



**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund

Engaging  
Culture  
and  
Heritage  
for  
Sustainable  
Tourism  
Development



**Veneto**  
*From earth to sky*

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Good Practice Guide

# CYCLING FOR TOURISTS

## Veneto by Bicycle



June, 2014



## Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development

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June, 2014



## INTERREG IVC Programme

INTERREG IVC provides funding for interregional cooperation across Europe. It is implemented under the European Community's territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The overall objective of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to **improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments**. A project builds on the exchange of experiences among partners who are ideally responsible for the development of their local and regional policies. The areas of support are **innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention**. The programme aims to contribute to the economic modernisation and competitiveness of Europe. INTERREG IVC is linked to the objectives of Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

## CHARTS Project











Project Mission is to enrich **regional policies** with culture and heritage as added value for **tourism sustainability**, by **exchange experience** amongst the partners in established Good Practices on the sustainable management of **culture, heritage and landscape** through **communication** and **collaboration**, keeping in mind the effects of **innovation** and creating a base of **knowledge** that can span well beyond the project's end.

## Good Practices

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2. Accessibility to Heritage
3. Effective Partnerships
4. Host Communities and Responsible Tourism
5. Quality Criteria
6. Visitor Information
7. Place Marketing
8. Cultural Routes
9. Railway Heritage
10. Local Products and Gastronomy
11. Traditional Skills and Trades
12. **Cycling for Tourists**

## CHARTS project Partnership

13 Partners from 11 countries and 10 regions across Europe:

- |     |   |   |          |
|-----|---|---|----------|
| 1.  |    | Municipality of South Pelion (Lead Partner)           | GREECE   |
| 2.  |    | Welsh Government CADW                                 | UK       |
| 3.  |    | ECTN-European Cultural Tourism Network                | BELGIUM  |
| 4.  |    | Midland Regional Authority                            | IRELAND  |
| 5.  |    | Region Västtra Götaland                               | SWEDEN   |
| 6.  |  | Pafos Regional Board of Tourism                       | CYPRUS   |
| 7.  |  | Veneto Region – Department of Tourism                 | ITALY    |
| 8.  |  | Vidzeme Tourism Association                           | LATVIA   |
| 9.  |  | National Institute of Research-Development in Tourism | ROMANIA  |
| 10. |  | Mallorca Council - Environment Department             | SPAIN    |
| 11. |  | Union of South-East Region Local Authorities          | BULGARIA |
| 12. |  | Greek Nation Tourism Organization                     | GREECE   |
| 13. |  | IBERTUR / University of Barcelona                     | SPAIN    |

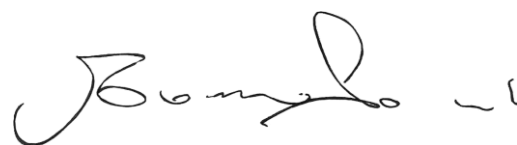
## FOREWORD



“Cycling for Tourists” is one of the main innovative expression of the current change of the tourism industry.

The Veneto Region is actually developing a significant policy concerning the Cycling for Tourists sector, which lies in a multi-year project called “Cicloturismo”. This project involves the Tourism Department that acts in cooperation with other regional divisions.

Today the tourist demand has changed becoming wider and the Cycling for Tourists is confirming itself as an increasing request. Within this Good Practice Guide, we are pleased to spread the Veneto Region’s methodology among the CHARTS partners and, in general, the citizens and all concerned stakeholders.



Marino Finozzi  
**Veneto Region, Head of Tourism**





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## SUMMARY

As part of the CHARTS “Cultural and Heritage Added Value to Regional Policies for Tourism and Sustainability” Interreg IVC project, the Veneto Region – Tourism Department, thanks to its cutting edge policy related to Cycling for Tourists, has been selected to be the “Donor” of this best practice, as it is offering the scope to become an example for other regions.

Based on Cycling for Tourists sector, this Good Practice Guide aims at transferring to the CHARTS partners and potential interested stakeholders the methodology and policy developed by the Veneto Region in this field.

Cycle Tourism is one of the main innovative expressions of the current change in the tourism industry. Today the tourist demand has changed and the general interests are moving to nature, culture and heritage. Cycling for Tourists is confirming itself as an increasing request. According to a recent investigation published by the European Commission, cycle tourism on the European network of bicycle paths (Eurovelo) creates an economic impact of 47 billion Euro/year. This guide presents cycle tourism like an interesting and specific market segment and the material on which it is based is a project carried out by Tourism Department of Veneto Region.

The CHARTS partner is actually developing a significant policy concerning the Cycling for Tourists sector, which lays in a multi-year project called “Cicloturismo”.

Project aims:

- laying a tourist plan out;
- improving governance;
- replicating good practices/ideas;
- introducing innovative, clear and trustworthy holidays.

Starting from the Veneto’s good practice, the guide describes the strategy to be transferred to other regions. This includes the need to define a cycle routes network, a hierarchy of intervention and quality standards for works. After the infrastructural part, the next step is to plan the tourist actions: define the tourist products and related promotion tools.

A strategy of Cycle tourism implementation needs the contributions of many actors and stakeholders: policy maker, tourist professionals, planners, hotel owners and environmental associations. For this reason, we have produced this guide, a leaflet, a summary presentation and a video.

According to the objectives of CHARTS project a thematic workshop was also organized on ‘Cycling for Tourists’ and it took place on 10th September 2013 in Vidzeme region, Latvia,





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hosted by the project partner Vidzeme Tourism Association, and a study visit in the Natural Park of Euganean Hills and historical centre of Padua in the Veneto Region.

The annex I reports the results of Vidzeme meeting, hosted by the project partner Vidzeme Tourism Association.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### CYCLETOURISM, VENETO BY BIKE: Background

