The Iron Curtain Trail

A ride in history, politics, culture and nature

Sustainable mobility as a European “peace” project»

Gdansk, July 30, 2024

Michael Cramer

Cultural route of the Council of Europe
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A ride through European History

- from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea
- along the Western border of the former Warsaw Pact states
- 10,000 kilometers
- through 20 countries, 15 are now EU Member States

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The EuroVelo Network

1. Atlantic Coast Route
2. Capitals Route
3. Pilgrims Route
4. Central Europe Route
5. Via Romea Francigena
6. Atlantic – Black Sea
7. Sun Route
8. Mediterranean Route
9. Baltic - Adriatic
10. Baltic Sea Cycle Route
11. East Europe Route
12. North Sea Cycle Route
13. **Iron Curtain Trail**
14. Waters of Central Europe
15. Rhine Route
17. Rhone Cycle Route
19. Meuse Cycle Route

Facts & figures

A cross-cutting sector, the 3rd largest economic activity in the EU (after Distribution and Construction)

Involves a big diversity of services and professions

Mainly dominated by SMEs

Socio-economic importance of tourism:

- 5% of the EU GDP
- 5.2% of the total labour force
- 10 million jobs

But with the related sectors:

- 10% of the EU GDP
- 12% of the total labour force
- 24 million jobs

Bicycle tourism

- Since several decades an increase of 20% per year
- The infrastructure on the coast is then used for ten months
- The loipes for Skiing is used for the cycle route as well
- Bicycle tourists spend 35 € a day, car tourists only 10 € and therefore support the local economy
- Investment costs for bicycle infrastructure are low while benefits are high
- Finnish study (Helsinki): For one invested Euro, the return is eight (!) times more
- Example of the Danube cycle route: After signposting an increase from 500 cycle tourists in 2008 to 13 000 in 2012

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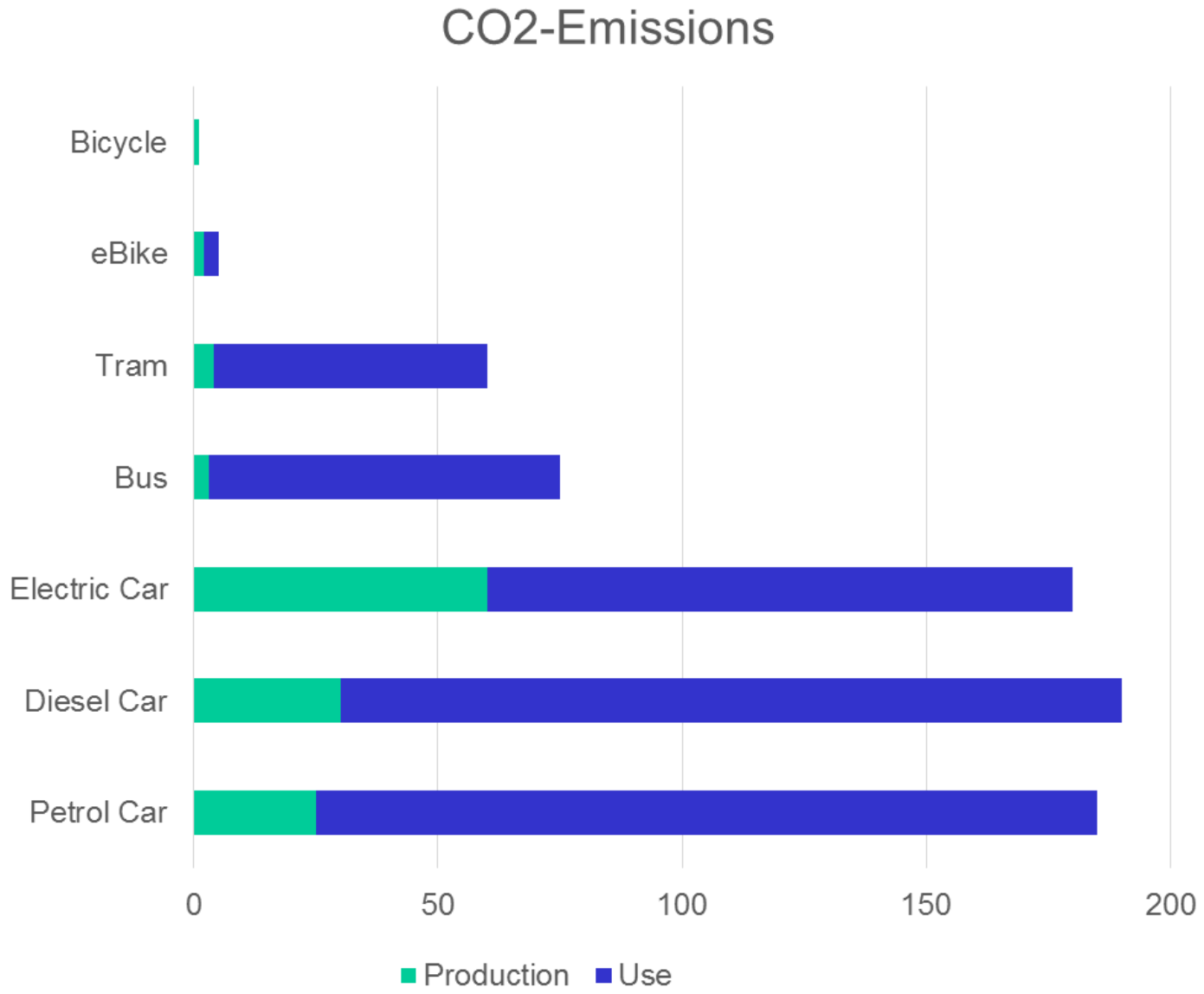
Cycling is very environmentally friendly



