First Routes4U meeting for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)
"Strengthening regional development through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"

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Plenary Session: The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and EUSBSR

ANALYSIS OF CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

1. Baltic Sea Region and the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR)

The Baltic Sea Region represents 85 million people in eight EU member states: Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. The region is an almost entirely enclosed marine region. A huge drainage area surrounds the Baltic Sea. Activities in this area thus strongly influence the marine environment.

Most inhabitants of the Baltic Sea Region live in the southern half, many of them reside in Poland.

The region faces common environmental, economic and social challenges. The Macro-region represents a sensitive and vulnerable ecosystem, susceptible to environmental load and high pressure of use. The sustainable economic development of the Baltic Sea Region is therefore of utmost importance in order to preserve the natural and cultural resources.

The Baltic Sea region was the first area for which a macroregional strategy was developed: In 2009, the Council of the European Union confirmed the creation of the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) to respond to the common challenges by joining capacities, coordinating activities and creating synergies.

Routes4U Project

Funded
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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The Strategy focuses on the question how to improve the region's competitiveness, create new transport and energy connections, protect the environment, promote knowledge-based co-operation and contacts, and ensure safety for people and for the environment.EUSBSR has three main goals:

1. Protect the Baltic Sea;
2. Connect the region;
3. Increase prosperity[1].

These goals are implemented through an Action Plan that comprises 13 Policy Areas and 4 Horizontal Actions. Two Policy Areas touch upon the area of sustainable cultural tourism and development of the Baltic Sea Region: The Policy Area Tourism and the Policy Area Culture are included under the overall goal to "increase prosperity".

2. Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region

16 of 33 Cultural Routes[2] are located in the Baltic Sea Macro-region which is composed by the regions situated in eight countries (Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Germany[3], Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden). Figure 1 provides an overview of the itineraries represented there:
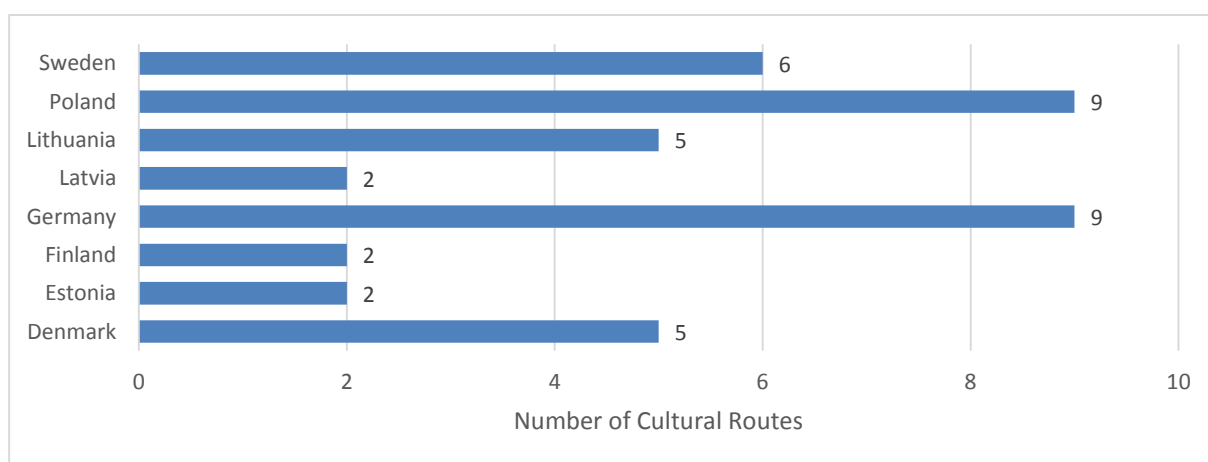

Figure 1 Cultural Routes represented in the Baltic Sea macro-region (N=16)

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[1] European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: https://www.balticsea-region-strategy.eu/
[2] In the following, the term "Cultural Route" is used to describe the Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe, in accordance with Resolutions CM/Res(2013)66 and CM/Res(2013)67, see Annex.
[3] Only some parts of Germany belong to the Baltic Sea macro-region: Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Schleswig-Holstein.

Regarding the quantitative distribution of the Cultural Routes, it reveals that most of them cross Germany and Poland (9, each) whereas about one third of them are present in Sweden (6), Denmark (5) and Lithuania (5). Only a few routes can be found in Estonia, Finland and Latvia (2, each).

