

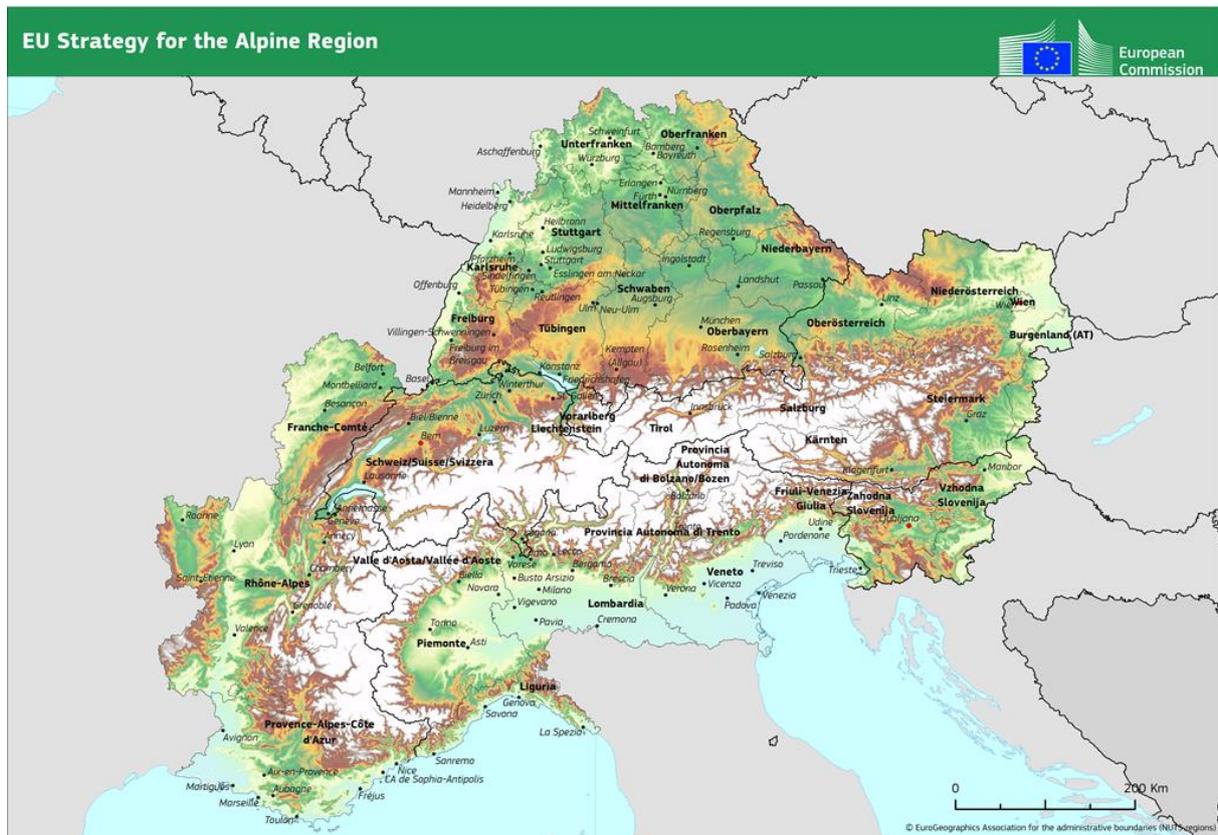
# ROUTES4U FEASIBILITY STUDY

*The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe  
and the Alpine Region (EUSALP)*

March 2019

## ANALYSIS OF CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN THE ALPINE REGION

### 1. ALPINE REGION AND THE EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION (EUSALP)



The Alpine Region contains five EU Member States: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Slovenia. Furthermore, the region contains two non-EU countries: Liechtenstein and Switzerland. These countries differ in terms of their economic, demographic and social development.

These seven countries represent 48 Regions: Austria (Burgenland, Kärnten, Niederösterreich, Oberösterreich, Salzburg, Steiermark, Tirol, Vorarlberg, Wien), France (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur), Germany (Baden-Württemberg, Bayern), Italy (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, Valle d'Aosta, Veneto), Switzerland (Aargau, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Basel-Landschap, Basel-Stadt,

Routes4U Project

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



Implemented  
by the Council of Europe

Bern, Freiburg, Genf, Glarus, Graubünden, Jura, Luzern, Neuenburg, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Schaffhausen, Schwyz, Solothurn, St. Gallen, Tessin, Thurgau, Uri, Waadt, Wallis, Zug, Zürich).