The Greens | European Free Alliance
in the European Parliament

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Cycling is very healthy

- Non-cyclists are three times more ill than cyclists
- Cyclists live five years longer than non-cyclists

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Cycle tourism has also a big economic effect

Cycle industry in the EU creates 1 Million jobs

- more than in coal mines
- more than in steel production

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44 billion Euro

VS

39 billion Euro

Cycle tourism in Brandenburg

- 23% of all tourists in Brandenburg
- are cycle tourists

- Positive for the local economy and for small and medium-sized enterprises

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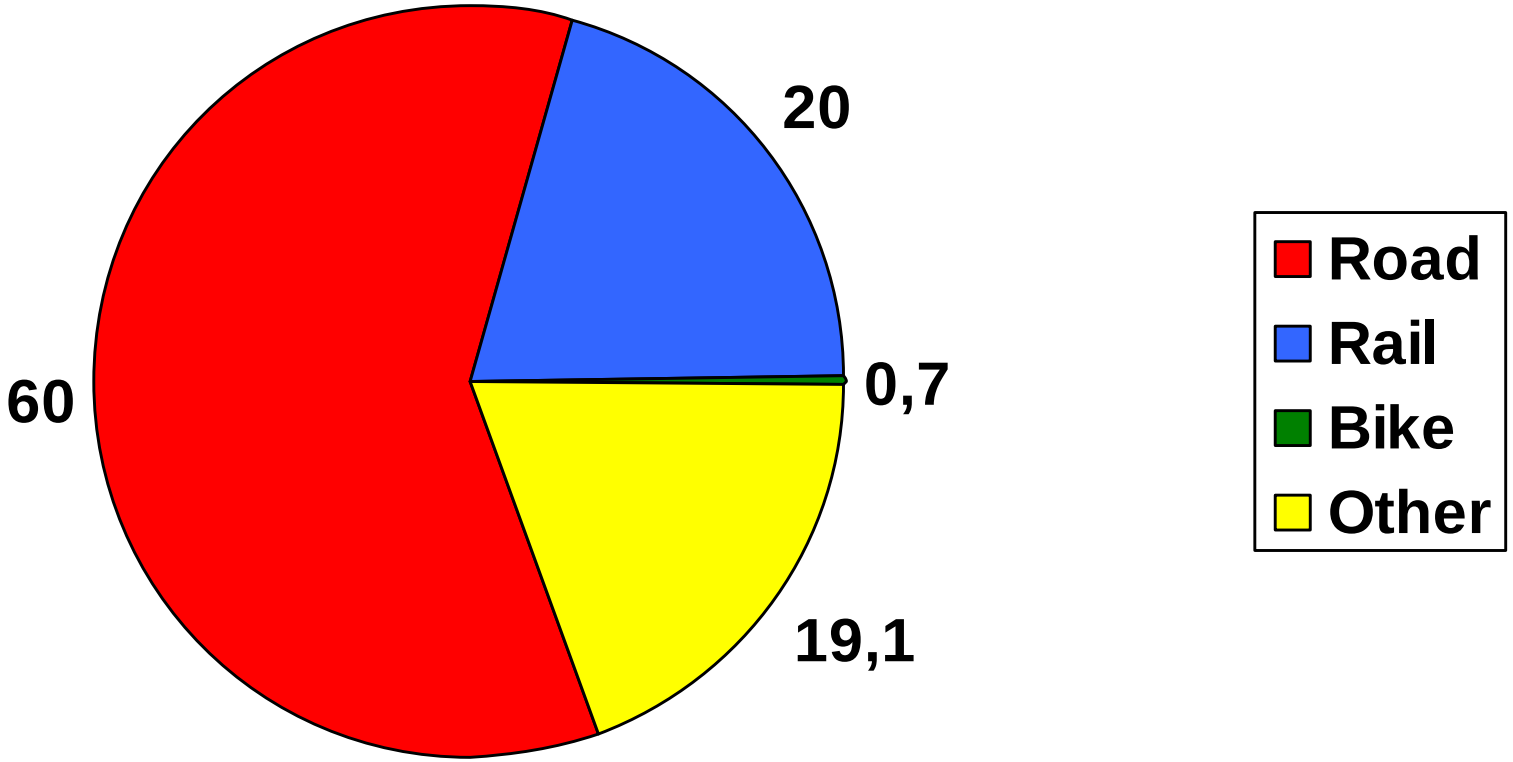
EU-funding

Allocation of EU co-funding by mode of transport



Hungary leads the way: It uses 2% of EU funding for cycling

Carriage of bicycles on trains has to be improved!

•The European Parliament has voted with a big majority that bicycles have to be accepted on all trains, also on high-speed trains.

•The second chamber of the German Parliament (**Bundesrat**) requests that unaniomously!

•In **Poland** it has been realized, you can take your bike in all the trains.

•In **Austria** it has been realized as well. Not only for the new trains - the old ones have been retrofitted as well.

•In **Germany** it is possible to take bicycles on all regional trains and on the new high-speed trains ICE 4 - but not in the improved ICE 3.

•**Airlines** make bicycle transport very much easier - no separate package

•By being bike-unfriendly the railway companies chase away their best customers into the arms of their competitors such as busses and airlines.

