National Status Report

for the Macedonian side of the Bulgarian - Macedonian Section of the Iron Curtain Trail (EuroVelo 13)

Center for development and promotion Promo Idea (PROMO IDEA) - Strumica

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1. Background

1.1 Mission of the project and objectives of the national status report

The Iron Curtain Trail is the newest EuroVelo route, tracing along the historical Iron Curtain, connecting countries from the Finnish-Russian to the Turkish-Bulgarian border.

The Iron Curtain Trail project received support from the EU South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme with a total budget of 1,403,441.05 Euro.

The project involves partners form all South East European countries along the trail. With the help of this subsidy, the Southern section of the Iron Curtain Trail will be able to catch up to the more developed sections in terms of sustainable transport and tourism and become the engine of all cycling-related development in the region, along the following specific goals:

1. Improve the accessibility of the SEE regions by bicycle.
2. Connect cycling and public transport opportunities.
3. Connecting SEE regions by a European long distance cycle route.
4. Promote cycling and combined sustainable transportation as a means of sustainable mobility.
5. The ICT project will significantly improve knowledge, experiences of the leading regional development bodies and the relevant NGOs in the program area and will lay down the basics of the future cooperation.

The objective of this document is to contribute to this project with a summary of the the current status and possibilities of the Macedonian part of the Bulgarian-Macedonian section of the Iron Curtain Trail.

The study reports the current situation of the itinerary on the whole section in Macedonia, and thus contributes to the plans of development in the region. It is also intended to be used for lobbying purposes: to convince the decision-makers, the authorities on local and national level, institutitions on regional level, NGO's and private sector and gain support for the EuroVelo 13 route as part of the Iron Curtain Trail.

1.2 Organisation

The current National Status Report was prepared by Center for development and promotion Promo Idea (PROMO IDEA) - Strumica within the ICT project, based on the survey of the route sections in Macedonia and formerly prepared documents: EuroVelo Route 13 - Manual for development of section on the Balkan Peninsula, prepared in 2011 in the framework of the project: Development of Long-term Strategy and Networks for Promotion and Implementation of the Iron Curtain Trail in its Balkan Section (StrategIC), and the Skeleton for the Trans-national Action Plan, prepared by ECF on behalf of the Association of South-western Municipalities of Bulgaria in the framework of the project: “The Balkan Velo Trail – BVT 13” in December, 2011. It is a part of the Transnational Status Report, which is being prepared in the framework of the project “Sustainable mobility along the newest EuroVelo route, the Iron Curtain Trail route” (Acronym: ICT), and in cooperation with responsible partner for Working Package 3 „Anlaysis and planning” ERDF PP5 Bulgarian Cycling Association, Bulgaria.

1.3 Short methodology

As mentioned above, the curent National Status Report is based on a previous documents prepared during the course of 2011 where unfortunately Promo Idea - Strumica (IPA PP6) did not participate. Representatives of Promo Idea - Strumica still had to survey the route again and update the previous report with the changes in the past two years. During the survey it become obvous that some of the sub-sectiosn sould be changed and a proposal is prepared that has still to be discussed in the frame of the project as well as with the stakeholders on local and national level. The survey took place in during March and April, 2014. This was followed by data gathering via Internet, mails and phone calls, regarding the services, the promotion and the financial and organizational resources. Based on this document other documents, that are foreseen to be prepared in the project, will be prepared. The action plan based on this report, once prepared and translated into Macedonian language, will be sent to the local, regional and national decision-makers for feedback and to gain recognition for the project.

1.3.1 The itinerary of the route

The itinerary of this section was agreed with the Bulgarian partners (ERDF PP5 Bulgarian Cycling Association (BCA) and ERDF PP9 Association of South-western Municipalities (ASWM)) and is the best possible route according to the EuroVelo methodology. The route was designed to be as close as possible to the original Iron Curtain, cross the border as many times as possible, run by the historical and cultural points of interest regarding the Iron Curtain, and meanwhile be close to the best services possible. It is also important to guide the cyclists through safe, quality, easily accessible and picturesque ways. This itinerary is the most cost-efficient one using the existing infrastructure as much as possible, almost without any section where new infrastructure has to be built. We designed the itinerary in this way to create the opportunity of having the route signposted and incorporated into the EuroVelo system promptly – even as a temporary route.