The Alpine Region represents the largest preserved natural area of mountain range in Europe with unique geographical and natural features. The protection of the ecosystem and the preservation of natural resources as well as tangible and intangible cultural heritage is an immanent task for all countries of the Alpine Region. This includes the mitigation of negative effects of climate change such as loss of biodiversity and deterioration of the living conditions of the population.

The mountain area of the Alpine Region hold a double burden: It is characterized by low population density, at the same time ageing populations and decline of population. This decline of population results in a loss of economic attractiveness and thus economic development. It is also characterized by missing infrastructures that contribute to the further abandonment of these areas which effects their biodiversity conservation and protection of the tangible and intangible culture.

With regards to the economic development, the Alpine Region contains some of the economically most dynamic areas of the European Union. *"The Alpine Region is one of the richest areas in the world and among the most economically dynamic, innovative and competitive areas in Europe. However, significant economic differences still exist within the territories, requiring a common response."*<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the Alpine Region is a popular travel destination and traditionally recognized for recreational tourism that has nevertheless a high seasonality. This tourism has a positive impact on the economic development, but needs to be sustainably managed to avoid negative impacts on the environment. Due to the high diversity of cultural resources, cultural tourism represents a potential that can be further used with a positive impact on the creation of new jobs and on the economic growth.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission: Commission Staff Working Document. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region. COM(2015) 366 final. P. 4

## 2. EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION (EUSALP)



In December 2013, the Council of the European Union invited the European Commission to elaborate a EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). The Commission, in cooperation with Member States, prepared this strategy, taking into account the experience from the previous EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and EU Strategy for the

Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

On 27 November 2015, the Council of the European Union endorsed the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region. The strategy aims at economic and social prosperity of the Alpine Region through an intensified cooperation on key opportunities and challenges. The focus lays on complementarity of actions and structures rather than duplication of existing actions and structures. Areas that request a transnational cooperation are identified in relation to economic globalisation, demographic trends, climate change, energy challenge as well as there is given due consideration to their specific geographical position as a transit region.

In the framework of EUSALP, three interdependent thematic and one cross-cutting objective have been identified:

1. Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region;
2. Sustainable internal and external accessibility;
3. A more inclusive environmental framework and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future;
4. A sound macro-regional governance model for the Region to improve cooperation and the coordination of action.

Within these four objectives, nine actions have been defined that are addressed within so-called Action Groups. The Action Groups are composed of representatives from national, regional and local administrations.

### **Objective 1: Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region**

Action 1: To develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem;

Action 2: To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors;

Action 3: To improve the adequacy of labour market, education and training in these strategic sectors;

### **Objective 2: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all**

Action 4: To promote inter-modality and interoperability in freight and passengers transport;

Action 5: To connect people electronically and promote accessibility to public services;

**Objective 3: A more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future**

Action 6: To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources;

Action 7: To develop ecological connectivity in the EUSALP territory;

Action 8: To improve risk management and to better manage climate change including major natural risks prevention;

Action 9: To make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy.

**Protection of culture and sustainable tourism**

Culture and tourism are topics that are not addressed through a dedicated Action Group, but as subthemes of existing Action Groups: Action Group 2:

“To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors” and Action Group 6: “To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources” deal with topics related to Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. Action Group 2 addresses as a thematic priority health Tourism (coordinated by the Region of Salzburg, AT). Action Group 6 aims at initiating activities for the promotion and marketing of sustainably produced food and forest products as a way to maintain cultural and ecosystem services.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN THE ALPINE REGION

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



The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are transnational grass-roots networks. They act as channels for intercultural dialogue and promote a better knowledge and understanding of European shared heritage.

As of March 2019, 33 networks certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond. They cover a range of different themes, such as architecture, cultural landscape, gastronomy or major figures of European art, music and literature.

#### ***Distribution according to countries***

23 of 33 Cultural Routes<sup>2</sup> are located in the Alpine macro-region which is composed by the regions situated in seven countries (Austria, France<sup>3</sup>, Germany<sup>4</sup>, Italy<sup>5</sup>, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland). Figure 1 provides an overview of the itineraries represented there:

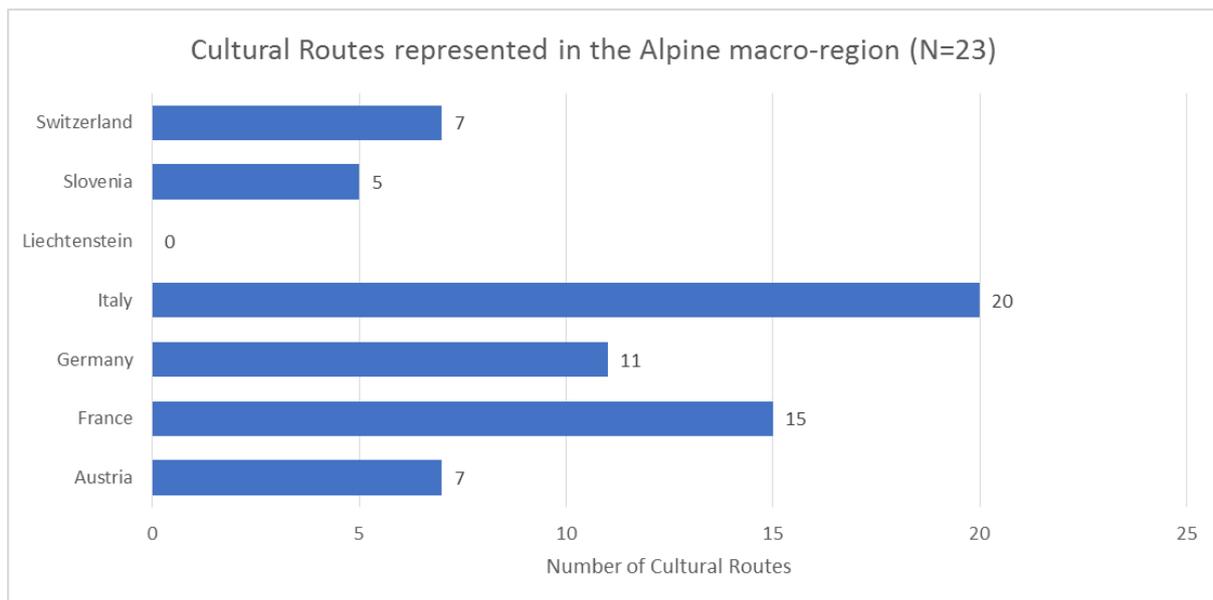


Figure 1

<sup>2</sup> 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)66, see Annex.

<sup>3</sup> Only some parts of France belong to the Alpine macro-region: Franche-Comté, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Rhône-Alpes.

<sup>4</sup> Only some parts of Germany belong to the Alpine macro-region: Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria.

<sup>5</sup> Only some parts of Italy belong to the Alpine macro-region: Bozen, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Liguria, Lombardy, Piedmont, Trento, Valle d'Aosta and Veneto.

Regarding the quantitative distribution of the Cultural Routes in the Alpine Region, it reveals that most of them cross Italian part (20), followed by French (15) and German (11) part. Seven routes can be found in Switzerland and in Austria and five in Slovenia. No route crosses Liechtenstein which might be explained with the geographical size of the country. It can be stated that the presence of Cultural Route in the Alpine Region is relatively high.

The countries with a higher presence of Cultural Routes correlate with a higher number of tourists. According to a study published by the European Commission Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) in 2017<sup>6</sup>, Italy (mostly Veneto region) and France (mainly Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur) score the highest amount of arrivals at tourist accommodation establishments in the Alpine macro-region. In Germany, the Oberbayern region is at the top, which is linked to its favourable proximity to Munich and the Alpine mountains. Slovenia, as youngest EU Member State, has the smallest amount of arrivals in 2015 but shows a remarkable increase of 32% between 2008 and 2015 – only France had a higher rate of growth (41%) in the macro-region.

### **Recommendation 1**

Cultural Routes members are not distributed in a geographical balanced manner in the Alpine Region. Austria and Slovenia deserve particular attention and support, as it represents underexploited potential for Cultural Routes projects<sup>7</sup> and the extensions of already certified Cultural Routes.

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<sup>6</sup> See for this paragraph DG REGIO (2017): Study on macroregional strategies and their links with cohesion policy. Data and analytical report for the EUSALP. The data described in this paragraph refer to 2015.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

