
Resolution CM/Res(2023)2 revising the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 5 April 2023
at the 1462nd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members and that this aim may be pursued through joint action in the cultural field;

Considering that the main aims of European cultural co-operation are to promote the European identity in its unity and its diversity; to preserve the diversity of Europe's cultures; to encourage intercultural dialogue and to facilitate conflict prevention and reconciliation;

Considering that highlighting the influences, exchanges and developments which have formed the European identity can facilitate awareness of a European citizenship based on the sharing of common values;

Considering that it is essential for younger generations to acquire this awareness of a European identity and citizenship and the common values on which they are based;

Considering that in order to uphold these common values and make them more tangible, it is necessary to promote an understanding of Europe's history on the basis of its physical, intangible and natural heritage, so as to bring out the links which unite its various cultures and regions;

Noting that the identification of European values and a common European cultural heritage may be achieved via cultural routes tracing the history of peoples, migrations, and the spread of the major European currents of civilisation in the fields of philosophy, religion, culture, the arts, science, technology and trade;

Aware that such routes lend themselves to long-term European co-operation programmes in the fields of research, heritage enhancement, culture and the arts, cultural and educational youth exchanges, cultural tourism in Europe and sustainable cultural development;

Considering that such co-operation mobilises and brings together a large number of individuals, organisations, institutions and structures in Europe, and thereby contributes to the process of European construction;

Considering that in order to provide an intellectual and technical support to this co-operation, which requires considerable human and financial resources, a formal operational framework should be established enabling the reaffirmation of fundamental values, the qualitative and quantitative assessment of implementation, training of actors and a coherent communication;

Considering that such a framework enables common objectives to be pursued and guarantees the quality of the initiatives undertaken;

Considering Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (hereafter “EPA”);

Having regard to the objectives and activities of the EPA,

Adopts this resolution which annuls and replaces Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 of 18 December 2013 revising the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification;

Adopts the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification which are appended to this resolution.

Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2023)2

Rules

The certification “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe” may be granted to networks which deal with a theme that complies with the eligibility criteria in part I below, involve priority actions as indicated in part II and are presented by a single network meeting the criteria in part III and IV.

I. List of eligibility criteria for themes

Themes must satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;
2. the theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus;
3. the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;
4. the theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields;
5. the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;
6. the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups;
7. the theme must be clearly reflected in the name of the cultural route; it must be concise and easily understandable.

II. List of priority fields of action

Cultural routes must pertain to the following priority fields of action, while fulfilling the criteria enumerated below for each field of action:

1. Co-operation in research and development

In this field of action, cultural routes must:

- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together;
- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European cultures;
- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe;
- lend themselves to research and interdisciplinary analysis on both a theoretical and a practical level.

2. *Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage*

In this field of action, cultural routes must:

- enhance physical and intangible heritages, explain their historical significance and highlight their similarities in the different regions of Europe;
- take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning, as well as promote the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
- identify and enhance European heritage sites and areas other than the monuments and sites generally exploited by tourism, in particular in rural areas, but also in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring;
- take account of the physical and intangible heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe;
- contribute, through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as a means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.

3. *Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans*

In this field of action, cultural routes must:

- include the organisation of activities with groups of young people in order to promote in-depth exchanges aimed at developing the concept of European citizenship, enriched by its diversity;
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts;
- encourage de-compartmentalisation by organising exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe;
- constitute pilot schemes with a limited number of participating countries and be provided with sufficient resources for meaningful assessment in order to generate prototypes that can serve as reference models;
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels.

4. *Contemporary cultural and artistic practice*

In this field of action, cultural routes must:

- give rise to debate and exchange, in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective, between the various cultural and artistic expressions and sensibilities of the different countries of Europe;
- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture;
- highlight, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, and link them with the history of skills development, whether they belong to the field of the visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression;
- give rise to networks and activities which break down the barriers between professionals and non-professionals, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields.