1.4 Overview of the sections

BG_Section 1: Blagoevgrad - Border crossing point Stanke Lisichkovo, 27,1 km

MK_Section1: Border crossing point Delchevo - Ilin Kamen locality-Delchevo, 11.7km

(1) Border crossing point Delchevo - Ilin Kamen locality, 6,3 km

(2) Ilin Kamen locality-Delchevo, 5,4 km

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 0 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 11,7 km; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km.

TOTAL_Section1: Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria - Delchevo, Macedonia, 38,8 km

MK_Section2: Delchevo - Pehcevo - Berovo, 44 km (Var. 1)

(1) Delchevo - Chiflik - Pehcevo, 30 km

(2) Pehcevo - Sign Iron Curtain Trail (start of section Ravna reka - Ablanica), 6 km

(3) Ravna reka - Ablanica, 4,1 km

(4) Ablanica - Berovo, 3,9 km

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 8,4 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 35,6 km; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km.

MK_Section2: Delchevo - Pehcevo - Berovo, 41.8 km (Var. 2)

(1) Delchevo - Pehcevo, 27,8 km

(2) Pehcevo - Sign Iron Curtain Trail (start of section Ravna reka - Ablanica), 6 km

(3) Ravna reka - Ablanica, 4,1 km

(4) Ablanica - Berovo, 3,9 km

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 4,4 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 37,4 km; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km.

MK_Section3: Berovo - Strumica, 56.2 km

(1) Berovo – Suvi Laki – Hamzali – Petralinci – Dabile, 51,7 km

(2) Dabile - Strumica, 4,5 km

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 0 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 51,7 km; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 0 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 4,5 km.

MK_Section4: Strumica - Border crossing Novo Selo, 38 km (Var. 1)

(1) Strumica - Dabile - Robovo - Murtino - Bansko, 13,5 km

(2) Bansko - Gabrovo - Borisovo – Mokrievo – Mokrino – Smolare, 13,7 km

(3) Smolare - Drazhevo - Staro Konjarevo - Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo, 10,8 km

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 6,4 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 16,2 km[1]; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 7,5 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 7,9 km.

MK_Section4: Strumica - Border crossing Novo Selo, 36,1 km (Var. 2)

(1) Strumica - Kuklish – Svidovica - Bansko, 13,5 km

(2) Bansko - Gabrovo - Borisovo - Mokrievo - Mokrino - Smolare, 13,7 km

(3) Smolare - Samoilovo - Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo, 8,9 km

[1] Some section during the summer are with medium traffic

Bicycle path, lane: 0 km, Non-asphalted road: 2,6 km; Asphalted traffic free road: 0 km, Low traffic, asphalted public road: 27,8 km[2]; Medium traffic, asphalted public road: 3,8 km; High traffic, asphalted public road: 1,9 km.

BG_Section4: Border crossing Zlatarevo - Petrich, Bulgaria, 21 km

TOTAL_Section4: Strumica, Macedonia - Petrich, Bulgaria 57,1 km

1.4 Proposals for changes in the route

- ***Proposal Nr. 1 - MK_Section2: Delchevo - Pehcevo - Berovo.***
  Route on the road which is not signposted and not very safe for the cyclists: *Delchevo - Chiflik - Trbovishte - Pehchevo (Var.1)*, to be replaced with low traffic, asphalted public road in a good condition: ***Delchevo - Pehchevo (Var.2)*.**

- ***Proposal Nr 2. - MK_Section4: Strumica - Border crossing Novo Selo***
  Route on the high traffic, asphalted public road which is not safe for the cyclists: *Strumica – Dabile – Robovo – Murtino – Bansko* (Var.1), to be replaced with the route: ***Strumica - Kuklish - Svidovica - Bansko* (Var.2).**

