

Comments on

« Baltic Sea Cycle Route », A *bikeline* Cycling Guide written by Michael Cramer

This report follows an 11-day solo cycle journey from Lübeck to Gdansk during summer 2018 (June 26th to July 6th). I slept most nights in campings, plus one night in a rented caravan and the last night at the difficult-to-find Youth Hostel in Gdynia, near the Container Terminal – see at the end of the report for more details on accomodation.

In addition to your guidebook, I used OSMAnd+ application as a navigation aid. OSM maps include a layer showing many cycle routes. On OpenstreetMap, the German part of the Baltic Cycle Route is marked as « D2 » and when cross-checking, it is most of the time identical to my own route, starting at Travemünde. The Polish section is shown as « R10 » on OpenstreetMap (for Eurovelo 10). Besides, I downloaded the bikeline official GPS-Track. And during my trip I had sometimes to decide whether I should follow the guidebook, OSMAnd+ or the signposting...

First of all, I would like to say that, to my opinion, focus should be put on maps rather than text, as route description is totally useless for about half of the readers : those who travel the other direction. Therefore, I won't make any comment about the text, which I didn't read (except for some historical and cultural paragraphs).

In this document, I'll be commenting the maps from C27 (page 185) to B10 (page 93), that is in reverse order, as I cycled from Lübeck to Gdansk.

Map scans, page and map numbers are taken from the 1st edition in English, dated summer 2017. I highlighted my route with a fluorescent marker when not following the guidebook's itinerary.

To save time, I'll use the closest latin letter to the polish special letters.

I. Map legend and route surface type (page 6)

One of the biggest problem I experienced when using this guidebook was the unreliability of some of the symbols used to describe the type of cycle route, and in particular the inappropriate use of dashed (---- *Unpaved surface*) and dotted (.... *Bad surface*) lines, regardless of their colour.

To my opinion, in contradiction with what the legend says (*Unpaved surface, Bad surface*), these lines have been drawn mainly with respect to route WIDTH instead of route SURFACE CONDITION, although the second parameter is of much more importance to the traveller. What I mean is that a good single trail, on firm and stable ground, will be much more comfortable and allow higher speed than a wide forest track used by tractors and/or trucks but with lots of sandy sections or concrete slabs sections. When planning our daily cycling, we want to know « how fast » we can expect to travel from a point to another, as this will determine, among other things, whether we can continue in late afternoon or whether we must stop for the night where accomodation is available.

Therefore, I'll hereafter suggest a change of line type (dashed to dotted, or vice versa) each time I think it would be appropriate according to my own experience.

II. Route reporting : Germany

Signposting along the cycle route is very good in Germany and most of the time it includes the official Eurovelo (13 or 10) logo along with local towns names and distances. I am hereunder reporting all differences between the guidebook's maps and situation on the ground. These result mostly from new infrastructure (cycle paths) and temporary diversions (July 2018). But I also found some minor errors in the guidebook.

Map C27

Finding the right way out of Lübeck is not easy, particularly when reaching the suburbs of Marli : the path is not properly signposted. After crossing the railway lines, there wasn't any signpost at the road crossing. No signpost again along the forest section, although there are several intersections – I wrongly turned right and had to cycle back. A GPS helps. The path in the forest can be muddy after rain.

Map C26

A brand new paved cycle path (traffic free green way) runs along road B105 from the crossing near Sülsdorf to Dassow. The long detour via Schönberg is now avoided.

Map C25

The paved cycle path is continuous from Dassow up to Johannstorf, where the itinerary branches off to the right on a rural road → same colour.

Maps C24-C23

Nothing to report.

Map C22

Shortly after Niendorf, the route goes through a camping : cyclists must push the bike to cross the gate.

Map C21-C20

In Pepelow, the route is signed via Rakow : there's a continuous paved cycle path from Pepelow to Tessmannsdorf ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)).

Maps C19

In July 2018, there was a diversion from the watch tower in Börgerende up to Ostseebad Nienhagen via Rethwisch ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)). Paved cycle path all the way.

Map C18

There's a convenient Netto supermarket in Markgrafenheide.

In Markgrafenheide, the route was diverted along road 43, on a paved cycle path, during approximately 2.1 km. Then, we branch off to the left following official signposts and cross the forest on a very comfortable track ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)).

Map C17

Nothing to report.