### Distribution according to members per country

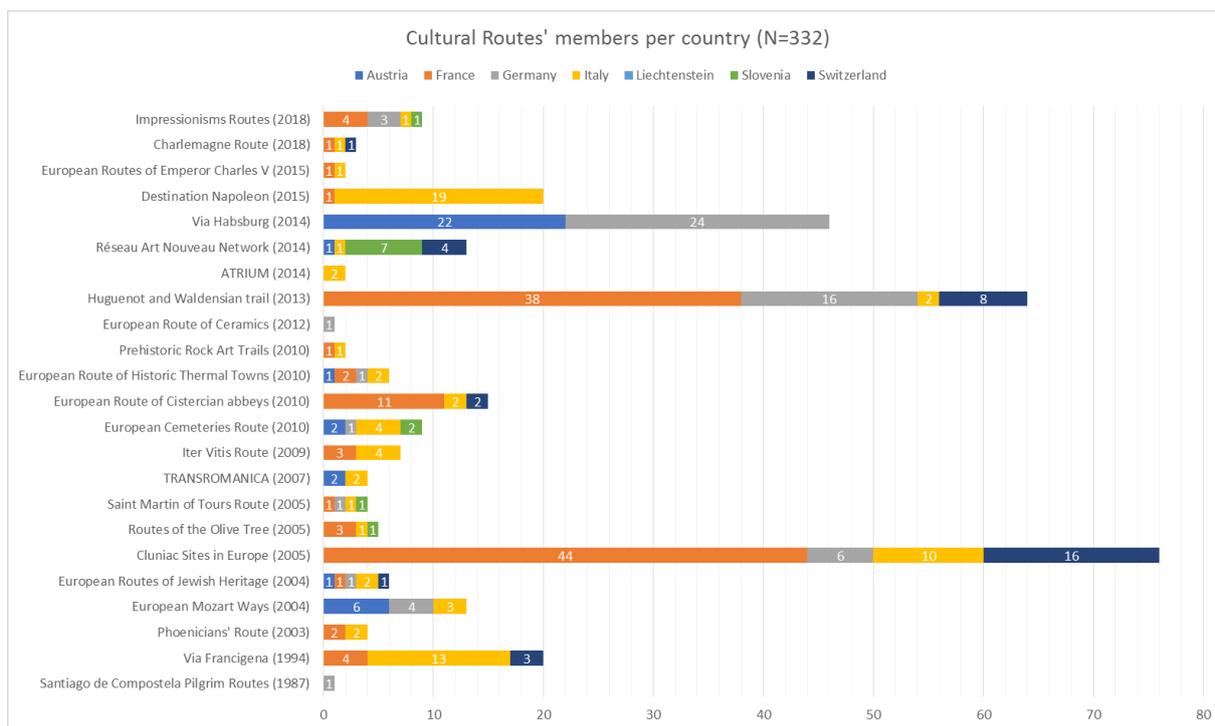


Figure 2

The analysis of the Cultural Routes crossing the Alpine region reveals that they are differently developed in the countries (see figure 2).<sup>8</sup> Even though no route is crossing every state of the macro-region, some itineraries have a very well developed network with regard to members from different geographic areas: The European Routes of Jewish Heritage is at the top with partners in five states, followed by seven routes which are represented in four countries each: Impressionisms Routes, Charlemagne Route, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Huguenot and Waldensian trail, European Cemeteries Route, Saint Martin of Tours Route and Cluniac Sites in Europe.

There are five Cultural Routes that present potential for extension since they have exclusively members in one country being part of the Alpine macro-region: European Routes of Emperor Charles V (Italy), ATRIUM (Italy), European Route of Ceramics (Germany), Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (France) and Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes (Germany). Of course, not every mentioned route could be more developed or even expanded in the other countries belonging to the Alpine Region since their heritage is sometimes tied to specific territories. To develop concrete proposals, a feasibility study on the specific theme should be conducted, taking also into account the expertise of the university networks which

<sup>8</sup> 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. Please note that inaccuracies may occur.

are part of every route. Beside the routes which can be exclusively found in one state, also the itineraries with few members in various states could be expanded (e.g. Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Phoenicians’ Route).

The Cluniac Sites in Europe, certified in 2005, appears as well-developed network in terms of the number of its members due to the quantity of Cluniac heritage in Europe. It could be useful to analyse the governing structure of every Cultural Route to learn how to support their management. In a second step, this could serve to share best practices on effective management structures of Cultural Routes in the Macro-region.