- ***Proposal Nr 3. - MK_Section4: Strumica - Border crossing Novo Selo***
  Route on the road which is not signposted and in bad condition: *Smolare - Staro Konjarevo - Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo (Var.1)*, to be replaced with low traffic, asphalted public road in a good condition: ***Smolare - Samoilovo - Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo (Var.2)*.**

[2] Some section during the summer are with medium traffic

2. Routes-infrastructure

2.1 Existing route infrastructure

Total length of route in Macedonia:	149,9 km / 100% (Var. 1)
Total length of route in Macedonia:	145,8 km / 100% (Var. 2)
Bicycle path, lane	0 km / 0%
Traffic free, asphalted public road	0 km / 0%
Low traffic, asphalted public road	115,2 km / 76,8% (Var. 1)
Low traffic, asphalted public road	128,6 km / 88,2% (Var. 2)
Medium traffic, asphalted public road	7,5 km / 5% (Var. 1)
Medium traffic, asphalted public road	3,8 km / 2,6% (Var. 2)
High traffic, asphalted public road	12,4 km / 8,3% (Var.1)
High traffic, asphalted public road	6,4 km /4,4 % (Var. 2)
Public non-asphalted road	14,8 km /9,9 % (Var. 1)
Public non-asphalted road	7 km /4,8 % (Var. 2)

As it is visible from the above breakdown, most of the trail runs on the existing low-traffic asphalted public roads. The most of the trail is not signposted. The bicycle routes between Pehcevo - Berovo and around Berovo are the most popular ones (MK_Section2, sub-sections (2), (3) and (4); see description above). Section 2 in Macedonia passess through Malesh - Pijanec micro region. In the past few years the region of Berovo has enriched its offer with the construction of several marked tourist - recreational trails. Some hiking trails can be used also for cycling, and in paticular mountain bike (see Best Practice “Developing a cycling tourism in Berovo”). The other popular routes are around Strumica (MK_Section4, sub-section (2); see description above). In the region of Strumica 20 trails were selected, mapped and classified for alternative tourism. The trails are located on a distance 2 - 5 km from the main ICT route. The most of the trails can be used for mountain biking. The area is very attractive and the tourist can visit Koleshino, Gabrovo and Smolare waterfalls as well as Mokrino springs. Other tourist attractions that can be visited by the tourists in the area are: Roman Bath (III Century); Spring Parilo which is the hottest spring in

Macedonia and the Monastery "Forty Holy martyrs of Sebastea" (see Best Practice “Sites and routes for alternative tourism”).

2.2 Planned route infrastructure

The main trails are near the city of Berovo and city of Strumica. There are several marked tourist - recreational trails develoed in diiferent projects. The most of the trails can be used for mountain biking. There is a need to develop touristic bicycle routes which will be properly signposted. The project team is in contact with different stakehokders and will discuss cooperation about the action plans and mutual signposting, infrastructural or other activities.

2.3 Critical Deficiencies

The route has several critical sections. There are two sections with high traffic:

- Dabile - Strumica, 4,5 km (MK_Section3, sub-section (3), please see above)

- Samoilovo - Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo, 5,7 km (MK_Section4, sub-section (3), please see above).

The other critical section is the section Ravna reka - Ablanica, 4,1 km between Pehcevo and Berovo (MK_Section2, sub-section 3, please see above), which runs in very attractive area but the trail which is non-aspahlted is not in very good condition. In addition there is a danger of shepard dogs, so it is advised to use local guides.

Asphalting in a length of 7 km is needed to improve the conditions on the existing sub-sections:

- already mentioned sub-section Ravna reka - Ablanica, 4,1 km (MK_Section2, sub-section (3), please see above)

- already mentioned sub-section Ablanica - Berovo, 0,3 km (MK_Section2, sub-section (4), please see above)

- sub-section Mokrino-Smolari, 4,5 km, where part of the road with length of 2,6 km is non-asphalted (MK_Section4, sub-section (2), please see above).