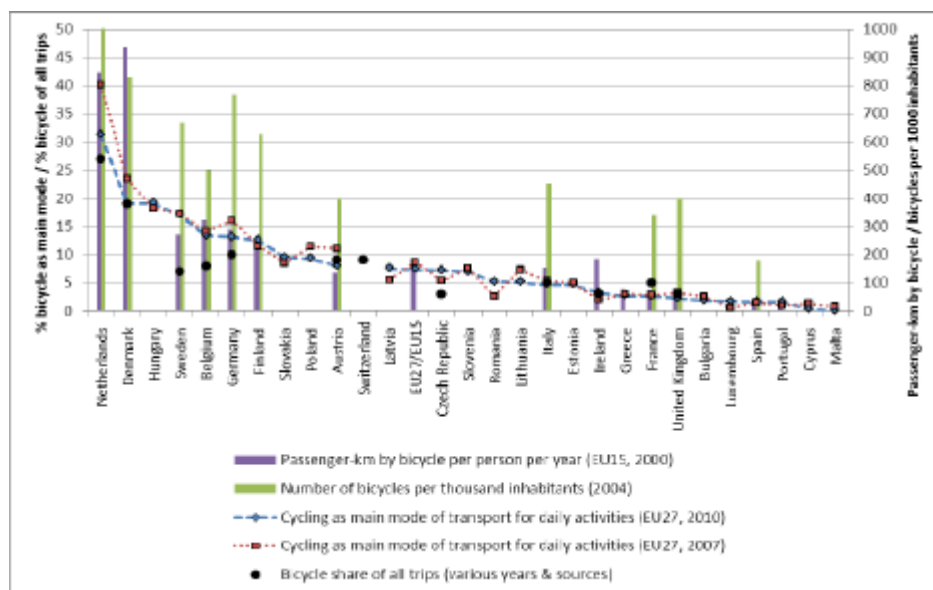
Cycle tourism, in all its forms, is one of the most innovative and interesting expressions of the change that is taking place in the tourism industry. According to a recent investigation published by the European Commission, cycle tourism on the European network of bicycle paths (Eurovelo) creates an economic impact of 47 billion Euro/year. Other signals confirming this sector's ongoing growth are the increase in tour operators and product clubs specialized in many holiday destinations.

#### 1.1. Cycle Tourism: Definitions

Cycle tourism is a market segment with specific characteristics. A generic definition could be as follows: cycle tourism is a form of tourism that is centered on bicycle as a means to move and as the aim of the holiday. The spread of this form of active holiday depends on the culture related to it in different countries. Italy considers bicycle mostly a means for recreation, relax and to practice some sport, while in other North-European countries bicycles are real means of transport (figures 1 and 2).



**Figure 1:** Different ways of considering the bicycle explained by different ways to promote two important trade fairs: Friedrichshafen (Germany) on the left, Padova (Italy) on the right.



**Source:** adapted from EC DG Energy and Transport (2003), The Gallup Organization (2007, 2011), and various sources in Trasporti e Territorio (2010) and Ministerie van Verkeer en Waterstaat & Fietsberaad (2009).

**Figure 2:** Overview of cycling in all 27 European Countries

To understand the main features of cycle tourism, a useful thing to do is to analyze what specialized *tour operators* usually offer. What emerges by doing so is that cycle tourism takes different shapes, according to the target and to the type of product.

With regards to the type of bicycle, we can distinguish three different targets:

- **Slow or leisure cycle tourism**, practiced by those tourists who prefer to travel slow, so to enjoy all that is related to travelling as nature, landscape, culture, wine and food.
- **Road cycle tourism**, for those who see cycling more like a sport.
- **Mountain bike cycle tourism**, that combines in cycling the ideas of sport and nature.

This distinction is based on the tourists' different needs and it affects mapping, signage and design of routes and tourism promotion tools.

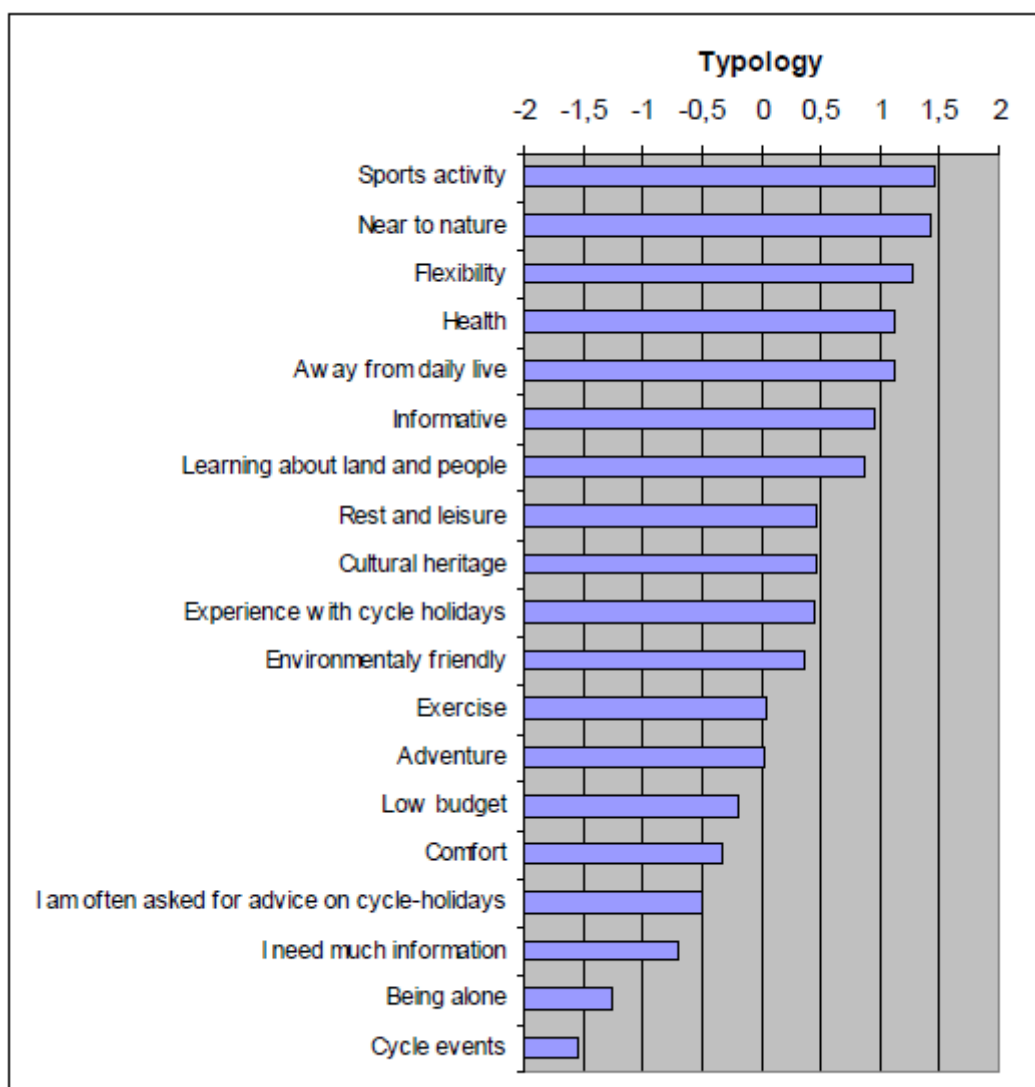
The main research on tourism identify three types of products (Lumsdon, 2000. Sustrans 2003):

**Cycling holidays (Holidays by bike):** holiday lasting at least one night of which the main reason is to use a bicycle. The routes can be aligned, they can change logistics reference daily, or be centered to just one destination with different ring cycle tracks. Cycle holidays can be organized by tour operators or by the tourist himself.