**Types of members**

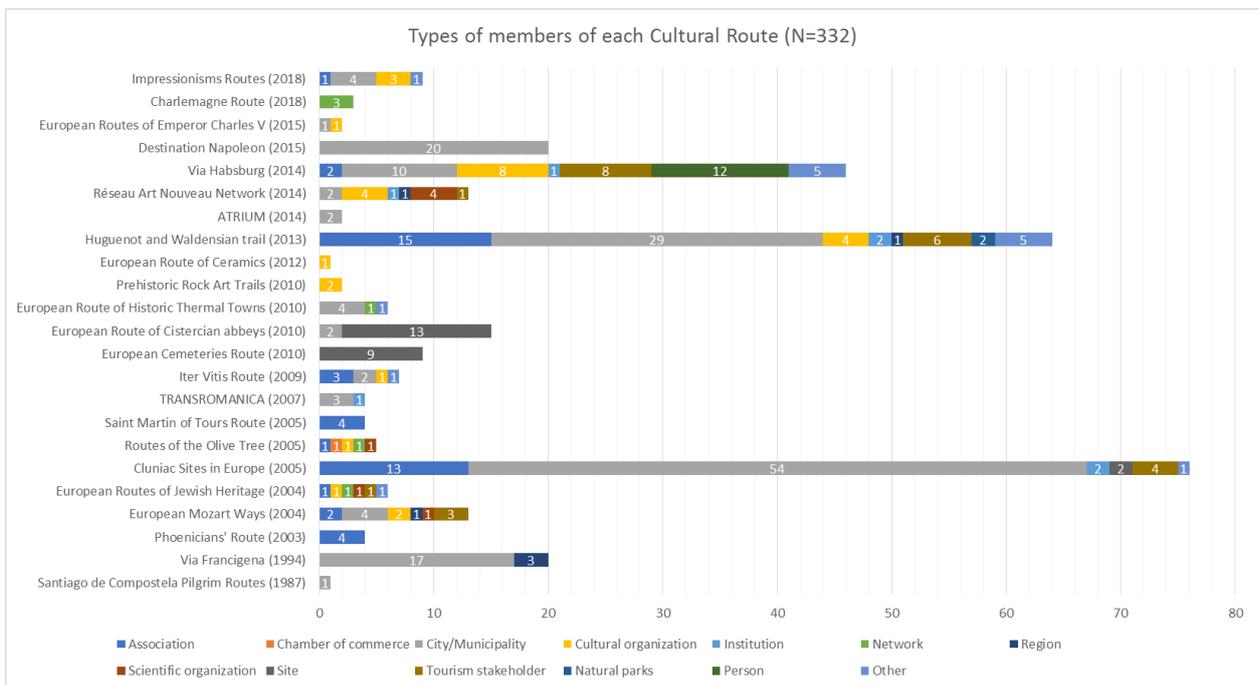


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the distribution of Cultural Routes’ members with regard to their type: By far most of them are cities or municipalities (155), followed by associations (46), cultural organizations (28), sites (24), tourism stakeholders (23), institutions such as foundations or public organizations (15), individual persons (12) and networks (12). Only very few members can be classified as scientific organizations (7), regions (6), natural parks (6) and chamber of commerce (1).

In order to expand the routes’ networks strategically, figure 4 provides information about the members of every Cultural Route in the Alpine macro-region: It becomes apparent that a lot of the Cultural Routes have a rather heterogeneous composition of their members, e.g. Cluniac Sites in Europe, Via Habsburg, Huguenot and Waldensian trail, European Mozart Ways.