For the other most critical sections, 3 proposal are given (pls. see above) to change the route. That will mean that the existing Variant 1 (Var.1) is replaced with Variant 2 (Var.2). It is a bit shorter and has less sections with medium and high traffic.

3. Services

3.1 Existing Services

There is a wide selection of services in all sections: Malesh - Pijanec micro region (Sections 1+2) offers possibility for various accomodation (hotels, motels and private accommodation), while wellness and spa services are available only in Berovo. The micro region is rich in natural and cultural features, including small museums and other sites to visit. Bike rental service are offered only in Berovo. There are possibilites to book guided tours (mainly in the bigger hotels) as well as to enjoy in hiking, fishing and hunting. Bycicle repairing services are available but mainly in the car repair shops andshould be further developed. Along the rote in these sections, water can be easily found since there are many public water taps.

The other two sections (Sections 3+4) offer bigger possibilities. Around both cities (Berovo and Strumica) bigger number of hiking trails were developed and the most of them can be used for mountain bike. The area offers a lot of attractions for the tourists (historical and cultural features) as well as higher quality accomodation. Those who want cheaper accomodation can acommodate in the private villas and houses, Many events are organised throughout the year, both in Berovo and Strumica. Tourists can explore the national beauties alongside the route. They can visit and explore Pehchevski waterfalls in Pehchevo, rent a kayak on the artificial Berovo Lake or they can visit Gabrovo, Koleshino and Smolare waterfalls as well as Mokrino springs on Belasica mountain near Strumica. Tourist can taste the traditional Macedonian cuisine. There are 6 bigger hotels in the region Berovo - Strumica and bigger number of restaurants. Rent-a-bike services are offered only in the better hotels in Berovo.

3.2 Planned services

There is a plan to develop combined transport and tourist offers that include transport services by train and bus (also for the bikes) as well as rent-a-bike services. It is important to offer tourists entry to the trail. The main entry points are the airports in the capital city of Skopje, the airport in Thessaloniki, Greece and the airport in Sofia, Bulgaria. From there combined transport offers (train and bus) could be developed to

bring tourists as well as their bikes to the trail. The closest train stations are in Kochani (36 km from Delchevo and 58 km from Berovo) and in Gevgelija (58 km from Strumica) near the border with Greece. From there the tourist and their bikes should be transported with buses. In principle, at the moment the transport companies can (are willing) to take bikes in the baggage compartments of the buses, but only if there is a place and priority is given to the personnal bagagge of the travellers. For this it is neccessary to improve bike transportation capacity on public transport, and in particular improve the bike carriage possibility on public busses. Once the tourist are on the trail, bike rental services should be available in Delchevo, Berovo and Strumica. The ideas are discussed with the main stakeholders, such as larger hotels, transport companies, tourist agencies and municipal administrations.

3.3 Critical Deficiencies

There is a need to establish “cycling friendly” services in the accommodations, in the attractions and in the retail shops, pubs and restaurants. There is a lack of standardized rest stations with proper facilities. There is a need to establish bike repair stations along the route. There are also no bicycle counters in the area. Transport offers should be developed, and in particular transport of bicycles on buses in order to have better access to the trail since the region has no direct access by train. The e-bike services are also non-existent. There is neither campng site on the whole route.

4. Marketing and promotion

4.1 Existing promotion tools

The route is signposted very little, and only as a result of previous mainly awareness raising projects,where several signposts were placed (some of them are in bad condition at the moment) and some promotional events were organised. The existing signposting is not according EuroVelo standards. The idea was also discussed with the Mayors in both East and South-east region. So the idea of the Iron Curtain Trail (ICT) was mainly promoted in professional conferences and cycling events. The municipalities which are responsible for the local economic development, hotels, restaurants, as well as the cultural and gastronomical events in the 2 regions and along the trail has their own marketing and promotion materials. These events and features can cooperate with the ICT project to create synergies in marketing and promotion.

4.2 Planned Promotion Tools

The route is not yet ready and signposted. Therefore, the project team was not able to identify planned promotion tools for the EV13 - ICT in Bulgaria - Macedonia from whoever of the stakeholders.

