

# EUROVELO 8 –the Mediterranean Route

**Start date: 1 April 2014, duration 18 months**

**The project is about enhancement and promotion of sustainable transnational thematic tourism products, with the help of cycling tourism. Using the existing tourism offers (e.g. signed as EuroVelo8, well developed sections along the river Po in Italy and in Spain) and brands (Pirenexus Route) along the Mediterranean Route ; there is a great potential to expand the tourism destinations and offers (which are currently usually located in coastal areas or internationally not necessarily known tourism attractions).**

Main objectives:

## **1. Strengthening transnational cooperation with regard to sustainable tourism.**

- The Mediterranean Route – EuroVelo 8 (EV8) runs for nearly 6,000 km through 11 countries. The current project will **bring together stakeholders** from 7 countries along the route (Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Albania, Greece, Cyprus) and 2 countries representing the potential target markets (Denmark, Belgium).
- The USP of the route can only be developed and promoted if the itinerary is well covered with attractive packages. The current project will **cover the best, most developed sections of the route** with bookable packages and connect them to each other to take advantage of their synergies.
- **Cycling tourism is one of the most sustainable forms of tourism** in environmental terms (low CO2 emissions during holidays by bike and less emissions to reach the destinations by using public transport<sup>1</sup>), economic terms (longer stays, more spending, more local products – services consumed) and social terms (less harmful impact, more interaction with the local population).

## **2. Encouraging a higher involvement of small and medium enterprises and local authorities.**

- This can be achieved through close **cooperation between local, regional, national and trans-national service providers** in developing and selling packages. In the case of local authorities, participation will improve conditions for the target groups.
- We aim to select **150 key SME partners and develop 50 (initial) packages** with the help of these SMEs providing connected services along the central and northern section of the route.
- **Local authorities** will be contacted where critical deficiencies are identified (on issues that are their responsibility) where conditions do not even meet the needs of the least demanding target groups (for example “just appropriate” route conditions).

## **3. Stimulating competitiveness of tourism industry by means of an enhanced focus on the diversification of sustainable tourism thematic products.**

- This objective can be met by **exploiting the unique Mediterranean landscape, culture and international recognition of the Mediterranean region as a holiday destination** (even not

necessarily by bike). Use of this branding and heritage will be highly competitive in transnational tourism markets so this is an effective and sustainable proposal.

- **Cycling is part of the brand “Europe”** when it comes to holiday destinations and should be communicated to overseas markets, because some parts of Europe are already well known as ideal places for cycling mobility and cycling sport. The current project will greatly promote the “Europe” brand by using the EuroVelo signs (blue shield, yellow stars of Europe, route number).
- Cycling tourism is one of the largest growing segments of the tourism sector, generating 2.3 billion cycle tourism day trips every year in Europe. Around 20.4 million cycle trips include overnight stays. Average spend on day trips is more than €15; whilst on overnight trips it is more than €57 per day meaning that €353 is spent on trips on average. This means that the total economic impact of cycling tourism in Europe is €44 billion per year and EuroVelo can add a further €7billion to it.
- **Combining cycling and cultural heritage** brings large new audiences to the market. In the EU countries along the Mediterranean Route cycling tourism (on all routes) may eventually generate annually a total of €24 billion in direct revenues (direct expenses by the holiday makers and day excursionists) according to the methodology commissioned by the European Parliament. The current project can contribute €9 million by generating 180,000 additional daytrips and over 18,000 overnight trips per year (calculated using the same methodology).

**Lead partner/coordinator: PROVINCIA DI MANTOVA (ITALY)**

**Partners:**

- **European Cyclists` Federation** (Belgium)
- **Provincia di Ferrara** (Italy)
- **Regione Piemonte** (Italy)
- **ENIT- Agenzia Nazionale del Turismo** (Italy)
- **Cyprus Tourism Organization** (Cyprus)
- **Consorci de le Vies Verdes de Girona** (Spain)
- **Pays Pirénées-Méditerranée** (France)
- **Foreningen Frie Fugle** (Denmark)
- **Conseil Général des Alpes-Maritimes** (France)
- **Regional Development Centre Koper** (Slovenia)
- **ANTIGONE** – (Greece)
- **GO2** (Albania)

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