**Holiday cycling (holidays with the bike):** Bike tours are just one part of the holiday, but not the main one. The tourist stays in the same accommodation for the entire holiday and goes on different tours.

**Cycle day excursions (cycle tourist excursion):** bike tour, to relax and have fun, that lasts at least three hours and does not require an accommodation different from one's own home.

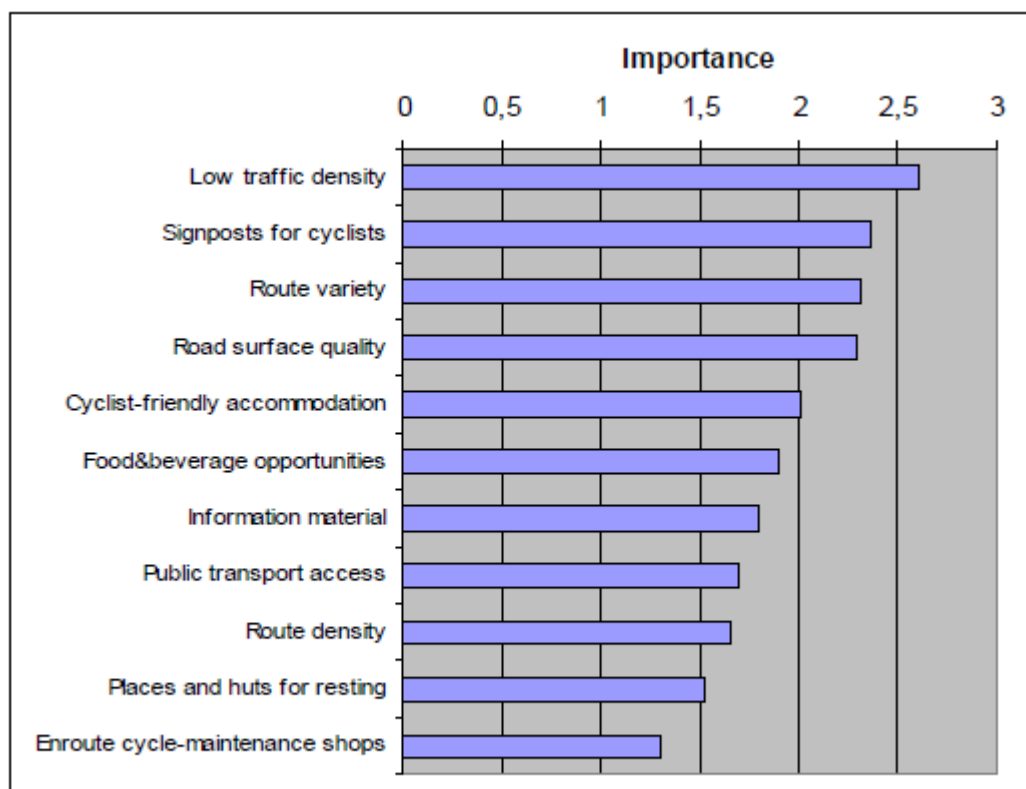
All the holiday offers have two things in common: they are easy and consist of daily stages of approximately fifty kilometers. Figures 3 summarizes the cycle tourists' main reasons to travel. The best routes touch sites of artistic and natural interest, they pass through rural areas where cars cannot travel and require appropriate services for bike rental, luggage transport, intermodality and reception.



Source: Trendscape (2008b).

**Figure 3:** Reason to travel for cycle tourism

A route whose aim is cycle tourism has to consider the following factors: safety, comfort, signage, contact with nature and variety of routes (figure 4).



Source: Trendscape (2008b).

Note: 0 is the lowest score while 3 is the highest.

**Figure 4:** Bike routes technical features (right)

This publication refers only to *leisure* cycle tourism, as it is the type of cycle tourism chosen by Veneto Region to spread this form of sustainable tourism.

## 2. CYCLE TOURISM: VENETO BY BIKE

Veneto, thanks to its weather conditions, many cities relevant for their art heritage, geography, variety of landscape and culinary richness, is a cycle tourism destination with great potential. The main European *tour operators* have been present in this region with multiple travel offers for about ten years. To strengthen these tourist flows, the Department of Tourism of the Veneto Region has promoted the pilot project "Cycle Tourism: Veneto by Bike" that aims at defining new cycle tourism products and at publishing specific tools to promote tourism. Main results are:

- Diffusion of a work methodology;
- Design of new tools to promote tourism;
- Increase of cycle tourism flows.

The project "Cycle Tourism: Veneto by Bike " lasted from 2009 to 2011 and was coordinated by the Department of Tourism of the Veneto Region, with the support of the Department LEAF of the University of Padua and the tourist division of the Province of Padua. Two researchers, two cartographers, a photographer, a video maker and a graphic agency carried out the project activities.

The project guidelines were:

- Designing by thinking about the tourist
- Choosing a target (leisure or slow bike)
- Identifying specific tourism products
- Strengthening the existing flow of tourists
- Involving the local tourist system

The sustainable dimension of tourism has been pursued both in the attention with which regions were chosen and in the commitment to involve local stakeholders.

The main project actions were:

1. Market survey: the working group has studied the tourist products offered by specialized *tour operators* and has analyzed products, target, fairs and tourism promotion tools. This phase allowed collecting a series of good practices that were replicated in the following project phases.
2. Territorial animation: technicians and officers from tourist offices and responsible for roads and parks, local development agencies and local associations were involved. This meant about 25 meetings per year.
3. Identification of tourist products: at the end of participant processes, the working group has defined the paths involved in their tourist products. The group decided to promote 7 excursions (daily and weekend products) and 4 weekly routes (bicycle tours). The routes selected were listed in the Rete Escursionistica Veneta (Veneto Trekking Network), the regional document containing the regional program for low-impact mobility.



4. Project development: the working group prepared a specific geodatabase for cycle tourism, containing routes and related tourist information, to be used to create cycle tourism cartographies and geo-referenced tracks. It also worked at a photographic campaign to identify specific *locations* and *targets* and the same locations were video shot, in order to be aligned with the photos.
5. Publication of the project outputs: all the phases of project development allowed producing a well-structured set of tools to promote tourism.

## 2.1. Cycle Tourism in Europe and Italy

Cycle tourism takes different shapes all over Europe. Cycling as a sport is much more practiced on the mountains, as it is favored by the presence of important events or by special circuits called *bike parks*. Leisure cycle tourism is instead popular in those countries where the bicycle is considered a real means of locomotion. Long-distance cycle paths along the territory, efficient intermodal public transport and how the cycle tourist is welcomed are the main factors that made cycle tourism a mature and consolidated segment of the market in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and Denmark. Although we have no investigations allowing to compare data from different Countries easily, we can consider cycle tourism successful thanks to three factors: the green essence of the tour, the contact with nature and the idea that cycling is fashionable.