Map C16

In July 2018, there was a diversion via Bakelberg and a rural trail to Althagen and Ostseebad Ahrenshoop (coastal path closed). In OSM, [the « D2 » diversion starts in Wustrow](#).

Maps C15-C14-C13

There wasn't any signpost on the whole section between Ostseebad Ahrenshoop and Ostseebad Prerow via Darss forest, although I remember I had seen something in Ahrenshoop, by the lakeside (don't remember what was written, because I decided to follow the route described in the guidebook even in the absence of signposting). When looking in OSM, [I see that « D2 » now runs along the lake shore via Born and Wieck all the way to Prerow](#) – and this is why I didn't see any signpost in Darss forest and saw the first one since Ahrenshoop at Höhe Dünen in Prerow, where I re-joined the official « D2 » route.

The first unpaved section in Darss forest crosses a tough sandy section (Rehberge), [therefore it should be shown as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#). Then the long straight path up to the intersection with the road to the Lighthouse is not made of concrete slabs as stated in the guidebook : it's a comfortable dirt track where one can easily ride at 20 to 30 km/h – and hence [should be shown as a dashed line instead of a dotted line](#). There are indeed concrete slabs on the short section between the intersection with the Lighthouse road and the next paved section, before Prerow.

There's a signpost close to the camping, before Ostseeheilbad Zingst : a shortcut running on a dike allows to avoid the town ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)).

Map C12

Although it is not shown on the map, there are a few unpaved (but easy) sections between Dabitz and Nisdorf.

Map C11

In Stralsund, it's not that easy to find the way to the cycle path on the old bridge towards Altefähr (camping). Ferries from the old harbour are more comfortable, but there are just a few crossings in a day (EUR 6.50 for one person with a bike).

As usual with bigger cities, getting out of Stralsund on the right path is sometimes confusing, due to lack of or ambiguous signposting in urban suburbs.

Maps C10-C9-C8

In Brandshagen, signposting points towards Reinberg along the old cobbled street. The official cycle route continues to follow the same cobbled street up to Mesekehagen and then further as far as a kilometer before Neuenkirchen ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)). Although cycling on such a road is not comfortable, I managed to ride those 18 km (if I remember well) at an average speed of 15-18 km/h, which is not so bad and possibly faster than the long detour along the shore of Strelasund.

Map C7

The single path between Ludwigsburg and Loissin Bungalowsiedlung is good and easy, [therefore this short section should be represented with a dashed line instead of a dotted line.](#)

In July 2018, cycle traffic was diverted from Vierow to Seebad Lubmin along road L262 ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)).

Maps C6-C5-C4

Between Kröslin and Wolgast, there's a new cycle path along the main road as far as a kilometer after Gross Ernthof, where we take a good single trail through the forest. After passing near the zoo, we join the itinerary shown in the guidebook at Tannenkamp ([same as OSM « D2 »](#)).

Leaving Wolgast, I do not remember having seen any signpost indicating the way along Peenestrom as shown in the guidebook. Instead I found myself cycling to Mölschow on a good rural dirt track, according to signposting on road B111 in Mahlzow ([same as OSM « D2 »](#), which then doesn't travel via Peenemünde). From there, although I should have tried to turn left towards Heideberg and Peenestrom (not signposted), I reached Peenemünde via Ostseebad Trassenheide – Ostseebad Karlshagen (cycle path along main road) and the dirt track along Peenestrom shown on the map. The section from Mölschow to the start of the dirt track on the shore of Peenestrom is an uninteresting detour and should be avoided. The itinerary in the guidebook is probably the best option for those who want to visit Peenemünde, starting in Mahlzow along Peenestrom.

From Peenemünde, I followed the guidebook's route via the airfield to Ostseebad Karlshafen and forward.

Maps C3-C2-C1

Nothing to report.

III. Route reporting : Poland

Signposting is largely irregular in Poland, although more frequent in some sections than in others. When available, it always mentions « R10 », for Eurovelo 10.

Map B35

Here comes the first true obstacle, one that will make Poland route less fun than the German part : sand ! Starting along the otherwise beautiful and silent forest track outside Swinoujscie, unavoidable deep and sometimes long sand holes require tiresome bike pushing. Obviously, heavily loaded travel bikes represent a bigger challenge to the cyclist. As a consequence, one must plan with a significant decrease in average speed and daily distance – or longer cycling days.

The forest section between the industrial polygon at Swinoujscie and Miedzzydroje is a long succession of sand holes, [therefore it should be shown as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#).