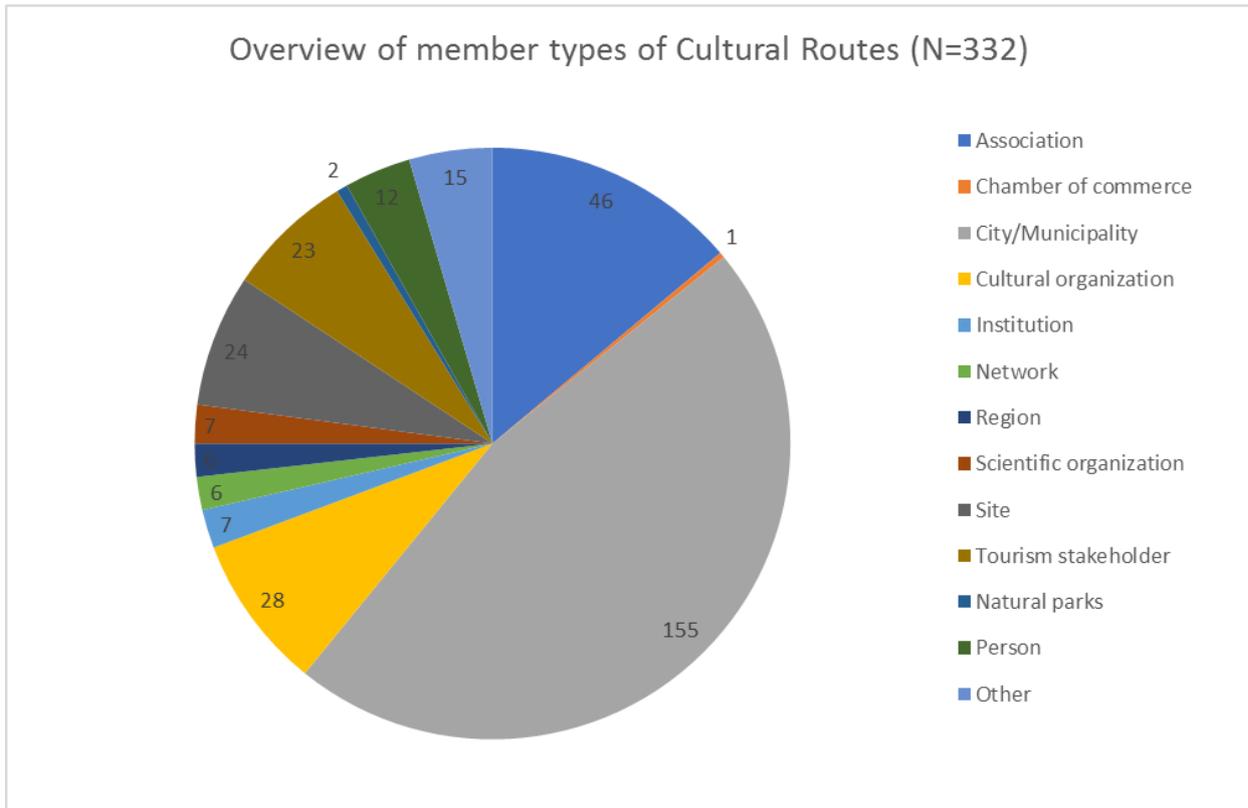


Figure 3

**Recommendation 2**

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 Alpine 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.

**Themes of the Cultural Routes in the Alpine Region**

The Cultural Routes in the Alpine macro-region cover a wide field of themes related to their tangible and intangible heritage. It has to be underlined that most Cultural Routes are trans-sectorial networks and as such, touch upon different themes which will be presented in the following.

**Religious themes** are very present – whether by focusing on an important historic personality or by being dedicated to cultural and religious identity in general: The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, Via Francigena, European Routes of Jewish Heritage, Saint Martin of Tours Route, Cluniac Sites in Europe, European Route of Cistercian abbeys and European Cemeteries Route. Huguenot and Waldensian Trail?

**Arts and architecture** is a theme which is often represented in form of monuments, groups of buildings or sites. The concerned routes are: TRANSROMANICA, Prehistoric Rock Art Trails, European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, ATRIUM, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, European Route of Ceramics and áthe Impressionisms Routes.

Five routes are linked to the life and the influence of famous (secular) **European personalities** such as the Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (European Mozart Ways), Charles V (European Route of Emperor Charles V), Napoleon (Destination Napoleon), Charlemagne (Charlemagne Route) and the Habsburg dynasty (Via Habsburg).

**Agricultural landscape and food production** is a topic addressed by two networks: The Routes of the Olive Tree deal with the civilisation around the olive tree and the Iter Vitis Route is devoted to viticulture.

Finally, two routes are dedicated to the **movement of people** in Europe. So is, on one hand, the Phoenicians' Route focusing on the exchange of artefacts, knowledge and experience through commerce. On the other hand, the Huguenot and Waldensian Trail deals with migration and integration because of religious persecution.

This analysis shows that certain categories or themes of cultural properties are underrepresented among the Cultural Routes in the EUSAIR macro-region. All the routes described focus on tangible and intangible cultural heritage while natural heritage<sup>9</sup> is not taken into consideration and the specific landscapes of the Alpine region are not reflected though existing Cultural Routes. No route represents a theme displaying the mountain tangible and intangible heritage.

### **Recommendation 3**

The creation of new projects of Cultural Routes to be certified by the Council of Europe in the Alpine region should consider a representative theme for the Alpine Region to promote and protect the tangible and intangible heritage of the Alpine Region

## **Impact of Cultural Routes**

### **Economic impact of Cultural Routes**

**Cultural Routes are tourism networks that contribute to the economic development in the regions they cross.** In Europe, tourism is the third largest socioeconomic activity. The direct impact of tourism on the GDP accounts to 10%, 12% of total employment is lined to tourism services<sup>10</sup>. Culture contributes to the attractiveness of tourism destination. Cultural Routes provide cultural tourism offers that:

<sup>9</sup> Natural sites such as natural and historic parks.