In Italy the situation changes according to regional context and local tourist development policies. Even though we have no official statistics to describe the phenomenon, interesting signals are coming from the market related to both *tour operators* and bike selling. In the first case, the number of operators who specialized in bicycle tours has grown considerably, going from one *tour operator* in 1985, to 4 in 1990, to 13 in 2000 till 40 in 2013. Bicycle selling is grown too: in 2012 the sell of bicycles exceeded that of cars (Table 1).

Bicycles	28.000.000
Urban Cyclists	5.000.000
Bicycles sold	1.748.000
Registered cars	1.403.000

**Table 1:** numbers of bike in Italy/2012

## 2.2. Cycle Tourism and Sustainability

Cycle tourism is fairly considered one of the best forms of eco-tourism or green tourism. This feature, that makes it so successful, can be considered the sum of four different aspects:

- Travelling with zero impact: using the bicycle means no greenhouse gas emissions.
- Avoiding seasonal tourism: cycle tourism allows *tour operators* to prolong the touristic season by differentiating their offers.
- Promoting tourism in rural areas.
- Designing tourism by involving local communities.

For these reasons, the spread of cycle tourism has to be seen as a real opportunity to improve the quality of tourism.

## 2.3. Contribution of Tourism to Cycling for Tourist Good Practice

The Veneto Region contributes to the project and, in particular, to its Component 3 ("Exchange of Experiences") with its experience in visitor management as a major cultural tourism destination.

In the framework of the CHARTS project, the Veneto Region has developed the Transfer Process of the Cycling for Tourists Good Practice within the following two main actions.

Firstly, on December 2012, the project partner of the Burgas Municipality – Union of South East Region Local Authorities - was hosted by the Veneto Region for one week in order to develop a Staff Exchange Programme related to Cycling for Tourists. During this week they had an on site visit to experience at first hand the best practice of the bicycle tourist routes of the Veneto Region. In particular they visited the bicycle tourist path called "Gira Sile" passing through the striking Regional Natural Park called "Fiume Sile". Furthermore they visited and walked around the city of Treviso where they were introduced to the city's bike sharing system and collect valuable impressions on the details of the system and how it works. Finally, through a meeting organized with the University of Padova's Land, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry Department, local stakeholders and experts, they were introduced to the cycle tourism promotional materials and the developed research. In addition they analyzed the process of selecting the cycle routes and developing a tourist product or service that can be promoted by a network of tour operators. They also discussed and developed ideas based on the "European cycle route network Eurovelo study" provided by the EU.

It follows the relative feedback questionnaire and SWOT analysis:

## Feedback questionnaire

		Excellent / very satisfied	Good / satisfied	Adequate	Weak / Not quite satisfied	Insufficient / Not satisfied	COMMENTS on the rating given:
		5	4	3	2	1	
1	Office Facilities	X					Great office facilities. We spent two days there, were introduced to all the colleagues and gained valuable information on how Veneto region works.
2	Equipment available		X				Had the opportunity to use internet connection and access to the office resources.
3	Site visits	X					Great variety of site selection, long and detailed visits both in the city and the region accompanied with extensive explanation and history of the places.
4	Guidance from host	X					Excellent in terms of information and availability provided as well as assistance to all matters.
5	Relevance		X				Valuable in the meaning of best practice information and implementation.
6	Tasks carried out		X				Very detailed program, managed to see and try best practices that could be introduced to the region of Burgas.
7	Awareness/understanding of Good Practice		X				Very practical and valuable information was shared along with visits of best practices of interest to the region of Burgas
8	Expectations fulfilment	X					our expectations were completely fulfilled as we managed to learn a great deal about the best practices working in the Veneto region and gain some valuable information on how similar practices could be implemented in our home region.
9	Global evaluation of the Staff Exchange	X					Useful, enriching and valuable in gaining practical first hand experience.

## Swot Analysis

Strengths	Weakness
<p>1) Plenty of good areas with wonderful scenery to enjoy open to pedestrians only</p> <p>2) Great variety of traffic free zones means also more opportunities for cyclists</p> <p>3) Very well developed bicycle lanes, bike tourist routes and bike infrastructure network.</p> <p>4) As many areas are closed for traffic cycling is one of few options for fast, eco-friendly and effective way for transportation</p> <p>5) Spectacular amount of architectural, cultural and historical sights and tourist attractions that can be further promoted and explored on a bicycle</p> <p>6) On-line resources and available travel guides on tourist cycling destinations</p> <p>7) Established network of European tour operators providing Italian cycling tourism products</p>	<p>1) land shaft is not always appropriate for cycling (too narrow streets, too crowded tourist areas, many hills or bridges)</p> <p>2) Not enough or well-advertised rent a bike places nearby to the promoted bicycle tourist routes</p> <p>3) Targeting mostly professional cyclists due to the requirement to possess one's own bike appropriate for the specific route terrain</p>
Opportunities	Threat
<p>1) Excellent natural areas in the region which could be easily reachable and explored by bike</p> <p>2) Possibility to further promote organized group bike tours as a special tourist service or included in a tourist package</p> <p>3) Effective network of stakeholders and tourist operators that are interested in providing and developing the bicycle tourism services</p> <p>4) Improved, innovative and differentiated tourist product adding to the variety of services</p>	<p>1) Inaccessible to the mass tourist unless provided easy access to rent a bike or organized bike tours</p> <p>2) Possible failure of driving the market demand towards greener and sustainable tourist services if there is not enough government will and support</p>



Secondly the Veneto Region – Tourism Department organised and hosted the Study Tour which took place from 23<sup>th</sup> May until 25<sup>th</sup> May 2013 (for more information see the link at the project website: <http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu/events/study-tour/>). This project event contributed to demonstrate on the ground some of the key issues and 12 good practices of the CHARTS project, and, among them, appeared the cycling for tourist sector.

In particular, the project partners' staff were involved in many technical visits, among which the thermal and the Terme Euganee areas around Padova, with their cycle paths called "Anello dei colli Euganei". During this tour the partners' staff visited this paths going biking, thus having the chance to experience how the Veneto Region developed its offer for cycling tourists.

### 3. PROJECT OUTPUT

With the project “Cycle Tourism”, the Veneto Region defined a plan to empower cycle tourism that contains some routes the tourist operators worked on, to create and sell original tourist products.

The paths are, in specific:

#### Itineraries:

I 1 “Garda Lake– Venice” explores the main art cities in Veneto: Verona, Vicenza, Padua and Venice.

