic cycle routes** need to be created and updated – in the form of further development of EuroVelo and national cycle route networks. Besides, attention and promotion must also be directed towards **cycle-friendly services and amenities**, such as bike hotels and the inclusion of small local businesses.

Benefits

	<p>Sustainable way of traveling</p>
	<p>Reduces carbon footprint</p>
	<p>Boosts local economy, brings people to less visited areas, improves rural connectivity.</p>



Contributes to our physical and mental health.

Challenges



To provide appropriate **bicycle infrastructure**



Costs for planning, building and maintaining cycling networks



Ensuring **cyclists' safety**

Examples



Cyclists in front of the oldest vine in the world in Maribor, Slovenia [14].



A cyclist on the Slovenian coast [15].



Underground biking in Peca, Slovenia [16].

References and links

1. World Tourism Organization (2021). A United Nations Specialized Agency: Secretary-general's Policy Brief on Tourism and COVID-19. In: <https://www.unwto.org/tourism-and-covid-19-unprecedented-economic-impacts>
2. Global Wellness Institute (2021). Wellness Tourism. In: <https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/what-is-wellness/what-is-wellness-tourism/>
3. Research and Markets (2020). Wellness Tourism Market - Forecasts from 2020 to 2025. In: https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5138753/wellness-tourism-market-forecasts-from-2020-to?utm_source=GNOM&utm_medium=PressRelease&utm_code=92qr84&utm_campaign=1432875+-+Outlook+on+the+Wellness+Tourism+Global+Market+to+2025+-+Key+Drivers+and+Restrains&utm_exec=jamu273prd
4. Shackell, J (2020). Breaking down the myth of 'Wellness Travel'. The Journal (6 January 2020). In: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/what-is-wellness-travel/>
5. Sutton, M. (2020). Economies benefit as cycle tourism sets records in European countries. Cycling Industry News (13 November 2020). In: <https://cyclingindustry.news/economies-benefit-as-cycle-tourism-sets-records-in-european-countries/>
6. Blondiau, T., Van Zeebroeck, B., Haubold, H. (2016). Economic benefits of increased cycling. Transportation Research Procedia, 14, pp. 2306-2313.
7. Warren, J. (2021). An interview for SABRINA and Danube Cycle Plans projects. In: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/news-and-events/programme-news-and-events/7002>
8. Tourwriter (2021). The future of bike tourism in 2021. In: <https://www.tourwriter.com/travel-software-blog/future-bike-tourism-2021/>
9. Duran, E., Sevinç, F., Harman, S. (2018). Cycle tourism as an alternative way of tourism development in Canakkale, Turkey. Journal of Awareness, 3(4), pp. 25-34.
10. European Cyclists' Federation (2021). Cycling tourism. In: <https://ecf.com/what-we-do/cycling-tourism>
11. EuroVelo (2021). Rhone Cycle Route tops the inaugural EuroVelo Barometer. In: https://pro.test.eurovelo.com/news/2021-09-23_rhone-cycle-route-tops-the-inaugural-eurovelo-barometer
12. Technavio (2020). COVID-19 Recovery Analysis: Wellness Tourism Market. In: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20201006005829/en/COVID-19-Recovery-Analysis-Wellness-Tourism-Market-Growth-in-Personal-Wellness-Awareness-to-Boost-Market-Growth-Technavio>
13. Orihuel, M. (2021). Reimagining the way we travel to address climate change: Cycling tourism as an ally. European Cyclists' Federation (10 November 2021). In: <https://ecf.com/news-and-events/news/reimagining-way-we-travel-address-climate-change-cycling-tourism-ally>
14. A cyclist on the Slovenian coast. www.slovenia.info, Tomo Jeseničnik
15. Cyclists in front of the oldest vine in the world in Maribor, Slovenia. www.slovenia.info, Aleš Fevžer
16. Underground biking in Peca, Slovenia. www.slovenia.info, Tomo Jeseničnik, Podzemlje Pece d.o.o.

Publisher & Media Owner: SABRINA Project Partners

Contact: Olivera Rozi, Project Director, European Institute of Road Assessment – EuroRAP | olivera.rozi@eurorap.org | www.eira-si.eu

Graphic Design: Identum Communications GmbH, Vienna | www.identum.at

Image credits: iStock, SABRINA Project Partners



SABRINA: No fears about safety on two wheels.

Copyright ©2022

The SABRINA Project has been co-funded by European Union Funds (ERDF, ENI). The information and views set out in this document are those of the SABRINA Project Partners and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union/Danube Transnational Programme.



#safetyon2wheels