

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



# Cultural Routes ACADEMIC WORKSHOP

2nd Edition - 7th December 2023 - Online

## CONCEPT NOTE



[www.coe.int/routes](http://www.coe.int/routes)



Organised by the The European Institute of Cultural Routes in cooperation with the University network for Cultural Routes Studies



## Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Cultural Routes Academic Workshop

7<sup>th</sup> December 2023, Online

#### I. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme

Since its beginnings, the Council of Europe has been aware of the importance of cultural heritage for achieving greater unity among Europeans. One of its most innovative initiatives was to launch in 1987 the **Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme**, to enhance the richness and the diversity of European culture.

Today, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe encourage European citizens to re-explore their heritage, acting as emblematic spaces for inter-cultural dialogue, transnational cooperation, sustainable development and cultural tourism.

Over the past 36 years, the programme has continuously grown, counting today 47 certified Cultural Routes and bringing together more than 3,000 network members in over 60 countries in Europe and beyond. While some routes enhance arts, architecture, history and civilisations, some others are dedicated to landscapes, handicrafts and religious heritage.

The programme is supported by two pillars: the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) and the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR).

In 2010, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe established an Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) to enable closer cooperation between states particularly interested in the development of the Cultural Routes. The EPA benefits today from cooperation among its 40 member States, regional and local authorities, as well as international organisations, including the European Union, OECD, UNESCO and UNWTO. Its headquarters are located at the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg.

The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), set up in 1998 as part of a political agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg (Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research), is the technical agency of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme. It assists certified Cultural Routes, provides advice to new projects applying for certification, coordinates a network of universities, and houses the extensive information and documentary resources of the Programme.

#### II. Background

The European Institute of Cultural Routes has been involved since its creation in cooperation actions with various universities and academic institutions. In 2012, the University Network for Cultural Routes Studies was established with the purpose of facilitating exchanges between the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, universities active in the field of preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, and certified Cultural Routes.

The University Network aims to promote research on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe related issues, encourage students to undertake their academic research on Cultural Routes, jointly apply for European Grants with the European Institute of Cultural Routes, participate in the annual programme of activities of the Institute and offer scientific advice where required.

Today, the University Network of Cultural Routes Studies counts 22 members:

1. University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
2. IREST, University Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne (France)
3. LABPACT, University of Barcelona (Spain)
4. CAST, University of Bologna (Italy)
5. INTOUR, University of Bedfordshire (United Kingdom)
6. IPAC, Laval University (Canada)
7. University of Haifa (Israel)
8. Compostela Group of Universities
9. USI, Università della Svizzera Italiana (Switzerland)
10. UniMib, Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (Italy)

11. Mid Sweden University (Sweden)
12. BSUN, Black Sea Universities Network
13. DIST, Politecnico di Torino and University of Torino (Italy)
14. University of Angers (France)
15. Mardin Artuklu University (Turkey)
16. University of Piraeus (Greece)
17. Armenian National Agrarian University (Armenia)
18. University of Maribor
19. University of Donja Gorica (UDG)
20. Nottingham Trent University
21. Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra
22. Lebanese American University-Louis Cardahi Foundation

Network members are specialised in a variety of disciplines, such as: cultural heritage, landscape, heritage management, interpretation and mediation, urban requalification, tourism, economy of tourism, geography, local development, sociology, among others.

Furthermore, cooperation in research and development takes place within each of the certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, as this is one of the five priority fields of action established in Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification.

With the purpose of fostering research practices within the network, the European Institute of Cultural Routes will hold its **2<sup>nd</sup> Cultural Routes Academic Workshop**, bringing together leading scholars, educators, researchers, and students to disseminate the results of their research works on Cultural Routes and to reflect on new perspectives for action. The event aims at becoming a platform for regular interactions between scholars from interdisciplinary fields discussing trends, innovative approaches, challenges and best practices in the field of Cultural Routes.

The workshop will provide opportunities for intellectual and human exchanges across borders, cultures and languages, seeking to build a common reflection on different themes related to the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe through a multidisciplinary approach.

### III. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cultural Routes Academic workshop

#### Session 1 - REDEFINING CULTURAL ROUTES: EXPLORING DYNAMIC NARRATIVES OF RELIGIOUS HERITAGE AND CULTURAL ASSETS

This session explores the dynamic and evolving narratives along Cultural Routes, with a specific focus on the intangible heritage experienced along these networks.

This transformative journey aims to redefine our common understanding of heritage, pilgrimage and tourism. Throughout the session, participants will have the opportunity to explore and gain insights into the positive outcomes achieved through Cultural Routes activities and projects, illustrating how local communities can derive significant benefits from preserving their unique traditions and actively participating in the promotion of a living heritage experience. A key highlight of the discussion will be the exploration of pilgrimage as a contemporary form of tourism capable of revitalizing and re-evaluating our religious heritage. By exploring these dynamic narratives, the panel aims to foster a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted intersections of cultural routes, religious heritage, and the broader cultural landscape.

#### Session 2 - A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ALONG CULTURAL ROUTES

The second session highlights the holistic dimension of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, showcasing their ability to involve communities through sustainable tourism and innovative management practices.

The panel introduces the contemporary concept of the “traveller”, emphasizing an understanding of the present-day context where landscapes play a pivotal role in engaging and valorising local communities. Strategic plans are discussed in order to create more appealing destinations for travellers by promoting sustainable and quality tourism. Within this framework, various management practices are outlined, highlighting the role of Cultural Routes as platforms for sustainability. These routes function as tools to foster and streamline collaborations among researchers, heritage institutions, tourism experts, local authorities, among other stakeholders. The aim of this session is to offer a comprehensive approach to creating meaningful and positive sustainable tourism experiences along Cultural Routes.

### **Session 3 - CULTURAL ROUTES FOR ALL: DIGITALIZATION AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR AN INCLUSIVE CULTURAL EXPERIENCE**

The third session addresses some of the key challenges in the cultural sector and in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe field, focusing on the development of inclusive and accessible cultural experiences.

This panel aims to showcase diverse activities implemented by certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and to highlight best practices for reducing exclusion and discrimination in cultural tourism. The concept of "accessibility" is examined in various aspects, including the necessity to reduce physical barriers and improve services for planning sustainable and resilient tourism models. Within this framework, post-pandemic digitalised cultural tourism is explored, considering its potential to redefine the tourist visit experience and interest through the use of digitalisation and ICT (Information and Communication Technologies). Furthermore, a system of indicators capable of measuring tourist satisfaction experience and the impact of new technologies on the territory is presented. This session offers a perspective on the evolving landscape of cultural tourism, in which new technologies play a pivotal role in achieving tourism for all.

### **Session 4 - ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND SHAPING THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL ROUTES THROUGH COOPERATION AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES**

The final session introduces innovative approaches and methodologies to address current and future challenges faced by the Cultural Routes. Throughout this panel, various aspects defining the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are analysed with the aim of presenting new tools, models and platforms specifically designed to enhance and contribute to Cultural Routes' objectives. These new methodologies unlock the potential of Cultural Routes in policymaking, cultural heritage enhancement and socio-economic development. Comprehensive explanations regarding the functionalities and feasibility of implementing these methods will be provided, with the objective of fostering a discussion on how to shape new improved trajectories for Cultural Routes.