I 2 “Veneto Ring” is a step-by-step excursus through the most famous landscapes in Veneto: from the sea to the lagoon, from the river to the country, from the hill to the art cities.

I 3 “Way of the Sea” follows the Adriatic coast, from the Po Delta to the lagoon of Caorle, through Venice and the famous beaches.

I 4 “Dolomites – Venice” is a route dedicated to nature that goes from Cortina d'Ampezzo to the Venetian lagoon.

#### Excursions:

Cycle excursions include all natural reserves in Veneto and they normally grow near important tourist destinations.

E 1 “Long Way to the Dolomites” near Cortina d’Ampezzo gives new value to an old railway.

E 2 “Colli Euganei Ring” next to the important thermal area in Abano and Montegrotto.

E 3 “The Damsel Ring” inside the Po Delta.

E 4 “GiraSile” just outside Treviso along Sile River.

E 5 “The Bike Route on the Venetian Islands” inside the Venetian Lagoon.

E 6 “The Bike Route along Mincio River” from Garda Lake to Mantua along Mincio River.

E 7 “Palladio’s Landscapes” just outside Vicenza and along an old railway.

The project outputs focused on two lines of action:

1. Production of tourist promotion tools
2. Creation and installation of cycle tourism signage.

In the first case, the project produced different tools according to the tourist needs (figure 5), in the forms of a **tourist brochure**, a **cycling information form** and a **road book**. The **tourist brochure** illustrates the tools for fair purposes, but it also was attached to a widespread Italian magazine. Each excursion was provided with a **cycling information form** containing specific cartography, translated in four languages and distributed free of charge by the Tourist Information and Reception (IAT) Offices. To guide the tourist along the four itineraries, a special **road book** was printed for each one of them containing texts, tourist information and specific cartographies. The road book were translated in four languages and can be bought at the IAT Offices. All these materials have also enriched the





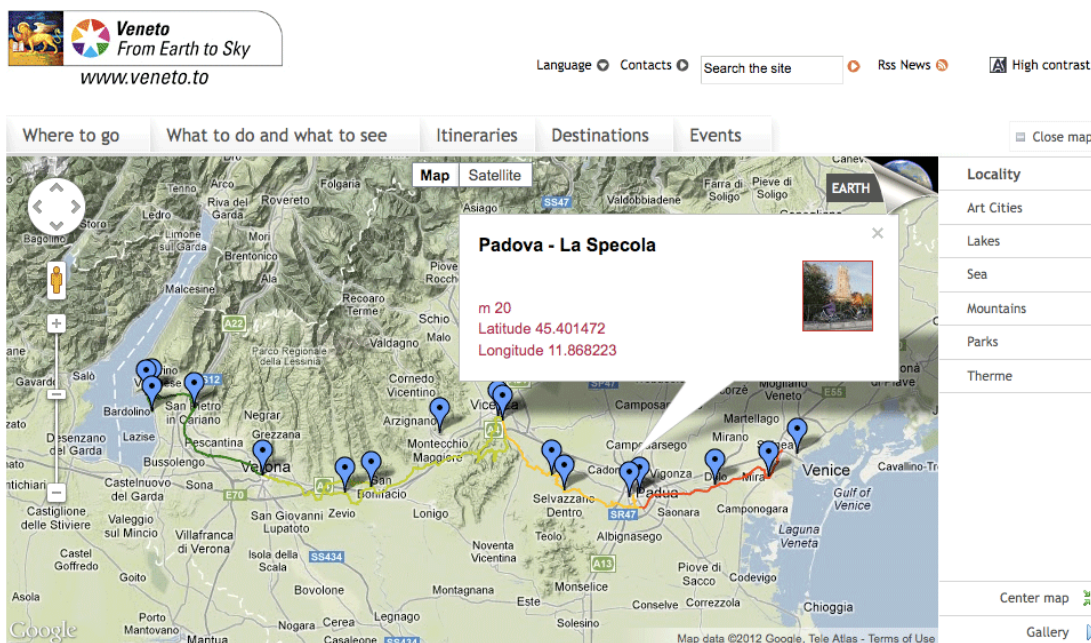
## Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development

regional **tourist portal** [www.veneto.to](http://www.veneto.to), where tourists can have a look at pictures, videos and at the pdf version of the documents. They can also download geo-referenced maps of the routes in gpx or kmz format (figure 6).

To disseminate the project contents also among local institutions, the Region produced a **technical magazine** containing some articles presenting the work done.



**Figure 5:** Tourist promotion tools created within the project



**Figure 6:** cycle tourism section in the website [www.veneto.to](http://www.veneto.to)

In the second case, we designed a **cycling signage program** (Figure 7) to be placed along the project paths. To achieve its purpose, the working group decided to involve the Federazione Italiana Amici della Bicicletta (FIAB, Italian Federation of Friends of the Bicycle) that contributed to the project revision and helped through all the positioning phases. This part of the project, was coordinated by Veneto Strade, a special authority in the Veneto Region.



**Figure 7:** Examples of signage created within the project

## 4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To promote the appraisal of cycle tourism in Veneto, the Region published some important regulations that describe a clear hierarchy of intervention, summarized in the following table 2:

Objective	Action/Rule
Governance and Tourist Promotion	Inter-regional "Cycle Tourism" Project, 2009 - 2011
Cycling Routes Network	Venetian Trekking Network (REV) DGR 1402, 19/05/2009
Hierarchy of Intervention	Valorization Plan for Cycle Tourism in Veneto DGR 1807, 13/07/2010
Signage	Executive Project for the implementation of the Regional Plan on Touristic Signage. DGR 179/2012 del 07 /02 /2012
Bike Park	Regional Project "Veneto Bike" 2013

**Table 2:** Regional rules and resolutions to give value to cycle tourism in Veneto



The project contents were disseminated through several conferences, technical seminars, technical visits (figure 8) and training courses. These actions went on also after the project was concluded and they involved local development agencies on the territory like Veneto Agricoltura, dedicated to the rural and agricultural sector in the Veneto Region, and some GAL (Gruppi di Azione Locale, Local Action Groups).