Map B34

There are many sandy or stony sections on the way between Miedzzydroje and Domyslow, [therefore it should be shown as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#). [OSM shows an alternative « R10 » ride between Warnowo and Domyslow, via the northern shore of Lake Czajcze](#) : maybe this is more comfortable (no sand) and should be tested ?

A bit further, the cycle path along the road between Sieroslaw and Zastan is in bad condition, [therefore it should be shown as a dashed line instead of a solid line](#).

Map B33

In July 2018, there was work in progress along road 102 between Miedzywodzie and Osiedle Rybackie and the cycle path was blocked off.

Map B32

There are sand holes in the forest between Dziwnowek and Lukecin, [therefore this section should be shown as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#). Right turn at the first intersection in the forest follows signposting as well as [OSM « R10 »](#).

Map B31

Outside Pogorzelica, there's a very good dirt track that avoids most of the cobbled street on the seaside. Turn right after the pond/marsh. It is signposted as R10 (Eurovelo 10), should be recommended and shown as a dashed line ([same as OSM « R10 »](#)).

Maps B30-B29

Nothing to report, except that the cycle path is brand new and very enjoyable, particularly the short windy path in the woods when leaving Kolobrzeg. Great sea views here and there.

Map B28

The unpaved section just before Sarbinowo is a bad track and [should be drawn as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#).

Maps B27-B26

This is the most problematic section of the guidebook (didn't read the Gdansk-Riga part, though) : from Lazy to Dabki, the maps show the itinerary on the narrow isthmus between the sea and lake Bukowo. I tried it, starting on a sandy forest track after the last houses in Lazy. There weren't any signposts but I followed some obvious cycle tyre tracks. The path then becomes narrower, more sandy, climbs on a dune and dives in a jungle-like wood at the back of the isthmus, infested with millions of starving mosquitoes. Still there were tyre tracks and I continued on a very narrow path regularly obstructed by fallen trees, until I faced an almost vertical climb back towards the top of the dune... That was too much and it took me a while to walk back to where another path branches off towards the beach – with cycle tyre tracks as well. Took this one and quickly found myself on the beach, where I tried to walk towards Dabki. Useless : the sand is far too soft to allow any pushing of a loaded travel bike on the beach ! It took me another very tough 30 minutes to push my heavy bike back on top of the dune (as it was neither possible to push it on the beach to Lazy) : one step up, three quarter of a step back on soft sand... From there, I walked back to Lazy and luckily found a caravan to rent for the night. I was exhausted, as well as angry against the nonsense itinerary in the guidebook – this day I had cycled 113 km.

In fact, there is a safe signed route from Lazy to Dabki, which travels inland ([same as OSM « R10 »](#), except the unnecessary detour on OSM, between Iwecino and Gleznawko) :

- Lazy to Osieki, cycle path by the side of the road → solid line
- Osieki-Rzepakowo-Iwecino, remote countryside road (concrete tabs and a short section of cobbled street) → dashed line
- Iwecino-Bukowo Morskie-Dabki, cycle path by the side of the road → solid line.

Please, make sure that next edition corrects this section. Besides, considering the very serious difficulties that travellers could meet when trying to cross this bloody jungle/impassable beach, as well as the potential damage to their bikes, because of high risk of fall when pushing the bike up or down through deep sand (imagine all this sand inside ball bearings and crankset), I would consider reasonable to contact the authorities in both Lazy and Dabki and ask them to post visible signposts which make it clear it is impossible and potentially dangerous to try connecting Lazy and Dabki via the beach/jungle with a loaded travel bike.

Map B25

There's a brand new cycle path all the way between Bobolin and Darlowo → solid line.

After Darlowo, the cycle path on the seaside is made of concrete slabs, but it's not too bad.

Map B24

A long section of the cycle path on the seaside between Lake Kopan and Jaroslawiec was under development and I guess this ride will be very comfortable by summer 2019 (→ most probably solid line).

Map B23

In Wodnica, I took left instead of right, following [« R10 » route in OSM](#), as it looked easier than the guidebook's forest trail. This section was signposted as local cycle route « 14 », first half paved (→ solid line) and second half on a good dirt track (→ dashed line).

Maps B22-B21

The wilder and most beautiful part of Baltic Sea Cycle Route starts in Ustka. It is probably also the toughest due to lots of unpaved sections in remote environment.

