

What is a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and how to become one

In the framework of the joint programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission Routes4U¹, **projects for the development of new Cultural Routes for the EU Macro-regions will be identified and then further developed.**

In this context, due attention needs to be paid to the **criteria established by the Council of Europe for the certification of Cultural Routes²:**

The Routes are grass-rooted **European networks with a legal status** (in form of an association or a federation). These networks involve **at least three countries in Europe** and operate in democratic structures to ensure the transnational and participatory character of Cultural Routes.

The development of a Cultural Route requests the following steps:

1. **Defining a theme** that is representative for European values and common to several countries of Europe;
2. **Identifying heritage elements**, that can involve tangible and intangible elements;
3. **Creating a European network with legal status** of at least three European countries;
4. **Coordinating common activities in the main field of activities;**
5. **Creating common visibility** to ensure recognisability and coherence of the route across Europe.

The European Institute on Cultural Routes (EICR) and an external expert evaluate the proposal. On the basis of these evaluations, the **Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes**

CERTIFICATION CYCLE

YEAR 1

July

- Call for application for certification "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe".

September – October

- Deadline for submitting the application form for certification.
- Conformity's review of the dossier by the EICR. Attribution when applicable to an independent expert for review.

November – December

- Independent expert review: contact with the candidate projects. Field visit and preparation of the evaluation report.

YEAR 2

January – February

- Submission of the evaluation report by the independent expert to the EPA secretariat.
- Examination by the EICR and recommendations to the EPA Bureau.
- Experts' auditions during the EPA Bureau Meeting.

March-April

- Communication to the candidate projects of the conclusions of the EPA Bureau meeting.
- Examination by the EPA Governing Board of the evaluation reports and the recommendations made by the EICR and EPA Bureau.
- Audition of the selected projects at the EPA Governing Board meeting.
- Decision by the EPA Governing Board concerning the certification.

May

- Notification letter by the EPA Executive Secretary to the auditioned candidates concerning the results of their application for certification of their network as "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe".

¹ Webpage of Routes4U. Accessed 10 October 2018 at: www.coe.int/routes4u

² Council of Europe, Resolution CM/RES(2013)6767 on the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"

Routes4U Project

Funded
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EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Implemented
by the Council of Europe

takes then the final decision on the awarding of the certification³. Once certified, each Cultural Route goes through an evaluation process every three years.

Criteria for the certification

- **Define a theme**

The theme should be **representative for values** of the Danube Region and common to at least three countries

The theme should permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative **projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable development**.

The theme should take into account **needs and gaps of the Danube Region** with regards to the existing Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

- **Create a European network with legal status**

One important criteria is the **establishment of a legal entity** in charge of the management of the Cultural Route.

Each network has to work in a **democratic and participatory way**, involving all the partners in the decision-making process.

Cultural Routes projects have to create a **financial viable network**, in general through a system of membership fees or other financially viable sources.

- **Implement activities in the main field of actions**

The Cultural Routes, once certified, have to carry out activities with the aim to **protect and promote the common heritage**. This heritage represents the cultural and natural resources.

It should be active on the **scientific level and must establish a university network and a scientific committee** exploring different aspects related to the theme of the route.

The Cultural Route has to implement activities to **strengthen cultural practices and exchanges between people**, coming from different cultures and backgrounds, thus reflecting the living and dynamic feature of culture.

Cultural Routes represent a **vector for local economies and activities**. They have to ensure the **sustainable cultural tourism and the sustainable economic development along the route**.

³ Webpage of the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes. Accessed 12 October 2018 at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/home>