By looking at the distribution of Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region, it becomes evident that the higher presence of Cultural Routes correlates with a higher number of tourists visiting the country: According to a study published by the European Commission Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) in 2017[4], Germany recorded the highest number of arrivals at tourists, followed by Sweden and Poland.

The study also reveals a discrepancy between coastal and non-coastal areas: coastal areas are more popular in Denmark, Estonia and Latvia whereas the tourism in Lithuania, Poland and Finland is rather orientated to non-coastal zones. For some regions, particularly in Sweden and Germany, both geographical parts perform equally well.

In view of these results, Cultural Routes offer the opportunity to connect more touristic to less touristic and remote zones and to strengthen regional economic development especially in remote areas (see also chapter 1.3).

Recommendation 1

Cultural Routes members are not distributed in a geographical balanced manner in the Baltic Sea region. Estonia, Finland and Latvia deserve particular attention and support, as they represent underexploited potential for Cultural Routes projects[5] and the extensions of already certified Cultural Routes.

Furthermore, the analysis of the Cultural Routes crossing the Baltic Sea Region reveals that they are differently developed in the countries of the Macro-region (see figure 2)[6].

There is no Cultural Route that crosses every country of the Baltic Sea macro-region: The Hansa is represented in seven of the eight countries, the European Cemeteries Route in five and the Viking Routes in four countries. Hence, the two Cultural Routes focusing exclusively on the culture and history of the Baltic Sea - The Hansa, Viking Routes – are most spread in this geographical area.

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[4] European Commission: DG REGIO (2017): Study on macroregional strategies and their links with cohesion policy. Data and analytical report for the EUSBSR.

[5] In the following, "Cultural Routes projects" describe either existing routes in view of their certification process by the Council of Europe or initiatives aimed to create new Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe.

[6] The data for the analysis of the Cultural Routes in this section was provided by the Cultural Routes in 2017 and updated in July 2018.
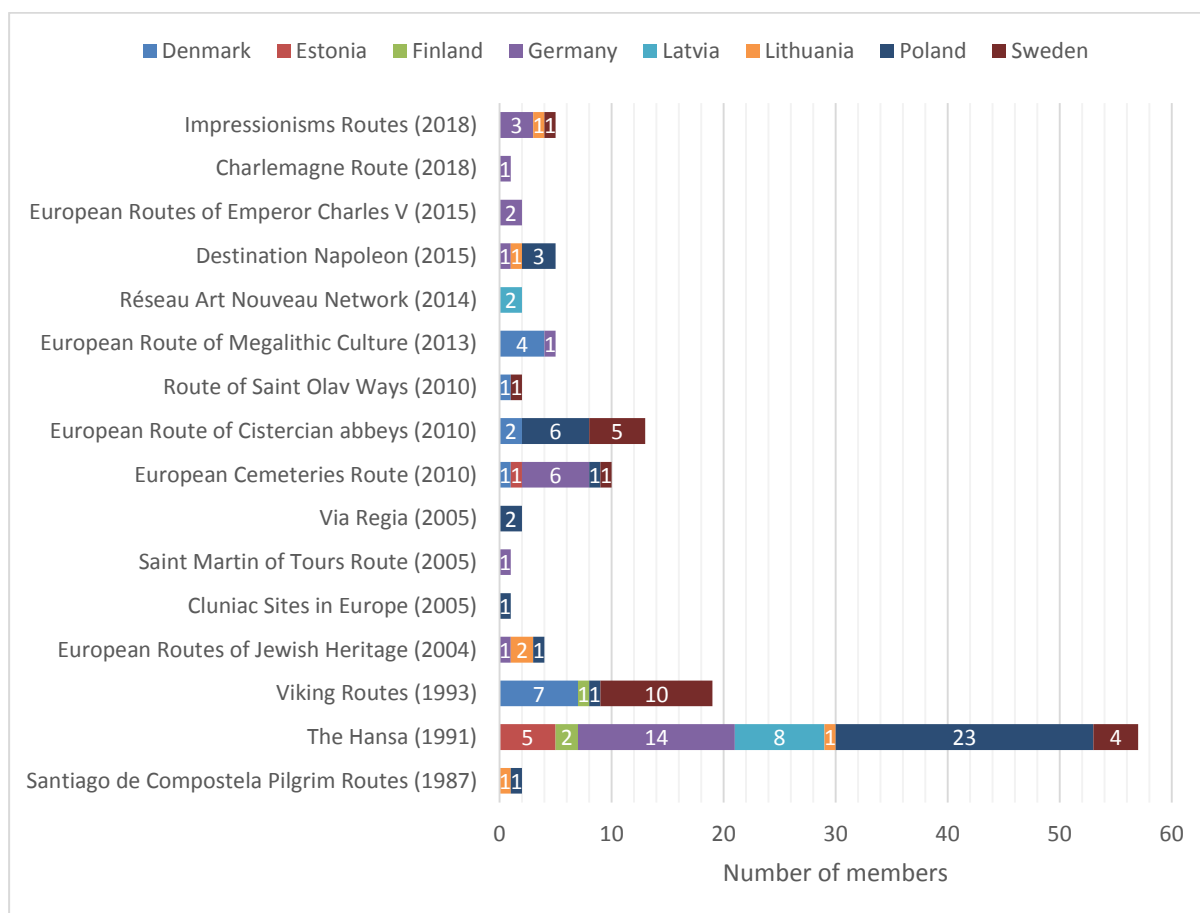
Figure 2 Cultural Routes' members per country (N=131)