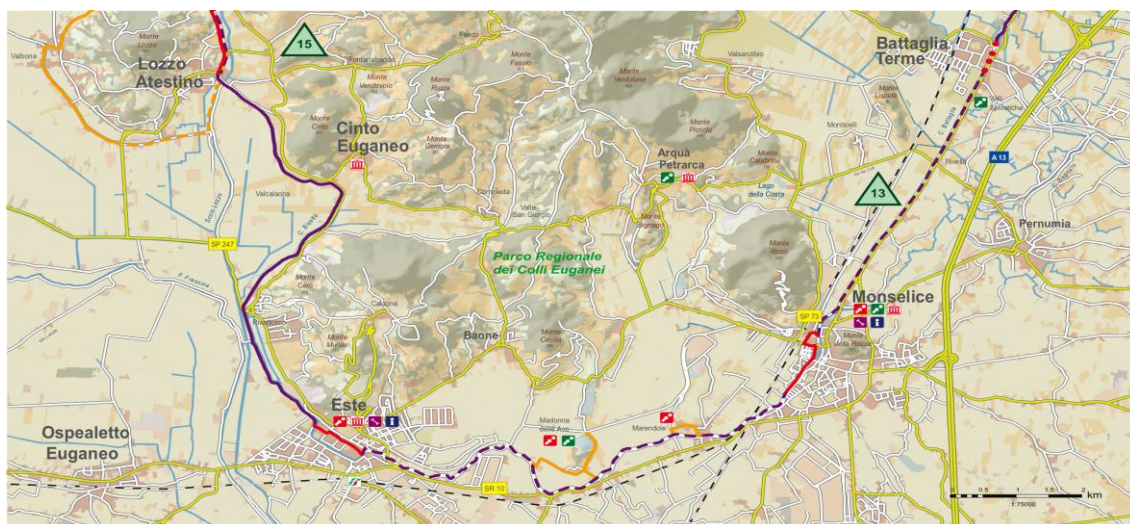
**Figure 8:** Stakeholders' study visits by bicycle



## 5. TRANSFER PROCESS

The multiple results obtained with the "Cycle Tourism" Project were both inside the regional tourism governance (tourist corporate image and communication, promotion of tourist dedicated infrastructures, training courses for tourist operators); both outside the regional tourism system (presence of tour operators and increase tourist flows).

The regional tourist system adopted a shared way of working that produced not only some **corporate photos and videos**, but also a **regional cartography specific for cycle tourism** (figure 9). At the same time, standards and good practices were spread among the partners, who now share the same tourist terminology and the same promotional tools.



**Figure 9:** Example of cycle tourism cartography produced within "Cycle Tourism" Project



Even though the project was merely touristic, it could positively affect other projects about **viability and signage**. While revising the plan for cycling, Veneto Region took into account the recommendations received during the cycle tourism project in order to distribute the necessary funds for the construction of new bike routes. The offices responsible for the cartography have spread the technical drawings produced by the working group to all the local municipalities. Finally, the Region created a plan for specific cycling signage along regional routes for a total of 1000 kilometers (Figure 10).

**Figure 10:** Example of cycling signage produced within "Cycle Tourism: Veneto by Bike" Project

At the end of the project, results were presented at some local trade fairs and during conferences for operators. These promotional actions caught the tourist operators' attention, who saw some new opportunities to start **training courses** aimed at promoting new tourist products. With the support of the rural development plan in particular, financed with the FEOGA funds coming from the European Community, we could use some rural areas as labs to work on. In some cases this led to real product clubs built by the collaboration between hotel managers and farmers (e.g. [www.adriabikeshotel.com](http://www.adriabikeshotel.com); [www.caorlebike.com](http://www.caorlebike.com) figures 11 and 12).



**Figures 11 and 12:** Example of labs with hotel owners for improve cycle tourism



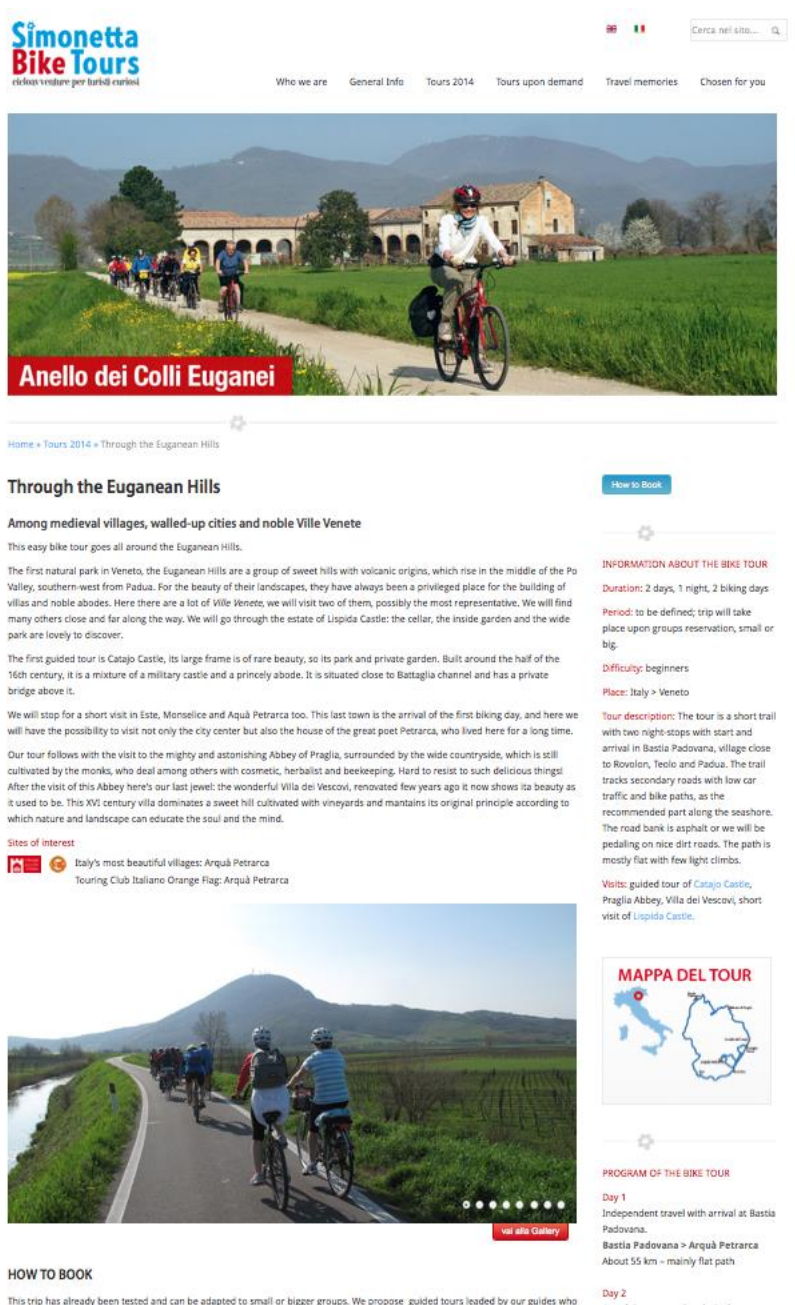
The spread of cycle tourism requires an approach aimed at continuously improve the tourist services offered to the guests. Two years after the end of the project, it is interesting to notice how the cycle tourism promotional strategy is still practiced among the tourist destinations in Veneto. One of the most interesting signals we can count is the replication of **promotional tools**: Padua, Rovigo and Venice provinces have produced some new cycle tourism forms and road books to promote the new cycle routes (figure 13). Some hotels included references of the project in their websites (<http://www.termepreistoriche.it/cicloturismo.aspx#.UxYO57tvuyw>), others created new micro businesses dedicated entirely to cycle tourists ([www.giteinlaguna.com](http://www.giteinlaguna.com)).