- Passenger rights
- To take bicycles in the train

PKP IC

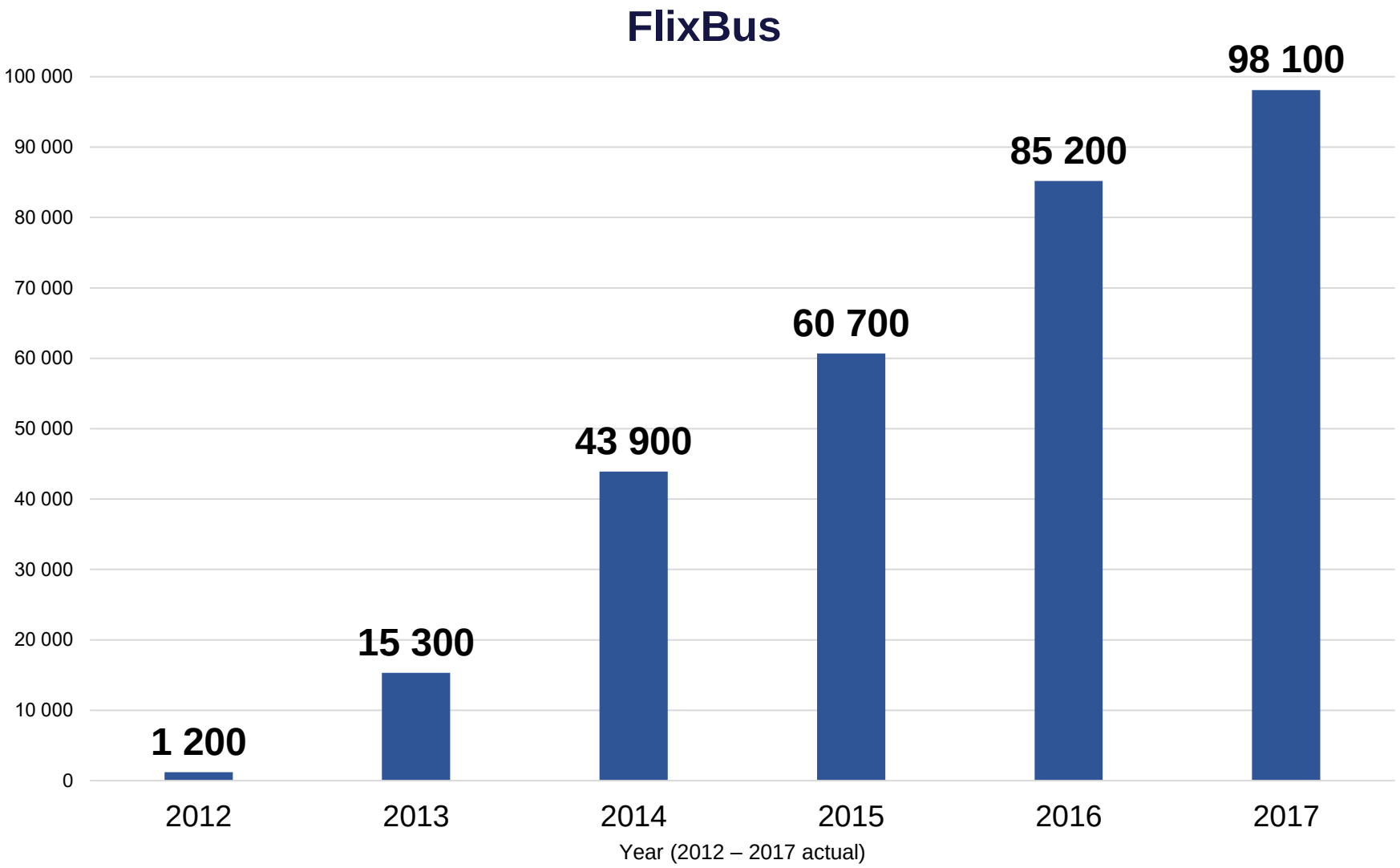
Deutsche Bahn
ICE 4

EC
Ceske Drahy

Railjet
ÖBB

Pro Railjet-Garnitur stehen fünf Fahrradabstellplätze zur Verfügung. Foto: -ÖBB-

Carriage of Bicycles on FlixBus



Quelle: Präsentation FlixBus aus 2018

KRISTALL KEBAB
K - Kaffe
THULE

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„The Berlin Wall Trail“

160 km around former West-Berlin

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The Brandenburg Gate 1961 / 1989

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Memorials for the victims of the Wall

Peter Fechter

Chris Gueffroy

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Cross border Heinrich-Heine-Straße (12.11.1989)

Premiere: After 28 years you could cross the border by bike

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Mitglied des Europäischen Parlaments

Remnants of the Berlin Wall - worldwide

In the garden of the UNO (New York) and near the European Parliament (Brüssel)

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“The Berlin Wall tours“ - discovering the former border strip