Figure 2 reflects the member of Cultural Routes. The Hansa provides a good example of a well-developed network due to an effective management which encourage transnational collaboration and the promotion of the region's common cultural heritage.[7] In this regard, it has to be underlined that the strong and sustainable management structure is a prerequisite for the further development of Cultural Routes in the region.

When looking at the distribution of members by type and according to the Cultural Routes, the analysis reveals that most of them are cities or municipalities (69), sites (28) and cultural organizations like museums (17) and associations (9). Only very few members can be classified as tourism stakeholders (3), regions (2), institutions such as foundations or public organizations (1) and NGOs (1).

It becomes apparent that some member types are completely missing such as chambers of commerce or scientific organizations. Similarly, tourism stakeholders as

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[7] Council of Europe (2011): Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness. Accessed 25 August 2018 at: https://rm.coe.int/1680706995.

under-represented category should be more included in the future to strengthen the touristic and economic development of the regions crossed by Cultural Routes.
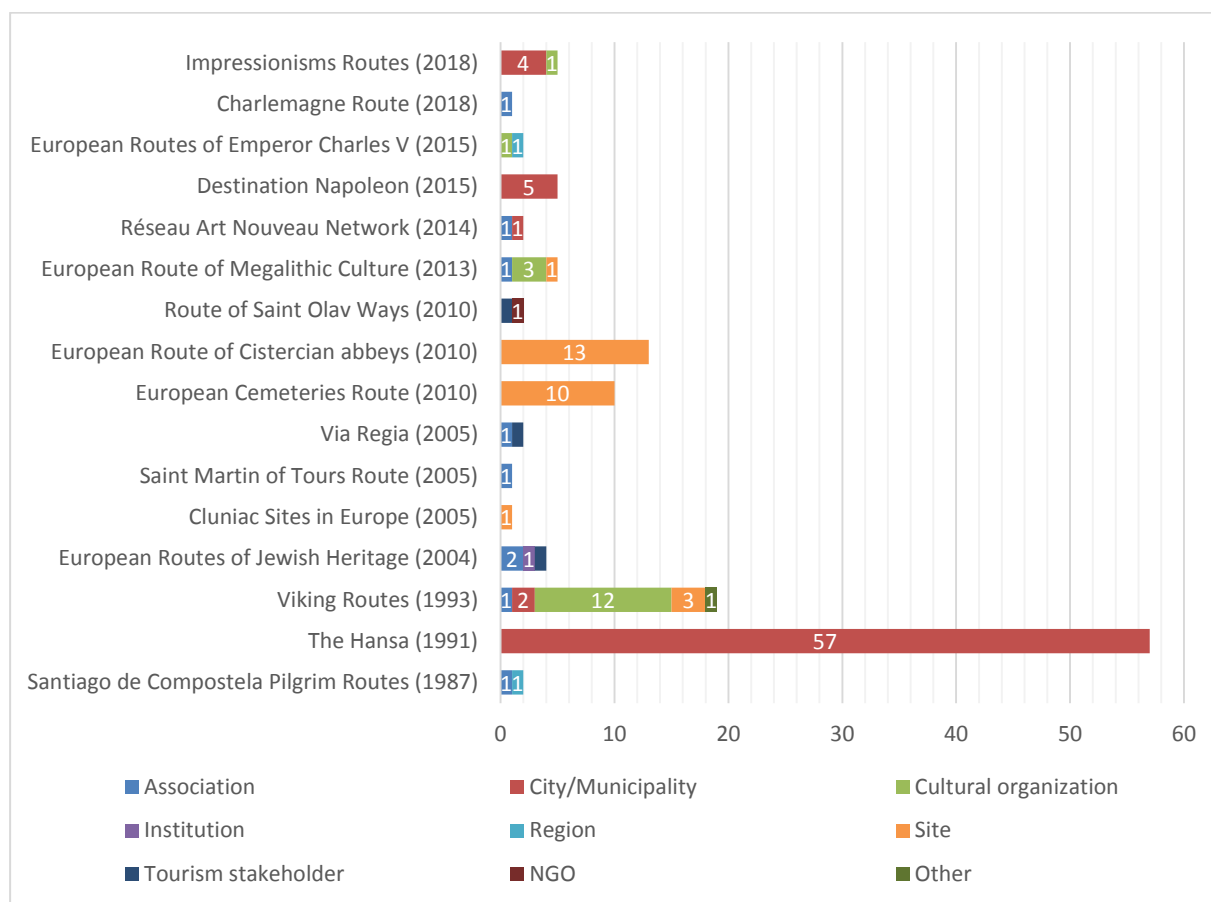