**Figure 13:** Cycle tourism forms produced following the good practices adopted within the project



Although we cannot easily monitor cycle tourism flows, we must highlight that the main Italian and European tour operators promote the project routes in their catalogues. Other operators have instead enriched their tourist offer by including regional bike routes (Figure 14 [www.simonettabiketours.it/anello-colli-euganei.html](http://www.simonettabiketours.it/anello-colli-euganei.html)).



**Simonetta Bike Tours**  
ciclismo vacanze per turisti curiosi

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### Through the Euganean Hills

**Among medieval villages, walled-up cities and noble Ville Venete**

This easy bike tour goes all around the Euganean Hills.

The first natural park in Veneto, the Euganean Hills are a group of sweet hills with volcanic origins, which rise in the middle of the Po Valley, southern-west from Padua. For the beauty of their landscapes, they have always been a privileged place for the building of villas and noble abodes. Here there are a lot of Ville Venete, we will visit two of them, possibly the most representative. We will find many others close and far along the way. We will go through the estate of Lospida Castle: the cellar, the inside garden and the wide park are lovely to discover.

The first guided tour is Catajo Castle, its large frame is of rare beauty, so its park and private garden. Built around the half of the 16th century, it is a mixture of a military castle and a princely abode. It is situated close to Battaglia channel and has a private bridge above it.

We will stop for a short visit in Este, Monselice and Aquà Petrarca too. This last town is the arrival of the first biking day, and here we will have the possibility to visit not only the city center but also the house of the great poet Petrarca, who lived here for a long time.

Our tour follows with the visit to the mighty and astonishing Abbey of Praglia, surrounded by the wide countryside, which is still cultivated by the monks, who deal among others with cosmetic, herbalist and beekeeping. Hard to resist to such delicious things! After the visit of this Abbey here's our last jewel: the wonderful Villa dei Vescovi, renovated few years ago it now shows its beauty as it used to be. This XVI century villa dominates a sweet hill cultivated with vineyards and maintains its original principle according to which nature and landscape can educate the soul and the mind.

**Sites of interest**

Italy's most beautiful villages: Arqua Petrarca  
Touring Club Italiano Orange Flag: Arqua Petrarca

**HOW TO BOOK**

This trip has already been tested and can be adapted to small or bigger groups. We propose guided tours led by our guides who

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIKE TOUR**

**Duration:** 2 days, 1 night, 2 biking days

**Period:** to be defined; trip will take place upon groups reservation, small or big.

**Difficulty:** beginners

**Place:** Italy > Veneto

**Tour description:** The tour is a short trail with two night-stops with start and arrival in Bastia Padovana, village close to Rovolon, Teolo and Padua. The trail tracks secondary roads with low car traffic and bike paths, as the recommended part along the seashore. The road bank is asphalt or we will be pedaling on nice dirt roads. The path is mostly flat with few light climbs.

**Visits:** guided tour of Catajo Castle, Praglia Abbey, Villa dei Vescovi, short visit of Lospida Castle.

**MAPPA DEL TOUR**

**PROGRAM OF THE BIKE TOUR**

**Day 1**  
Independent travel with arrival at Bastia Padovana.  
Bastia Padovana > Arqua Petrarca  
About 55 km - mainly flat path

**Day 2**

**Figure 14:** webpages of Simonetta Bike Tours, Italian tour operator

## 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cycle tourism promotion depends on many factors related to the local systems governance. By being a popular form of tourism in the area, cycle tourism requires a participatory process involving many stakeholders, and its development often depends on political choices and technicalities not involved with tourism. In particular, we encountered some difficulties with the organizations managing the watercourses.

The main difficulties have been:

- some bike routes were not in a good state
- there were some conflicts between the organizations having jurisdiction over the territories crossed by the paths.

At the end of the project, we can offer some suggestions that can be useful to spread cycle tourism in other territories:

- design according to the tourist's needs, the territory is at the service of tourism demand
- adopt a process and not a product approach
- analyze cycle tourism as a specialized market segment with its own rules and dynamics
- include the promotion of cycle tourism within the policies of tourist development of a destination
- involve the local system to promote new tourist products
- collaborate to compete, tour operators should join forces to promote cycle tourism by involving rural actors and service providers

The pilot project demonstrated that cycle tourism could offer new opportunities for economic, cultural and environmental development of the territory, thus favoring the overall growth of the tourist system.

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## **ANNEX I: THEMATIC WORKSHOP AND STUDY VISIT**

The thematic workshop on good practices related to 'cycling for tourists' refers to a study visit at five tourism information centers and cycling tour operators that took place on the 10th September 2013 in the Vidzeme region, Latvia, hosted by the project partner Vidzeme Tourism Association. Thirty-seven participants came together in order to exchange experiences on topics related to good practices, with particular regards to tourism destinations among project partners.

Vidzeme Tourism Association already developed projects regarding cycling. Road signs, tourist brochures, routes and maps are issued alongside informative videos and seminars. Projects establish and strengthen a cooperation network among tourism professionals dealing with bicycle tourism. This could be overtaken by other project partners as models of good practices.

There are around 100 local routes in Latvia in various length, theme, road surface, quality. Mr. Sijāts talked about topical problems in connection with cycling – regular maintenance of the routes and cooperation between institutions (Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Economics, private land owners, non-governmental organizations). He also showed different signs connected with cycling routes in different places – forests, cities, rural regions.

- The development of the Cycling routes consists of the following stages:
- The idea of the route;
- The target audience(s) of the route;
- The planning of routes and route maps;
- Real-life testing of the routes;
- Cooperation within the stakeholders along the route ;
- Issuing (printing) the Route Map;
- Sign-posting of the routes;
- Promoting the routes, maintaining the infrastructure.

To ensure the creation of new tourism products, workshops for tourism sector entrepreneurs are being organized with tourism associations and tourist information centers.





**Figure 15:** Mr. Raitis Sijāts, Head of the Board of Vidzeme Tourism Association and ICT 13 Project

The workshop continued with the experience of Sigulda Tourism Development Agency (Latvia). Mrs. Dana Spulle presented cycling at Gauja National Park and Sigulda city and outlined opportunities and threats. She showed a short film about Sigulda and its attractions.