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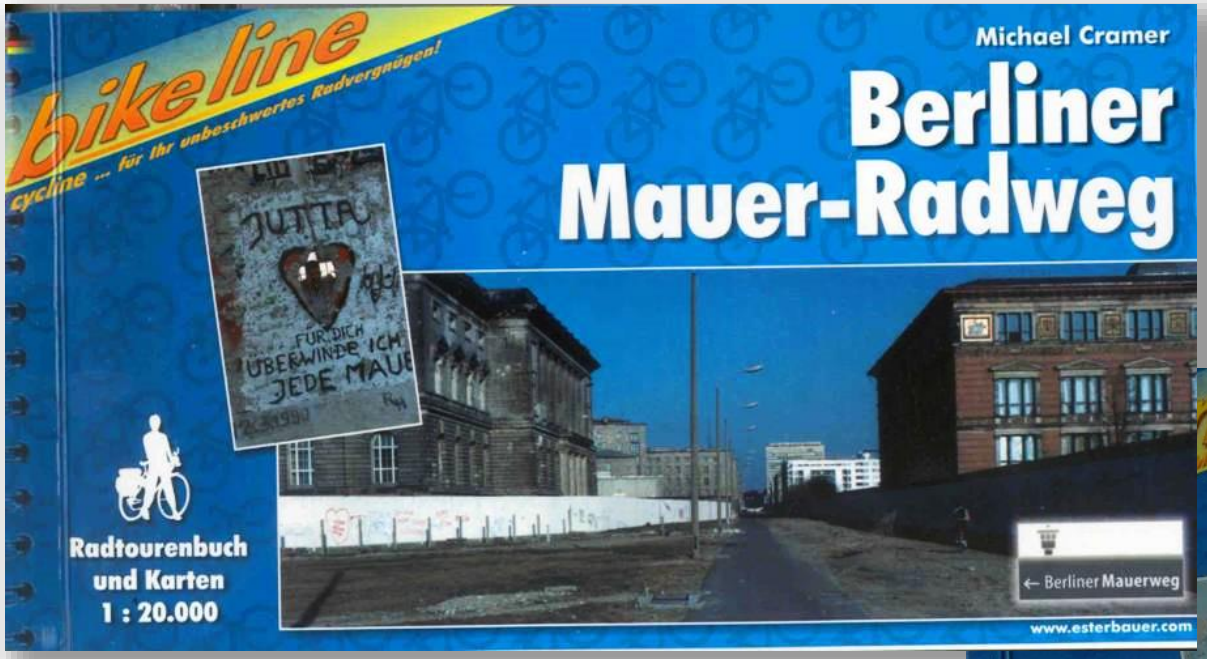
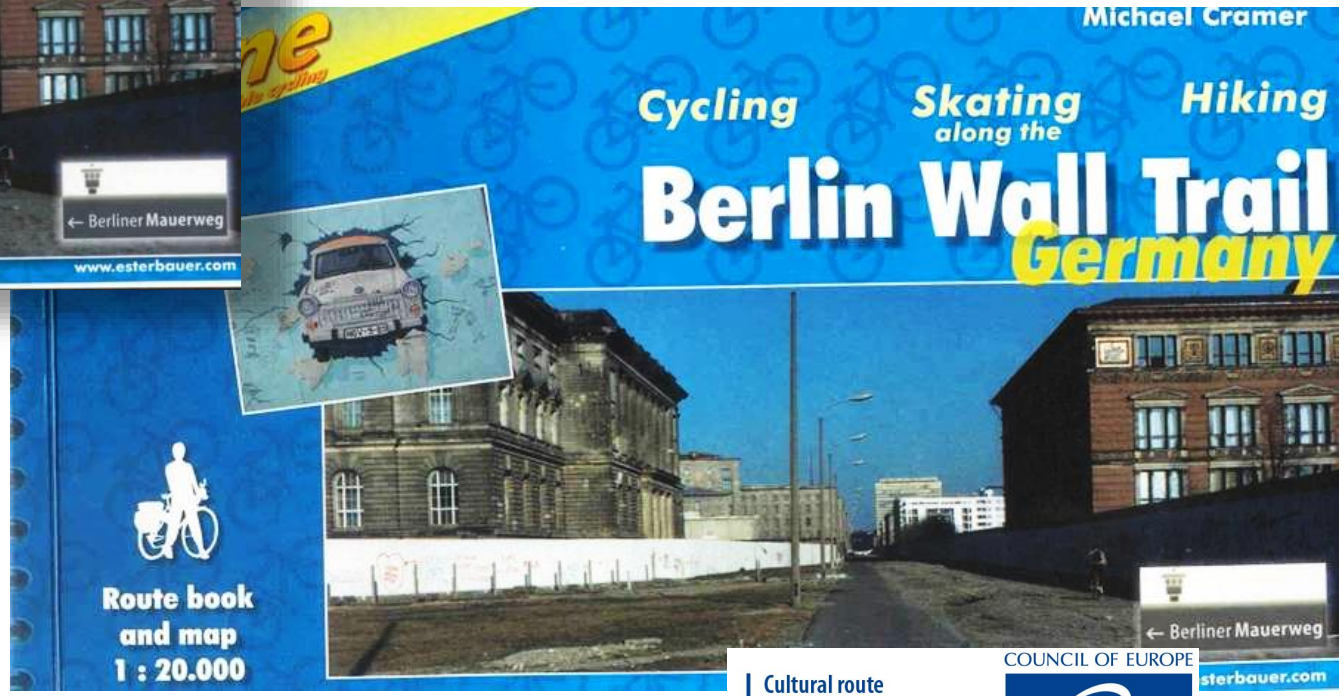
The Berlin Wall Trail in German…



…and in English.



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The route

- as close as possible to the former border
- as comfortable as possible
- avoiding highly frequented roads
- frequently crossing the former border
- integrating numerous historic monuments

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A European project

"The Iron Curtain Trail should be supported as an example of Soft Mobility and as a symbol of the reunification of Europe."

European Parliament resolution from 8th of September 2005 on

"New prospects and new challenges for sustainable European tourism

with a large majority of all the countries and all the political groups

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Workshops to the project

Transnational Workshops by the European Commission in 2009 and 2010

- with all the 20 countries involved:

  - **Warsaw**
  - **Sopron (Hungary)**
  - **Sofia**

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The Northern Part

- Russian-Norwegian border
- Russian-Finnish border

and the Baltic Coast in:

- Russia
- Estonia
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Kaliningrad exclave
- Poland
- the former GDR

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The Northern Part

Norway: Starting point at Grense Jakobselv on the Norwegian-Russian border

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The Northern Part

Grense Jakobselv: Town near the border to Russia

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The Northern Part

Norway - Russia: The border between the two countries

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The Northern Part

Norway: Kirkenes

Norway: near Kirkenes

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The Northern Part

Finland: Oncoming traffic in Lapland

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The Northern Part

Finland: Common Memorial at the Winter War in Suomussalmi, 105 clocks – one for each day, One stone block for each killed inhabitant

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The Northern Part

Finland: border near Ala Vuokki

Finland: Jyränkoski memorial

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The Northern Part

Source:http://images.travelpod.com

Russia: Vyborg castle and Fyodor Apraksin Monument

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Cycling along the Baltic Sea