<sup>10</sup> European Parliament: Report on Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe, (2010/2206(INI), 13 July 2011. Accessed 25 July 2018 at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2011-0265+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>.

1. Do not focus on major heritage sites but on **remote and/or rural areas**;
2. Invite travellers to discover diverse cultural themes, thus **covering a broad range of distinctive, cultural offers**;
3. Implement different fields of actions **offering a variety of cultural experiences to tourists**;
4. Offer a platform for **cooperation and synergies between cultural, tourism and economic stakeholders** due to their structural organisation.

### **Sustainability of Cultural Routes**

Each proposal for the certification of a new Cultural Route must ensure that the project is financially and organisationally viable. All certified Cultural Routes are legal entities in form of an association or a federation with members. In line with the objectives of the Council of Europe to strengthen democracy, certified Cultural Routes are democratic networks that work in a participatory manner. Due to this structure, **Cultural Routes have been proven to be sustainable. Cultural Routes members can furthermore ensure financial sustainability, e.g. through their membership fee. Cultural Routes have proven to be successful in project applications** (since 2017, on-going projects through e.g. EC Culture Program, LEADER, Creative Europe, Interreg amount to 16 000 000 Euros).

### **Protection of heritage**

**As landscapes, Cultural Routes combine the tangible and intangible heritage because they do not only safeguard cultural and natural sites, but also the living intangible expressions such as traditions, performing arts and traditional knowledge related to the specific Cultural Route.** They contribute to the protection of this intangible heritage for future generations.

### **Transnational networks**

**Cultural Routes are transnational cultural networks with members of at least three countries in Europe** that implement joint activities. These networks have proven to be successful tools for capacity-building: Members of a Cultural Route create synergies, exchange practices and knowledge on management practices. Members with fewer capacities can thus profit of the network and implement joint activities that they would not have been able to carry out alone.

### **Participatory approach**

Especially in the field of heritage management, a participatory approach is essential, given the perception of heritage as a common property and given the relevance of local and regional communities in bringing this heritage to life. **Cultural Routes generally offer an entry point for the interaction with local people during the whole journey.** The stay element of Cultural Routes seeks to maximise the benefits for local communities and to encourage visitors to experience local culture rather than just passing through it.

#### 4. NEW CULTURAL ROUTES FOR THE ALPINE REGION

##### Certification process

In the framework of the joint programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission Routes4U<sup>11</sup>, **projects for the development of new Cultural Routes for the Alpine Region will be identified and then further developed** for the Alpine Region.

In this context, due attention needs to be paid to the **criteria established by the Council of Europe for the certification of Cultural Routes**<sup>12</sup>:

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;
2. Identifying heritage elements;
3. Creating a European network with legal status;
4. Coordinating common activities in the main field of activities;
5. Creating common visibility.

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**

##### 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".

<sup>11</sup> Webpage of Routes4U: [www.coe.int/routes4u](http://www.coe.int/routes4u)

<sup>12</sup> Council of Europe, Resolution CM/RES(2013)6767 on the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"

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

### **Certification criteria**

- **Define a theme**

The theme should be **representative for values** of the Alpine 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 Alpine 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.**

## Projects for the Alpine Region

### 1. Mountaineering Villages



Italy)<sup>13</sup>.

The project-executing, non-profit organisations for the Mountaineering Villages are the Alpine Associations of Austria (Österreichischer Alpenverein - ÖAV), Germany (Deutscher Alpenverein - DAV), Southern Tyrol (Alpenverein Südtirol – AVS), Slovenia (Planinska Zveza Slovenije – PZS) and Italy (Club Alpino Italiano – CAI). They have approximately 2.2 Million members altogether. There are currently 27 Mountaineering Villages from four countries. (19 in Austria, 4 in Germany, 2 in Southern Tyrol, 1 in Slovenia and 1 in

In the mid-19th century Alpinism was established as a sportive discipline. In many places in the Alps mass tourism brought overbearing technical infrastructure and reshaped not only landscapes, but also local culture, society and architecture. When in 2005 the Mountaineering Villages project was developed, a set of criteria was created to find the rare places where there was still **excellent alpine landscape quality and no dominance of technological structures**. These places have proven to offer great opportunities for alpinist and outdoor experiences, a small-scale tourism infrastructure, and provide not only Alpine competence in form of experienced guides and locals, but **also knowledge of their historic path regarding this topic**.