Figure 3 Types of members of each Cultural Route (N=131)

Recommendation 2

The extension of Cultural Routes should take into account under-represented members that further contribute to the sustainable regional development such as chambers of commerce or to the further research on Cultural Routes such as scientific organisations.

Finally, it has to be emphasized that Cultural Routes reach beyond the Baltic Sea region. This trans-macro-regional aspect provides opportunities for joint activities, partnerships and synergies in line with the two strategic priorities of the Vilnius Roadmap from 2016. Its aim is, on one hand, expanding geographic coverage and

partnerships of the Cultural Routes and, on the other hand, developing new themes and topics[8].

Recommendation 3

Cultural Routes provide opportunities of enhanced cooperation and exchange of knowledge and capacities between the members of the network. As Cultural Routes' networks contain members from countries of the Baltic Sea region and beyond, they provide specific opportunities to join forces and cooperate on the extension and strengthening of existing routes but also on the preparation of Cultural Routes' projects.

3. Themes of the Cultural Routes

The Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea macro-region cover a wide field of themes related to their tangible and intangible heritage. In this context, special attention needs to be given to the fact that all Cultural Routes are considered landscapes that link cultural and natural resources. These landscapes not only describe the interaction of natural and/or human factors, but also contribute to the quality of life for people living in the landscapes[9].

Religious heritage is reflected by the Cultural Routes of the Baltic Sea Region – whether by focusing on an important religious personality or by being dedicated to cultural and religious identity in general. This is the case for The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, Cluniac Sites in Europe, European Cemeteries Route, European Route of Cistercian abbeys, European Route of Jewish Heritage and Saint Martin of Tours Route.

Arts and architecture is a theme which is often represented in form of monuments, groups of buildings or sites. The concerned routes are: European Route of Megalithic Culture, Impressionisms Routes and Réseau Art Nouveau Network.

Four routes are linked to the life and the influence of famous **European personalities** such as Charlemagne (Charlemagne Route), Charles V (European Route of Emperor Charles V), Napoleon (Destination Napoleon) and the Norwegian king Saint Olav (Route of Saint Olav Ways).

Finally, three routes are dedicated to the **movement of people** in Europe. So is The Hansa focusing on former German seafaring merchants who joined together to lay the basis of what became the Hanseatic League as a way to pursue their shared economic interests. The Viking Routes are dedicated to the Vikings, who, at a time when few people were travelling, raided, traded and settled extensively. The Via Regia, finally, was part of the most important road system of the Early Middle Ages.

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[8] Vilnius Roadmap, 2016. Accessed 25 August 2018 at:
http://culture-routes.net/sites/default/files/attachments/FORUM%20ROADMAP_EN.pdf
[9] European Landscape Convention. Florence, 20 October 2000

This analysis shows that certain categories or themes of cultural properties are under-represented among the Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea macro-region. Modern heritage (from late 19th century onwards), marine heritage and technical such as industrial heritage is less represented.