Russia: Winter Palace (Hermitage) in St. Petersburg

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The Northern Part

Russia: Memorial to Second World War in Sestoretsk

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Estonia: The Narva river marks the EU border with Russia

Estonia: Tallinn

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Baltics: Citizen chain from Tallinn via Riga to Vilnius on 23.08.1989

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Latvia: Freedom Monument in Riga

Latvia: Museum of Occupation in Riga

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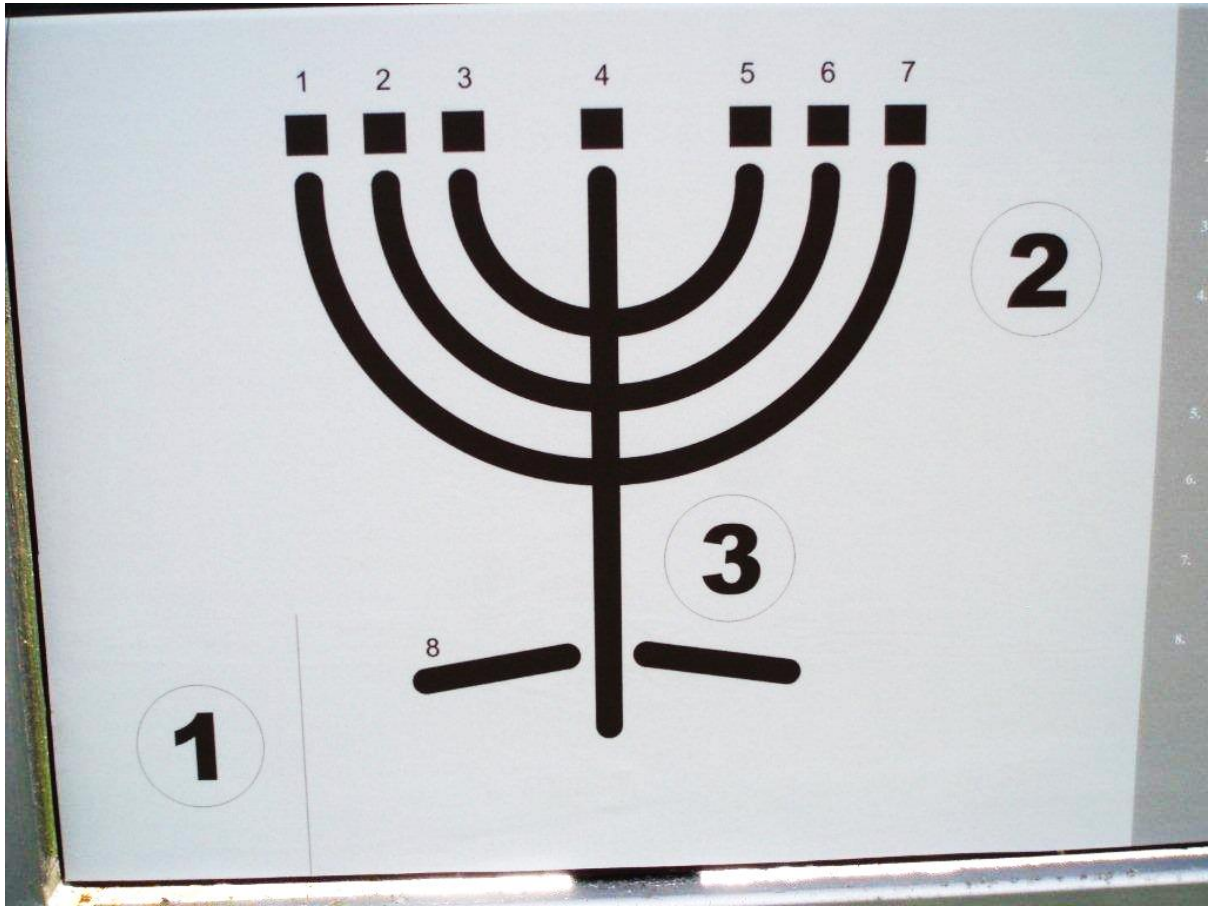
The Northern Part



Latvia: Holocaust-memorial as “seven-lamp (Menorah)" nearby Liepaja

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Latvia: Excellent bicycle route on the beach close to Jurmala

Lithuania: Paved cycle route on the Courland Split

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Lithuania: Klaipeda (Memel) Simon-Dach-fountain with Ännchen von Tharau

Lithuania: Thomas Mann‘s summer cottage on the Courland Split in Nida

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Kaliningrad: Kant Memorial

Kaliningrad: the Cathedral

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Krynica Morska: Lighthouse

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Poland: City center of Gdańsk