5. *Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development*

In this field of action, cultural routes must:

- take account of local, regional, national and European identities;
- actively involve print and broadcast media and make full use of the potential of electronic media in order to raise awareness of the cultural objectives of the cultural routes;
- promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions;
- promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures;
- open up possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents through the special affinities between certain regions;
- concern themselves, in the field of cultural tourism, with raising public awareness, drawing decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory and seek to diversify both supply and demand, with a view to fostering the development of quality tourism with a European dimension;
- seek partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.

III. List of criteria for networks

Cultural Routes shall form a multidisciplinary network located in several Council of Europe member States. In order to apply for certification, the network must:

- present a conceptual framework based on research carried out into the theme chosen and accepted by the different network partners;
- involve several Council of Europe member States through all or part of its activities without excluding activities of a bilateral nature;
- provide a comprehensive list of current members, including proof of membership (letters of accession or similar documentation) and a listing of potential future members;
- plan to involve as large a number as possible of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) as well as, where appropriate, other States;
- ensure that it is financially and organisationally viable;
- have a legal status, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations registered in a Council of Europe member State, at least two years prior to submission of an application;
- operate democratically, ensure the widest membership among member States represented in its governing bodies, gender equality, and rotation in its elective positions.

In support of the submission of its application, the network must:

- submit a multiannual comprehensive programme of activities and specify its objectives, methods, partners, participating countries (current and envisaged) and the overall development of the programme in the medium and long term;
- demonstrate how its activities relate to the five priority fields of action in Part II of the Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2023)2 (research and development, enhancement of memory, history and heritage, cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, contemporary cultural and artistic practice, cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development);

- identify, in the various member countries of the Council of Europe, the main initiators, participants and other potential partners likely to form a network; specify, where appropriate, at international level, other partner organisations;
- specify the regions concerned by the cultural route;
- provide details of its financing and operational plan;
- append the basic text(s) relating to its legal status;
- define and implement indicators aimed to measure the impact of the activities of cultural routes.

IV. Certification

1. The certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” is awarded by the Governing Board of the EPA in consultation with the relevant intergovernmental committee. It can, if necessary, seek advice from one or more expert consultants. The Governing Board may consult, if considered necessary, other pertinent committees or bodies of the Council of Europe.

Application files shall be submitted in paper and electronic format, type written in English or in French. Required documentation submitted in another language shall be accompanied by a French or English translation.

Cultural routes aiming to apply for certification should notify the Secretariat in writing by 31 March of the year of submission of their application and should submit the complete application by 31 July of the said year.

In case of a negative opinion by the intergovernmental committee concerned, the agreement of the Committee of Ministers will be required for the award of the certification.

Applicants presenting a theme which helps to achieve the Council of Europe political priority objectives, as well as a theme which contributes to the thematic and geographic diversity of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, are particularly encouraged.

An application by a candidate network may be submitted a maximum of three times. An application which has been refused certification may be submitted again no earlier than 12 months following the date of the decision of refusal.

2. Following the award of the certification, the entire mention “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” and the logo of the Council of Europe must be placed on all communication material, including press releases.

A manual with recommendations (or vade mecum) will be provided to networks.

The Council of Europe certification logo should systematically appear on road signs and information boards along the cultural route.

3. Evaluation of networks having received the certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”:

In addition to an annual programme of activities and an annual report, networks must submit to the EPA Secretariat every five years a report enabling the EPA Governing Board to evaluate their activities in order to ascertain whether they continue to satisfy the criteria in parts I, II, III and IV.2 above.

If the Governing Board of the EPA finds the compliance with parts I, II, III and IV.2 above unsatisfactory, it will issue a recommendation in order to ensure this compliance. If the recommendation is not followed within a year, the Governing Board of the EPA may decide on the withdrawal of the certification after consultation of the relevant intergovernmental committee.

In case the intergovernmental committee concerned is of the opinion that the certification should not be withdrawn, the agreement of the Committee of Ministers will be required for the withdrawal of the certification.

The Governing Board of the EPA decides on the practical modalities of application of this resolution. It adopts rules of procedure to this effect.

4. The EPA Governing Board will determine the number of applications to be reviewed by the Secretariat every year on the basis of available staff and budgetary resources.