Recommendation 4

The creation of new projects of Cultural Routes to be certified by the Council of Europe in the Baltic Sea region should consider those themes that are currently underrepresented such as marine heritage, modern heritage and industrial heritage.

4. Analysing the impact of Cultural Routes on sustainable tourism and regional development

A study of the impact of Cultural Routes[10], jointly launched in 2010 by the Council of Europe and the European Commission indicates that all Cultural Routes provide opportunities for small and medium enterprises to develop products and services within the framework of economic and tourism activities that the routes generate.

The study was based on a set of case studies covering the following routes: The Hansa, the Legacy of Al-Andalus, the Via Francigena, the Routes of the Olive Tree and the TRANSROMANICA. Hence, the study is not representative for the EUSBSR macro-region in general and should be updated as well. Nether the less, the authors give several recommendations related to sustainable tourism and regional development which are also relevant to the Baltic Sea region:

The study concluded that while Cultural Route themes were very clearly defined, they were not sufficient to establish continuous relationships between the partners or to function efficiently as transnational networks.

Recommendation 5

More joint actions and initiatives within Cultural Routes and their transnational partners should be initiated in order to establish a solid ground for better understanding of common network structures and provide visibility to the routes.

Whilst a few of the more established Routes are recording visitor numbers and direct sales of tourism products or look at the potential economic impact of SME's collaborations across the Route's towns, most are not gathering the data needed to measure the economic impact of their activities.

Recommendation 6

Monitoring and evaluation systems should be introduced to retrieve data on the economic impact of Cultural Routes. Statistical data about the Cultural Routes and their activities should be gathered to allow a comparative analysis on strengths and

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[10] Council of Europe (2011): Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness. Accessed 25 August 2018 at: https://rm.coe.int/1680706995

weaknesses and to further make use of the economic potential of Cultural Routes.

Different approaches have been developed to acquire comparative statistical data about the Cultural Routes:

1. The Step-by-step guide to the Council of Europe Cultural Routes "Cultural Routes Management: from theory to practice" includes a chapter with recommendations how to develop a new Cultural Route (see the table below).[11]

Demand variables	▶ Dimension: number of arrivals, length of stay, number of overnights ▶ Origin of tourism flows: how many domestic and how many international tourists? ▶ Motivations: do they travel for work, visiting friends and relatives, for vacation, etc.? ▶ Seasonality: is there a peak season? How are the arrivals distributed through the year? ▶ Accommodation: how many hotels, how is the quality standard distributed (number of stars), B&Bs, campsites, other kinds of accommodation (country houses, residences, etc.)? ▶ Tourism expenditure ▶ Transport: do tourists use their own cars? ▶ Number of individuals or package tourists
Supply variables	▶ Image: how is the destination currently promoted, using what kind of images and narratives? How is the destination perceived at the national and international level? ▶ Accessibility: is it easy to reach the destination (physical accessibility)? Is the destination cheap compared to other places (economic accessibility)? Is there a particular attitude visitors should have while visiting the destination (cultural accessibility)? ▶ Consumption: are tourists coming from other places? Where are they going after? ▶ Type of resources
Integration of the tourism product	▶ Co-ordination: how should culture and tourism stakeholders co-operate? ▶ Participation: what kind of tourism does the local community want? ▶ Diversification of supply = network analysis

Figure 4 Source: Alessia Mariotti (2015), "Tourism and Cultural Routes. Clusters, cultural districts and tourism systems", in: Cultural Routes Management. From theory to practice. Council of Europe Publishing, p.67.

2. The European Tourism Indicators System (ETIS) was introduced to assist in the monitoring, management and strengthening of the performances.[12] Developed by the European Union in 2013, the tool was applied to seven Cultural Routes[13] in the framework of a feasibility study requested by the IEIC. Its value added is linked to the opportunity to improve the current qualitative evaluation process of the Cultural Routes (certification system), with

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[11] Alessia Mariotti (2015): Tourism and Cultural Routes. Clusters, cultural districts and tourism systems, in: Cultural Routes Management. From theory to practice. Step-by-step guide to the Council of Europe Cultural Routes, Council of Europe Publishing

[12] European Commission, Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs: European Tourism Indicators System for sustainable destination management. Accessed 25 August 2018 at: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/sustainable/indicators/index_en.htm

[13] These routes were: Via Francigena, Transromanica, Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, European Route of Jewish Heritage, Iter Vitis, Olive Tree and Route of Saint Olav Ways. Only the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, the European Route of Jewish Heritage and Route of Saint Olav Ways have members in the Baltic Sea macro-region

quantitative measurement ETIS criteria, in order to ensure sustainable development. Moreover, it allows destinations to make their self-evaluation and comparison (benchmarking) among them.