Poland: Solidarność memorial in Gdańsk

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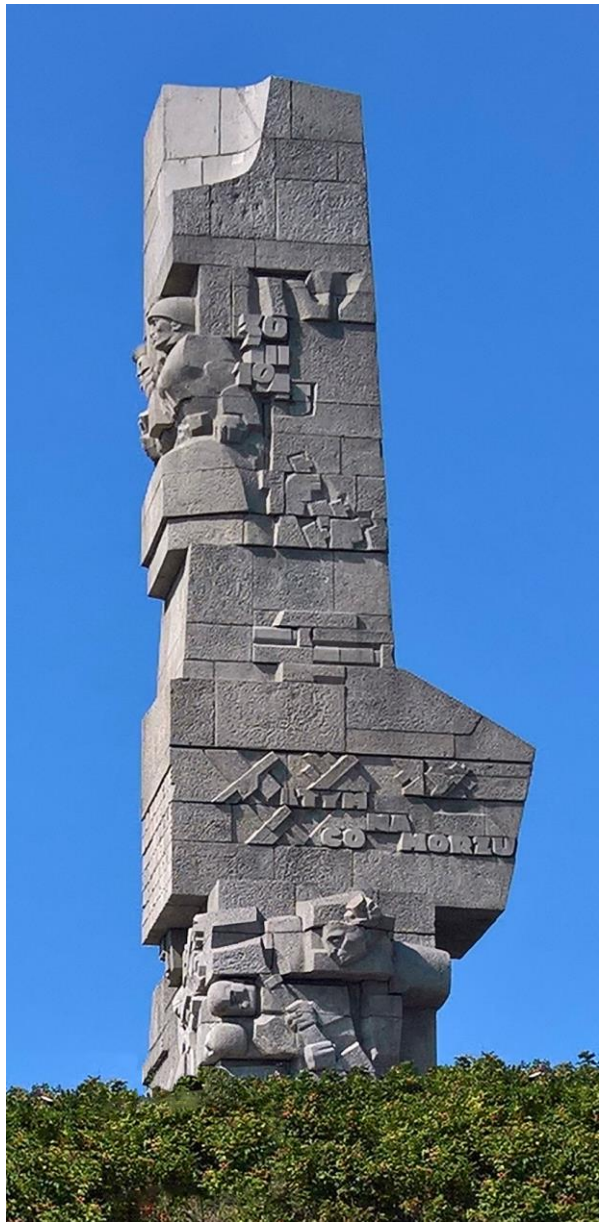
The Northern Part



Gdansk: Memorial of Westerplatte

Lighthouse in Kolobrzeg

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The Iron Curtain Trail in Poland is nearly signposted and improved

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The Northern Part

Entrance to the Wolinsky National Park

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Swinoujscie: Dzwon Tower

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The Northern Part

The border between Poland and Germany

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The Northern Part

Poland: Train station in Świnoujście

Poland/Germany: Świna river

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Through Central Europe

- The former German-German border

and the borders between

- Czech Republic - Germany
  - Austria
- Slovakia - Austria

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Through Central Europe

Before 1989: The Baltic Sea near Priwall at Lübeck-Travemünde

After 1989: The open border near Priwall at Lübeck-Travemünde

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Through Central Europe

Before 1989: a border patrol boat near Bleckede

After 1989: a ferry-service near Bleckede

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Through Central Europe

Before 1989: Lindewerra with watch tower and broken bridge

After 1989: Lindewerra with the bridge instead of a watch tower

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Through Central Europe

Point Alpha: Former death strip with US and Soviet watchtower

Point Alpha: Remnants of the border fence in the open-air museum

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Through Central Europe

Point Alpha: **Two watchtowers and the Iron Curtain on the most western point of the Warsaw Pact States**

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Through Central Europe

Before 1989: Görsdorf with the death strip

After 1989: Nature is back again in Görsdorf

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Through Central Europe

Before 1989: Mödlareuth then called „Little Berlin“ with the wall

After 1989: Mödlareuth today without the wall

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The Southern Part

Along the border between...

- Hungary - Austria
  - Slovenia
  - Croatia
  - Serbia
- Romania - Serbia
- Bulgaria - Serbia
  - North Macedonia
  - Greece
  - Turkey

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The Southern Part

Czech Republic: Memorial near Svätý Kríž

Czech Republic: The Iron Curtain near Cheb (around 1980)

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The Southern Part

Czechia: Sculpture close to the border near Dolní Hraničná

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Austria: Iron Curtain Memorial near Guglwald

Slovakia: remnants of the barbed wire

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Hungary: Open door memorial in Sopron

Hungary: Alois Mock and Gyula Horn cutting the fence on 27 June 1989

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Croatia: Monument of the 2. World War in Batina

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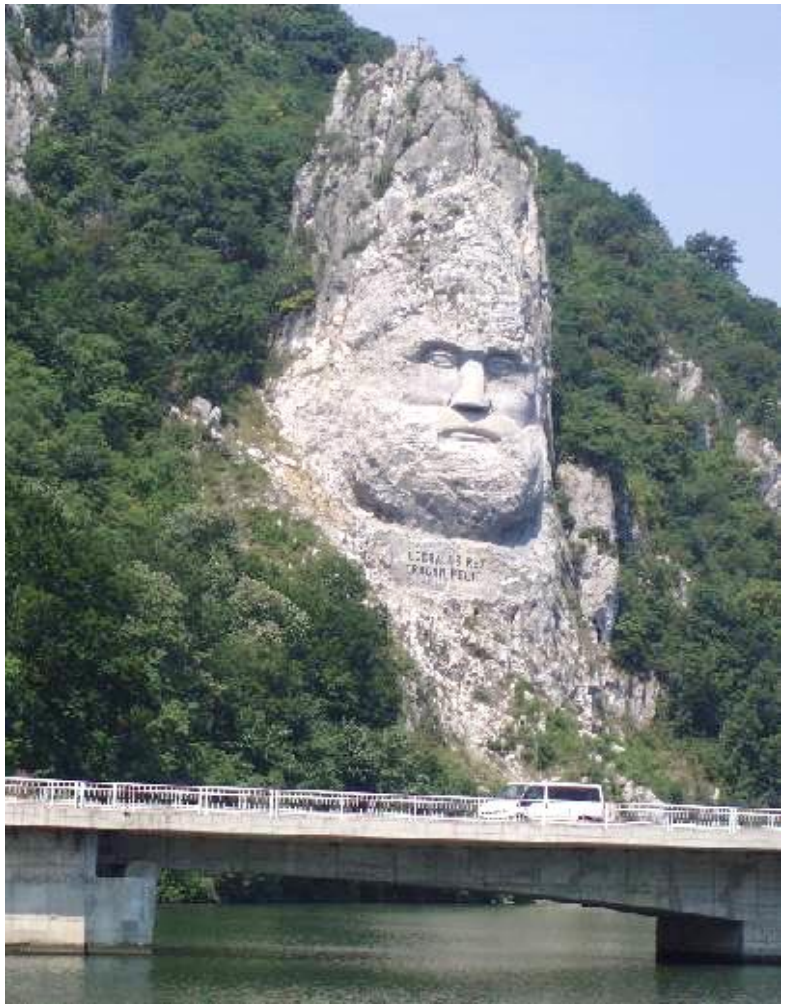
The Southern Part