A good practice is a case of good and successful collaboration in a particular field, which can be used as an example for further cooperation in the future. Good practice is considered all the initiatives (e.g. methodologies, projects, processes and techniques), undertaken in one of the programme's thematic priorities (Innovation and Environment), already proved successful (tangible and measurable results in achieving a specific objective) and it has the potential to be transferred to a different geographic area.



To see examples of good practice in real life, participants of the workshop had a chance to take a cycling tour in Saulkrasti. They visited seaside by the Baltic Sea, Cycling Museum. At the same time they were showed road signs, cycling alleys in Saulkrasti.

**Figure 16:** Mrs. Dana Spulle, Sigulda Tourism Development Agency

In total, nine project partners were represented: Municipality of South Pelion - Greece, Consell de Mallorca - Spain, Pafos Regional Board of Tourism - Cyprus, Greek National Tourism Organisation - Greece, Västmanland Region - Sweden, Welsh Government CADW - UK, European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) - Belgium, National Institute for Research and Development in Tourism (NIRD) - Romania together with Vidzeme Tourism Association - Latvia.

Participants discussed the different types of cycling tourists – beginners, everyday cyclers, professionals, leisure cyclers. What everyone could agree on is that no matter in which group a cyclist is included, information must be provided and they have to be suitable for everyone. Cyclers can get information about routes on the internet, in tourism information centers and on printed materials often available at tourism information centers. Pictures and videos of routes and infrastructures are also available on the internet.

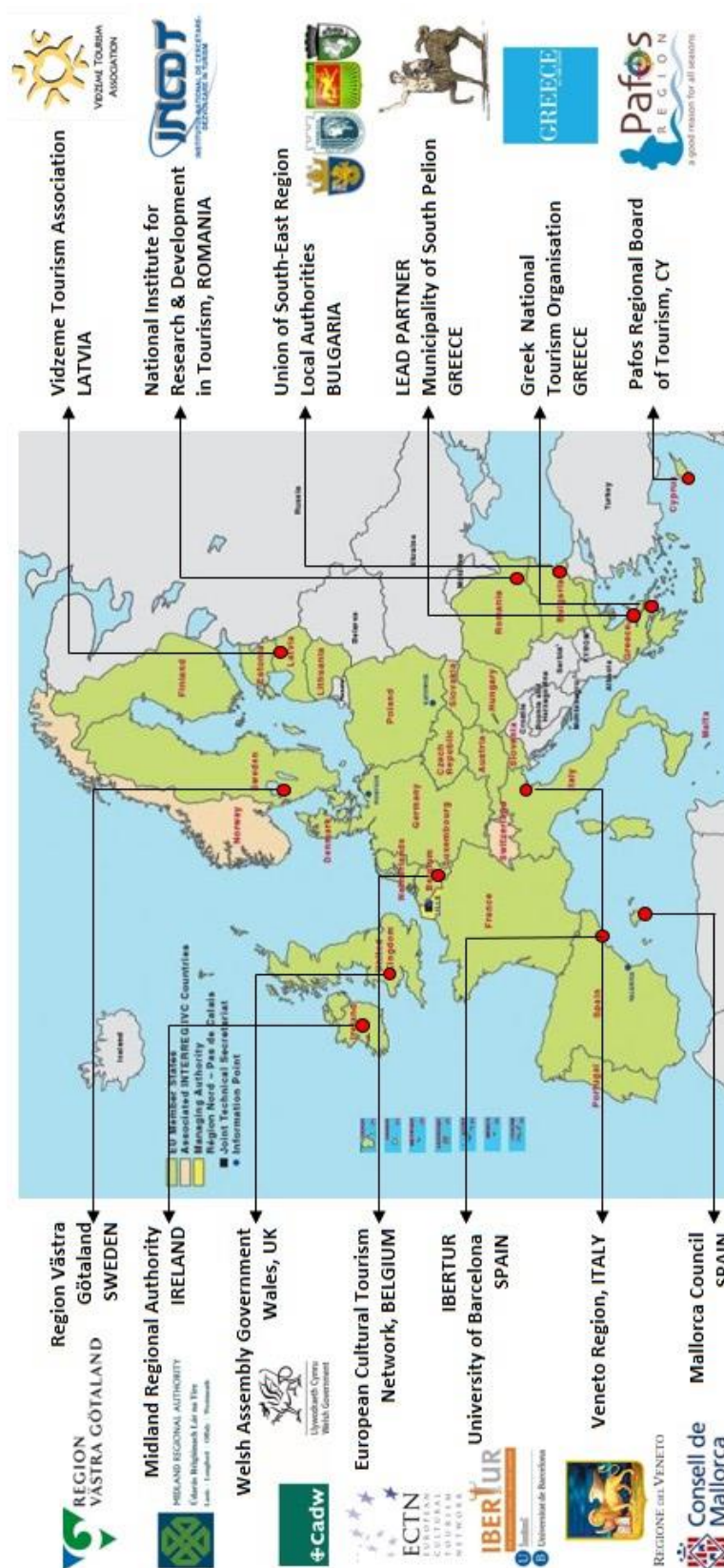
Workshop was a successful way for CHARTS project partners to get to know good practice examples in Vidzeme Region, Latvia, sharing their experience and GPs alongside discussions. Partners had a chance to exchange their experience and transferring good examples. Participants discussed on topics regarding cycling – infrastructure, available information, target groups, rental services. This workshop was approvingly appreciated both from the organizer's and recipients' sides, as a chance to exchange experiences about different ways of providing traveler's information and cycling possibilities.







**Figures 17 and 18:** Participants taking a cycling tour in Saulkrasti city





## Engaging Culture and Heritage for Sustainable Tourism Development





# CYCLE TOURISM

## Veneto by Bicycle

Cycle tourism is one of the main innovative expression of the current change in the tourism industry. Today the tourist demand has changed and the general interests are moving to nature, culture and heritage. Cycling for tourists is confirming itself as an increasing request.

According to a recent investigation published by the European Commission, cycle tourism on the European network of bicycle paths (Eurovelo) creates an economic impact of 47 billion Euro/year.

Veneto Region is actually developing a significant policy concerning the Cycling for Tourists sector, which lies in a multi-year project called "Cicloturismo".

The aims of the project's GP are:

- to layout a tourist plan;
- to improve governance;
- to replicate good practices/ideas;
- to introduce innovative, clear and trustworthy holidays.



[www.charts-interreg4c.eu](http://www.charts-interreg4c.eu)



The Interregional Cooperation Programme INTERREG IVC, financed by the European Union's Regional Development Fund, helps Regions of Europe work together to share experience and good practice in the areas of innovation, the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention.

EUR 302 million is available for project funding, but more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy-makers