A kilometer or so after Machowinko, I pushed the bike on a tough 2 km long sandy section (→ dotted line) up to the junction with the road close to Debina, where a « R10 » signpost directs us to a concrete slabs path (→ dashed line) running parallel to the road towards Rowy. As my own map is not that explicit, see the full official signposted « R10 » section between Debina and Rowy [in OSM](#).

The ride on concrete slabs was not very comfortable and the guidebook shows a cycle path from Debina to Rowy, so I left « R10 » concrete slabs and got back on the road just outside Debina... to find out that the straight cycle path I was looking for starts as a big sandy trap and then doesn't exist – at least I couldn't find it on that end !

There's a bike lane by the side of the road from Debina to Rowy, but not in the other direction.

From Rowy, I went around Lake Gardno via the northern shore ([same as OSM « R10 »](#)). There a PLN 6.- fee to enter National Park Slowinski. During the first 7 km, we ride on a very good dirt track, [therefore this section should be drawn as a dashed line instead of a dotted line](#). When the route turns south at the northeastern corner of the lake, we face a 1.5 km sandy section, and [hence this one should be represented as a dotted line instead of a dashed line](#).

The rural road towards Smoldzino that we join at the intersection starts as concrete slabs.

Map B20

The last kilometer before Smoldzino isn't paved and there are some sand holes, [therefore it should be shown as a dashed line instead of a solid line](#).

In Smoldzino, I took the almost traffic-free road for comfort, but [« R10 » follows a shortcut to Lokciowe](#), which is probably at least partly unpaved.

Map B19

The first half of the Kluki to Skorzyno stretch may not be passable in case of rain, due to high water and marsh environment, and I think this should be clearly mentioned on the map as there's no alternative route when you get to Kluki. Besides, this section is infested with mosquitoes and

horseflies so no one would like to end up blocked by high waters in this marsh. In good conditions, it will take anything between 45 minutes to 1 hour to get to Skorzyno from Kluki with a loaded travel bike.

After leaving the marsh, the itinerary continues on concrete slabs up to Zgierz, where we get back to a paved rural road up to Izbica. ([The « R10 » detour via Glowczyce](#) is not necessary). Between Izbica and Gac, the road isn't paved and [should therefore be drawn as a dashed line instead of a solid line](#).

The 7.5 km between Gac and Zarnowska are not too tough, despite a few sandy sections, some of which can be avoided by cycling on the edge of the forest track. [This could be represented by a dashed line instead of a dotted line](#).

However, the last kilometer before Zarnowska is more sandy and all loaded bikes have to be pushed. Allowing about an hour for the Gac-Zarnowska stretch is reasonable, as one might want to stop for a while at the pond (beautiful wild marshy area, with information board).

Map B18

In Zarnowska, one should not follow [« R10 » on the sandy track along the lake](#), as I did, but instead continue to road 214 as shown in the guidebook (don't know the traffic density on road 214 though).

After Leba, in Nowecin, « R10 » signposting directs us on a good track which shortly ends up as a tough sandy trap. This is not nice, but the Szczecurze-Sarbsk-Bergedzino road is not nice either, due to traffic and dangerous polish driving manner !

When checking now on OSM, I see that [« R10 » runs on the northern side of Lake Sarbsko and continues through the coastal forest as far as Kopalino](#). I'm afraid that this might be a long and tough sandy ride, maybe not worth to avoid a short section of road with traffic. Each traveller will have to make up his/her mind about this.

Map B17

In several places, I could not follow exactly the itinerary described in this map. Between Biebrowo and Kopalino, I didn't find the way through (as [it doesn't exists](#)) and had to turn left and make a detour.

After Lubiatowo, the forest section up to Bialogora is tough with lots of sand. In Szklana Huta, I do not recommend to follow the signpost to Bialogora. Instead, cyclists should travel on the very good unpaved forest track that runs parallel just a bit further inland. I do not know the condition of this track closer to Lubiatowo but it is shown on the map and maybe well worth a try... This is a unique section where neither the guidebook's itinerary nor [« R10 » route](#) is the best option – see my suggestion on the attached scan.

Map B16

Debki to Karwia : comfortable unpaved road, but lots of pedestrians → slow ride. [« R10 » itinerary leaves the coast and rides inland up to Swarzewo on the Bay of Puck](#), from where one can choose to turn left to Hel or right to Gdynia. As for me, I followed the guidebook's route and went on to Wladyslawowo.