Serbia: Tabula Traiana



Romania: Decibal sculpture

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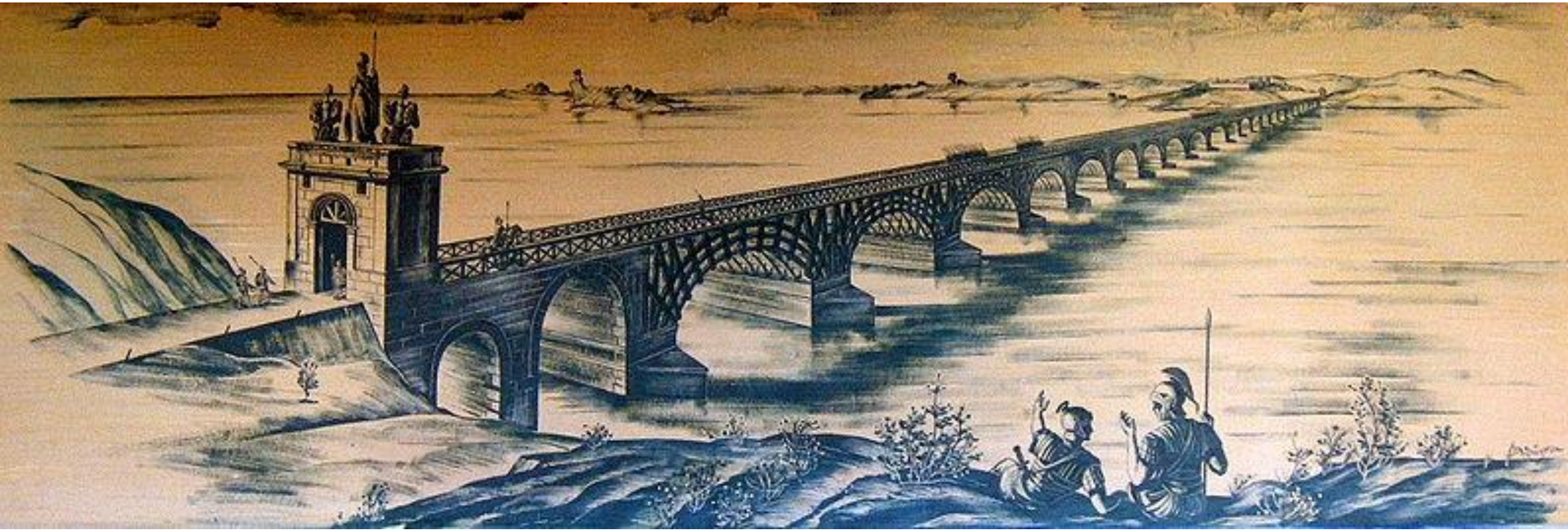

Romania & Serbia:

Trajan‘s Bridge on 19 arches and 20 pillars (105 A.D.)

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Serbia: War Monument near Halovo

Bulgaria: Watch tower near Halovo

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North Macedonia: The border near Novo Selo without barbed wire

North Macedonia: Former border post close to Novo Selo

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Greece: Fort Roupel - Metaxas Line

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Turkey: The bridge across Evros river, constructed from 1554-1560

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Turkey: Selimiye Mosque (1575) in Edirne with minarets of Turkey (71m)

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Bulgaria and Turkey: Old Iron Curtain

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Bulgaria and Turkey: New Border Fence

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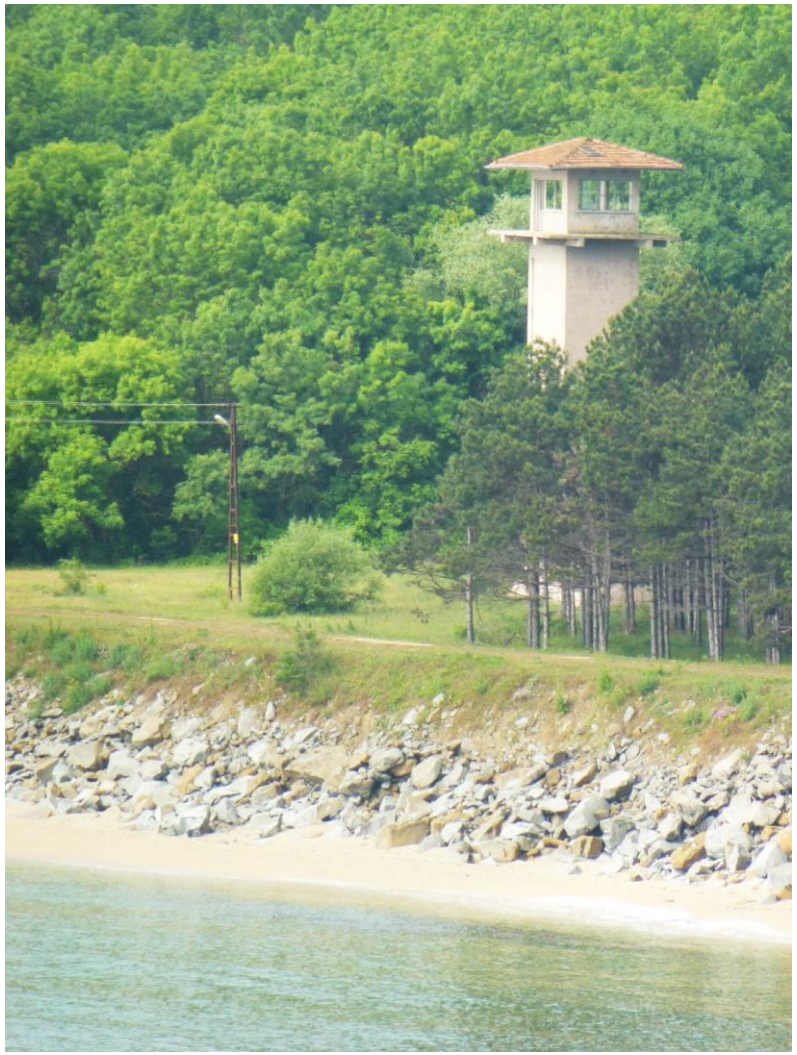