The plan is to promote the route via printed brochures, Internet (sub-site/page on Promo Idea own site and to connect with local, regional and national web portals with content and design according EuroVelo standards, etc.) and at various events. Municipalities of Berovo and Strumica, cultural and gastronomical events (e.g. carnival in Strumica, fair of traditional food in Berovo), tourist agencies as well as the hotels in the region develop their own promotional materials and the plan is to incorporate the promotion of the trail into the promotion of the above mentioned institutions/ organisations. It is planned to integrate the promotion of the route into the advertisements activities of the national tourism agency.

4.3 Critical Deficiences

Marketing and promotion of the route will be challenging as there is no practice at all in Macedonia according to EuroVelo routes. It is advised to make a complex marketing and promotion of the EuroVelo EV13 route passing through Macedonia.

5. Organisation, financing

5.1 Existing organizations for development and maintenance

Organizations concerned with development of infrastructure are the municipalities and national bodies.

Constructio and maintenance of local roads on their territories is the responsibility of municipalities. Public Enterprise “Makedonija pat” is responsible for national and regional roads in terms of financing and maintenance. This creates a huge problem for construction and maintenance, because most of the municipalities do not have sufficient resources, in particular not for maintenance.

5.2 Potential organisations for development and maintenance

Local and regional NGOs, tourist agencies and LEADER organisations (one is in process of establishment in Strumica micro region) should be involved in the developments in services and promotion. There is a plan to esatblish a Working Group with participation of technical officers from the local and the national authorities for infrastructure developments and maintenance with responsibility to coordinate the infrastructure developments and maintenance.

5.3 Existing financial resources

Most of the infrastructural developments in the region (especially in Macedonia) are funded through the central budget (e.g. national support programme for rural infrastructure in the Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development (AFSARD), national support programme for balanced regional development in the Ministry of Local self-government and the Bureau for Regional Development, etc.) and with loans (e.g. World Bank). With regards to the EU funds there are possibilities to finance small infarstructure developments thorugh the EU IPA Cross-Border Cooperation programmes (with Bulgaria and Greece) as well as from the IPARD programme.

6. Description of the route conditions by section

6.1 Section 1: Border crossing Delchevo - Ilin Kamen locality - Delchevo

- **Route infrastructure**

The ICT route reaches Macedonia at the Border crossing point Stanke Lisichkovo, BG/ Delchevo, MK. This section of the route continues at the beginning with 3 lanes of the national asphalted road which is with low traffic (one lane in direction border - Delchevo, and 2 lanes in direction Delchevo - border), and then continues with 2 lanes. This section has 7% descent in a lenghth of 4 km. The total lenght of this section in Macedonia is 11,7 km. In terms of infrastucture needs construction of a cycle lane (asphalting of the shoulders beside traffic roads) on the whole section is needed. However, the action should be hamonised with the (general) renewal of the road.

- **Signposting**

The route has national signposting as part of the national road and regional signposting towards touristic sites. There is one sign indicating Iron Curtain Trail placed in a previous project but in bad condition, and not according EuroVelo standards.

- **Public transport connections**

The closest train station is in Kochani (36 km from the route), Macedonia, and in Blagoevgrad, Bulgaria (36 km) on the Bulgarian section of the ICT route.The closest bus station is in Delchevo (11,7 km). There are 4 bus lines per day that are running every day from Delchevo to the capital city of Skopje day, plus 2 bus lines which are operating during working days and holidays, plus one bus line which is operating only on Sundays and holidays.There are 4 bus lines per day that are running every day from Skopje to Delchevo, plus one bus line which is operating during working days.

- **Services**

The area is a part of Pijanec micro region. There is an abundance of water resources on this section and the tourist can obtain water at several at public water taps which can also serve as resting places. There are repairing services available in the city of

Dechevo. In Delchevo there is one 3 star hotel and also a motel where the tourist can accommodate. There is also a pharmacy, and number of restaurants, pizzeria and coffee bars.