Map B15

From Kap Rozewie to Chlapowo road 215 is a very uncomfortable and high traffic cobbled street. In many places, it is nevertheless possible to ride (slow) on the pavement or on the unpaved road shoulder. The cycle path doesn't start in Chlapowo as shown on map B15 but a bit further in Cetniewo and then zigzags through the town.

Map B14

Nothing to report.

Map B13

Last departure of the ferry to Gdynia at 19h00 (1 hour crossing). Good to know as the camping in Hel is noisy and absolutely overcrowded in summer.

Maps B12-B11-B10

As this is a large urban area, most travellers will find it difficult to remain on the official cycle route and might end up lost in suburbs, although things are better once we reach the seaside in Sopot. Those without a Russian visa will have to leave the Baltic Sea Cycle Route in Gdansk, as this cannot be delivered at the Kaliningrad border. There's an excellent alternative for all travellers not yet tired : take the daily ferry to Nynäshamn at Westerplatte Terminal and go exploring beautiful Scandinavia, starting with Sweden and its great « Sverigeleden » cycle route network – which is what I planned and did.

End of route report.

IV. Accomodation

In Germany, I slept all 5 nights in campings shown on the maps, but not listed in the accomodation section of the guidebook except for Zierow : Zierow (« [Ostseecamping Ferienpark](#) »), Markgrafeneheide (« [Ferienpark](#) »), Altefähr/Stralsund (« [Sund Camp](#) »), Freest (« [Waldcamp](#) ») and Korswandt (a few km out of the itinerary). Zierow and Altefähr have nice grass grounds for tents. Markgrafeneheide was not the best place, as it is packed with tourists and tent pitches are among all others so you end up sleeping between big caravans and cars... Freest camping ground is a bit sandy and one has to remove the pine cones before setting up the tent, but apart from this it's a nice place. Korswandt camping ground is also sandy and there are not many flat pitches apart from the ones close to the road (but more noisy).

In Poland, I slept 3 nights in campings, one night in a rented caravan and the last night in Gdynia's Youth Hostel. I can recommend the campings where I stayed, because they were neither too big, nor noisy, which is worth noting as many coastal towns in Poland are packed with (Polish) tourists on holiday and campings that we pass by often do not look very nice (too big, too crowded, too noisy).

The Pobierowo « Pole Namiotowe u Zenona » camping (not listed in the guidebook) is very small and might be full if you arrive late. The ground is not perfect, but considering the area (lots of tourists) and the friendly reception, it is a good choice for one night. They also rent rooms and bungalows. Website : <http://www.podnamiotami.com/deutsch.htm>

In Ustka, I stayed at camping « Morski 101 » (not listed in the guidebook) which is good and conveniently situated along Eurovelo 10 cycle route. Website : <http://morski101.pl/en/>

In Leba, I warmly recommend camping « Marco Polo » (not listed in the guidebook), close to the railway station, as it has some very nice pitches for tents, as well as some tables for a comfortable evening picnic. Website : <http://www.marcopolo.leba.info/en/home>

If you end up in Lazy too late to continue, you can try to rent a caravan or a room at « Ośrodek Wczasów Rodzinnych Mewa » as there isn't any camping here. The caravan, with provided bedsheets and electricity costed me 47 PLN, which is good value. Rooms are more expensive though. Website : <http://www.mewa-noclegi.pl/kontakt>

The Youth Hostel is a few km away from central Gdynia and difficult to find, in particular at night, as it is strangely situated very close to Gdynia's Container Terminal and there aren't any signpost nor signboard on the building itself. Note that it will probably be fully booked if one wants to check-in during Gdynia's famous Open Air Festival. Website : <http://ssm-gdynia.pl/kontakt>

V. Last words

I hope that this report will help you updating your guidebook or, if it's not planned at the moment as the edition is recent, to upload on the website some updating notes for your current customers.

I'm planning to cycle more of the Baltic Sea Cycle Route in future, avoiding the Russian territory in Kaliningrad, as I refuse to apply for any visa – to me travelling rhymes with freedom, even more when we do so without any motor, so it's out of the question to request any kind of permission to whoever ! As there's a ferry from Travemünde to Klaipeda in Lithuania, I plan to ride in the Baltic States as far as Riga (then by ferry to Stockholm) or Tallinn (then by ferry to Helsinki).

Thank you for your attention and the great series of guidebooks and cycle maps.

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