ETIS (for the Cultural Routes) is based on 5 fields of actions/indicators:

1. Governance (indicator whose aim is to observe the way in which the partners manage the network)
2. Communication (which is concerned with the means allowing the actors to exchange between themselves and with the public)
3. Sustainable management
4. Indicator of cultural action (Measuring the impact of cultural itinerary activities - is one of the criteria required by the rules)
5. Economic impact (indicators analyse the environmental, cultural and economic impact of the itineraries activity)

The issues raised by the Cultural Routes involved were the following:

- Need to have a flexible and simple tool that does not overload the itineraries;
- Preparing ways of deepening the scientific network that should support the development of itineraries;
- Prepare the questionnaire in form of an on-line survey tool;
- Preliminary sceptical approach of the routes towards this new system of data collection, because of the workload;
- Currently, no such data are available, especially the measurement of economic impact is missing;
- Need to develop a new monitoring system, based on the data collection and analysis, which can be integrated with the current certification system

Recommendation 7

In the framework of Routes4U, an online tool could be developed to retrieve data on the management of Cultural Routes in the Baltic Sea Region. This data would serve to further align the activities of the Cultural Routes with the specific needs in the Baltic Sea region and to further analyse the specific macro-regional needs.

5. Projects on Cultural Routes in the Baltic sea Region

Extension of certified Cultural Routes

With regard to the members of the Cultural Routes (Figure2), it becomes evident that many certified Cultural Routes could further expand their network in the Baltic Sea Region. This is not only the case for those Cultural Routes that have a low geographical coverage in the Baltic Sea Region, but especially for those that are certified under a wider theme such as the European Routes of Jewish Heritage.

There are six Cultural Routes that present potential for extension since they have exclusively members in one country being part of the Baltic Sea macro-region: Saint Martin of Tours Route (Germany), Réseau Art Nouveau Network (Latvia), European Routes of Emperor Charles V (Germany), Via Regia (Poland), Cluniac Sites in Europe (Poland) and Charlemagne Route (Germany). Also, the routes with a few members in various states could be further developed (for example, Saint Olav Ways, European Cemeteries Route or Impressionisms Routes).

Recommendation 8

The extension of certified Cultural Routes should be discussed in the framework of the Routes4U, trying to focus on geographical balance to further strengthen the equal regional development.

Iron Curtain Trail

The Iron Curtain Trail[14] (ICT) invites people to retrace and experience the former division of the European continent on a 6,800 km cycle track (EuroVelo 13) along the length of the former border from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, combining European culture, history and sustainable tourism. In 2005, following the initiative of Michael Cramer, Member of the European Parliament, recognised the ICT as a model project for sustainable tourism and called upon the Member States for support.   The ICT is the longest route of the European cycle route network which was initiated by the European Cyclists' Federation. It can be used by long-distance cycle tourists, as well as by local people making daily journeys. The ICT is expected to generate annually 3,3 million daytrips, 849.000 holiday trips and to have an economic impact of 355 million Euro once it is fully developed.

In order to reach its full potential, the possible itineraries, services, promotion and marketing conditions even as the organisational and financial background have been collected and evaluated. Also, the necessary actions until 2020 have been defined. This work was done for Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, FYR of Macedonia, Turkey and Greece in 2011, supported by the European Commission DG Enterprise and Industry under the Sustainable Tourism Grant.

Recommendation 9

Since the ICT bicycle trail is currently mainly a touristic offer, activities according to the fields of action described in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 should be developed as well as a scientific network. Furthermore, a legal structure should be put in place and the network's members need to be defined as well as possible adhesion criteria.

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[14] European Cyclists' Federation (2011): EuroVelo13, Iron Curtain Trail; A Trans-national Action Plan for its implementation