- **Promotion, marketing**

Promotion and marketing of this section does not exists.

- **Organisation - financing**

Public Enterprise “Makedonija pat” is responsible for national and regional roads in terms of financing and maintenance.





6.2 Section 2: Delchevo - Pehcevo - Berovo

- **Route infrastructure**

This section of the route starts in the city of Delchevo in Pijanec micro region, passess through the city of Pehcevo and ends in the city of Berovo in Malesh micro region. It connects two tourist settlements Ravna Reka near Pehcevo and Ablanica near Berovo. It has total length of 41,8 km (Var.2). The section runs on a good quality, mainly low traffic asphalted road. The longest section Delchevo - Pehcevo, 27,8 km runs on the low traffic regional road. It has uphill of 700 m with gradient of 7%. Two sub-sections: (3) Ravna reka - Ablanica and part of (4) Ablanica - Berovo are critical and need asphalting as described in Chapter 2.3.

- **Signposting**

The route has signposting as part of the public roads and signposting towards touristic sites. There is one sign for the Iron Curtain Trail at the starting point of the sub-section (3) Ravna reka - Ablanica. It was placed in a former project and it is not according EuroVelo standards.

- **Public transport connections**

There are bus stations in the cities of Delchevo, Pehcevo and Berovo. Connections with Delchevo are described in the Section 6.1, while the connections with Berovo are described in the Section 6.3. The closest train station is in Kochani (36 km from Delchevo and 58 km from Berovo).

- **Services**

This section is dominated by the cities of Delchevo, Pehcevo and Berovo. The area belongs to the rather famous micro region Malesh - Pijanec. there is a unique combination of exceptionally preserved nature, cultural heritage, ethnography, traditional music and handicrafts, which is extremely important for the development of alternative tourism. There were some initiatives in the past for branding of the micro region Malesh - Pijanec. Several hiking trails have been developed in the last few years around Berovo. The sub-section Ravna reka - Ablanica shortens dramatically the connection between Pehcevo and Berovo. Most of the trails can be used for mountain biking. The trail also passes by the artificial Berovo lake. In Berovo tourists are offered rent-a-bike service in the bigger hotels. Private accommodation facilities in Berovo are categorised.

There are several at public water taps and gazebos which serve as resting places. Tourist are also offered other types of services: hotels, motels, private accomodation, restaurants, shops, archaelogical sites, natural (several small waterfalls), cultural (chrches and monastries) and historical points of interests, events, and information. In Pehcevo there are 2 motels, coffee bars, restaurants, markets, etc. Details about services in Delchevo are described in the Section 6.1, while the details about services in Berovo are described in the Section 6.3.

- **Promotion, marketing**

The area is well promoted on municipal, regional and national websites, travel agencies and hotel websites.

- **Organisation - financing**

Public Enterprise “Makedonija pat” is responsible for national and regional roads in terms of financing and maintenance, while local roads are under responsibilities of the municipalities of Delchevo, Pehcevo and Berovo.





6.3 Section 3: Berovo - Strumica

- **Route infrastructure**

This section of the route starts in Berovo in Malesh micro region, and passes through Suvi Laki – Petralintsi – Dabile ends in the city of Strumica. It has total length of 56,2 km. The section runs on a good quality, mainly low traffic asphalted road, which has lots of turns and several long uphills as well as descents with gradient in a range from 7 - 11%. The bigest part of the road is not protected from rock and stone slides.

- **Signposting**

The route has signposting as part of the road and signposting towards touristic sites. There are not signs for the Iron Curtain Trail and according EuroVelo standards.

- **Public transport connections**

There are bus stations at both ends of the section, in Berovo and in Strumica. There are 9 bus lines per day that are running every day from the capital city of Skopje to Berovo, plus 2 buses which are operating only during working days. There are 11 bus lines per day that are running every day from the capital city of Skopje to Strumica, plus 3 bus lines which are operating during working days and one bus line which are operating during working days and Saturdays.