Bulgarian and in Turkey: The watchtowers on the Black Sea

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european greenbelt

Iron Curtain Trail and European Green Belt

- Cooperation between the Iron Curtain Trail and the European Green Belt
- Patron: Mikhail Gorbachev, president of Green Cross International

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Patrons of the Iron Curtain Trail

Central Part:
Marianne Birthler

Northern Part:
Lech Wałęsa

Southern Part:
Václav Havel

The Iron Curtain Trail on the Biennale in Venice 2018

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The Iron Curtain Trail in 2019 was certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

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Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe

Itinéraires culturels du Conseil de l'Europe

The Council of Europe awards the certification
"Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" to
Le Conseil de l'Europe décerne la certification
« Itinéraire culturel du Conseil de l'Europe » à la

Iron Curtain Trail
Route du Rideau de Fer

Strasbourg
Fait à Strasbourg, le

29/5/2019

Thorbjørn Jagland
Secretary General
Secrétaire Général

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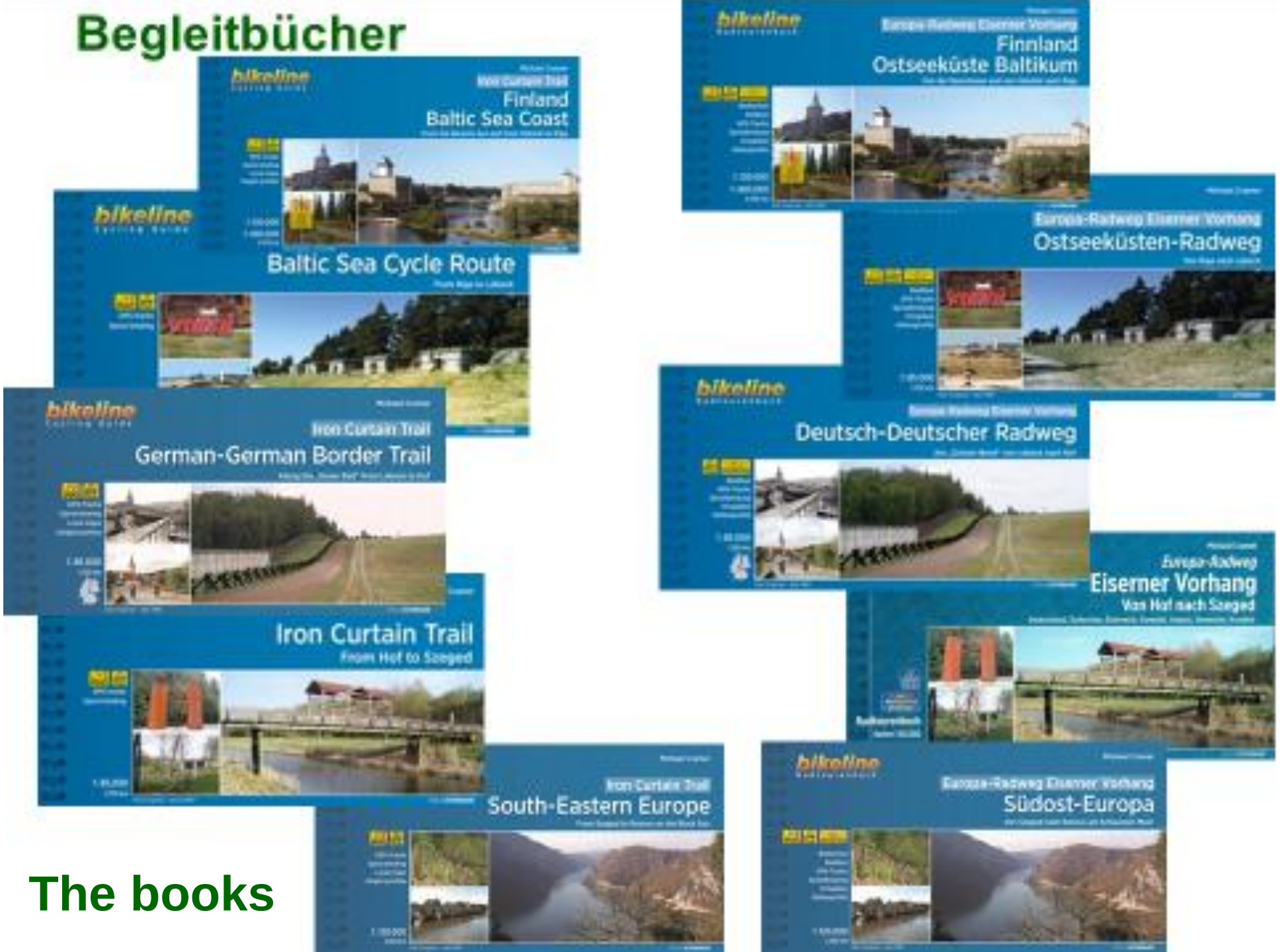
Begleitbücher



The books

Thank you for your attention

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