The closest train station from Berovo is in Kochani (58 km), and in equal distance of 58 km from Strumica is the train station in Gevgelija near the border with Greece.

- **Services**

This section is dominated by the cities of Berovo and Srumica at both ends of the section. Berovo and Strumica are important touristic destinations. Both Berovo and Strumica have developed in the last few years several hiking trails. Most of them can be used for mountain biking. In Berovo tourists are offered rent-a-bike service in the bigger hotels. Tourist are also offered other types of services: accomodation, restaurants, shops, natural and cultural points of interests, events, winery and information.

- **Promotion, marketing**

The area is well promoted by regional and national websites, travel agencies and hotel websites, especially Berovo and Strumica.

- **Organisation - financing**

Public Enterprise “Makedonija pat” is responsible for national and regional roads in terms of financing and maintenance, while local roads are under responsibilities of the municipalities of Berovo, Bosilovo and Strumica.






6.4 Section 4: Strumica - Border crossing Novo Selo

- **Route infrastructure**

This section of the route starts in the city of Strumica, has 3 sub-sections, passess through lot of villages in the micro region of Strumica and ends at the cross-border point Novo Selo with Bulgaria. The total length of the section is 36,1 km (Var.2). The section runs on a good quality, mainly low traffic asphalted road. It also has one section Samoilovo - Novo Konjarevo with length of 3,8 km on asphalted public road with medium traffic and one critical section Novo Konjarevo – Border crossing Novo Selo of 1,9 km on asphalted public road with high traffic (MK_Section2, sub-section (4)) as described in Chapter 2.3. On the sub-section Mokrino-Smolari, 4,5 km, part of the road with length of 2,6 km is non-asphalted (MK_Section4, sub-section (2)). The trail is relatively flat but there are some uphills as well as descents. In terms of infrastructure this section needs: traffic calming / reduction on the sub-sections and construction of a cycle lane on the sub-sections of the route on the international road Strumica (MK) - Petrich (BG); and in particular on the sections with high traffic (shoulders asphalted and marked with a line).

- **Signposting**

The route has signposting as part of the road and relatively good signposting towards touristic sites. There are not signs for the Iron Curtain Trail and according EuroVelo standards.

- **Public transport connections**

Connections with Strumica are described in the Section 6.3. The closest train station is in Gevgelija (58 km) near the border with Greece.

- **Services**

This section is dominated by the city of Srumica, which is well developed city and important touristic destinations. It is famous by the internationally renowned carnival. Several hiking trails around Strumica weer developed in the last few years. Most of them can be used for mountain biking. Tourist are also offered other types of services: hotel accomodation, spa and welnness, restaurants, shops, natural (several waterfalls and spings) and cultural points of interests (monastries in Vodocha and Veljusa, fortress Carevi Kuli), archaelogical sites, events, winery and information. In

Strumica there are several fine hotels (3 and 4 stars), a lot of restaurants, coffee bars, shops, etc.

- **Promotion, marketing**

The area is well promoted by regional and national websites, travel agencies and hotel websites.

- **Organisation - financing**

Public Enterprise “Makedonija pat” is responsible for national and regional roads in terms of financing and maintenance, while local roads are under responsibilities of the municipalities of Strumica, Bosilovo and Novo Selo.





7. Summary

Altogether, the Macedonian section of the Iron Curtain Trail along the Bulgarian - Macedonian border, though not as developed, it has great potential.

There are some infrastructure investments to be done as well as the complete route signposting according EuroVelo standards (incl. national traffic calming signs in the traffic intensive sections between the cities and in the cities). Sustainable tourism and transport offers should be developed as well as proper recreational bycicle routes.

The developments – especially the improvement needed in the route infrastructure, services and promotion, will be indicated in the National Action Plan. In order to happen until 2020, a well coordinated action of all involved stakehodlers is needed.

Low traffic, asphalted public road MK_Section3_Sub-section (1)



Existing ICT signposting, MK-Section2_Sub-section (3)



MK_Section2_Sub-section (2)



MK_Section4_Sub-section (3)