The local partners have realised a wide range of projects in 2018/19 in accordance to the Mountaineering Villages' philosophy and aim. To name a few, Ramsau bei Berchtesgaden organised a symposium about regional products for its local Mountaineering Villages working group, in Schleching a cooperative has reopened a local food store, Lesachtal organised the annual "Bergsteigerdörfer hautnah" tour – a three-day package promoted to alpine association members and Kartitsch has successfully earned the label of "Winterwanderdorf" (Winter hiking village).

### 2. Via Alpina



The Via Alpina is a network of five hiking routes across the Alps covering 8 countries, 200.000 km<sup>2</sup> and 5000 km of hiking routes<sup>14</sup>. The main route crosses all alpine states from Trieste to Monaco; additionally there are 4 varieties

<sup>13</sup> Webpage of Mountaineering Villages: <https://www.bergsteigerdoerfer.org/>

<sup>14</sup> Webpage of Via Alpina: <http://www.via-alpina.org/en/page/1/the-via-alpina>

of hiking routes that altogether offer 342 hiking stages. Since 2014 the international secretariat of the Via Alpina is located at CIPRA (the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps) in Liechtenstein.

The Via Alpina was initiated in 1999 and funded by an Interreg IIIB – Alpine Space-project from 01/2001 – 12/2004 to identify, mark and describe the trails, to create promotion tools and to carry out studies on improving the quality and sustainability of tourist offers. In a second project from 2005 – 2007 pilot projects were carried out to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the alpine regions involved. The two Interreg projects between 2001 and 2007 served as an umbrella that kept things together, since then interests and priorities are drifting apart and the eight partners concentrate on the maintenance of the routes, the website (164.564 visits and 723.207 views in 2018) and the support of hikers on the routes.

Thus, the objective for now is to further **enhance the notoriety of the hiking trail by** presenting a wide span of insights on hiking the alpine space with its natural and cultural treasures as well as of personal adventures and knowledge gained. At the same time the Via Alpina aims at **displaying sustainability initiatives along the trail, at involving stakeholders especially at local level and thereby reviving the spirit of the Via Alpina network.**

### 3. Via Claudia Augusta



The 3 countries and different work areas are organized in the European Economic and Interest Association Via Claudia Augusta Transnational, which are formed by the countries associations Via Claudia Augusta Germany, Austria and Italy<sup>15</sup>.

2000 years ago, the Romans developed the ways of the Etruscans, Raets and Celts to the **first connecting road over the Alps**. It ranged from the Bavarian Danube to the river Po and the Italian Adriatic. Thereby, the Via Claudia Augusta brought the regions and places along the way into contact with each other and **connected them with the entire world known at that time for cultural and economic exchange**. The trans-European line of communication continued to be important in the following years, in the Middle Ages and the modern era, and had a lasting impact on regions, ages, people and their cultures.

The common heritage is today lived and used as an axis for common archaeological and historical exploration, for cultural and economic cooperation - organized in transnational working groups. In the field of archeology history, for example, research is carried out at various locations along the historical route, and the knowledge is collected and compiled and

<sup>15</sup> Webpage of Via Claudia Augusta: <http://www.viaclaudia.org/en/introduction.html>

prepared in a form suitable for a wide audience. In the field of culture and education, museums work together to bring the Via Claudia Augusta to schools and vicerversa. In the field of tourism, the historical route is prepared and established as a cultural tourism themed route that can be traveled and explored by bike, on foot or by car.

#### 4. AlpFoodWay



AlpFoodway is a transnational project funded through the Interreg Alpine Space Programme. It involves fourteen partners from six nations: France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Slovenia, and is implemented from November 2016 to October 2019<sup>16</sup>. AlpFoodway partners started a "bottom up" process, involving local communities to identify and inventorying their own Intangible Alpine Food Heritage.

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Through Intangible Search ([www.intangiblesearch.eu](http://www.intangiblesearch.eu)) it is possible to access to the online community-based inventory that will include more than 150 elements about Alpine food knowledge, rituals, customs, traditions, resulting from anthropological, geographical, sociological and historical research.

### Extensions

#### European Route of Megalithic Culture



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



European Route of Megalithic Culture, is a certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" since 2013. At time being, the Cultural Route is not present in the Alpine Region and an

extension is envisaged<sup>17</sup>.

Megaliths – literally "big stones" – were widely used by prehistoric communities to build monuments, burial places, and sanctuaries. Megalithic tombs, Dolmens and other

<sup>16</sup> Webpage of AlpFoodWays: <https://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/alpfoodway/en/home>

<sup>17</sup> Webpage of the European Route of Megalithic Culture: <http://www.megalithicroutes.eu/en>

monuments represent the oldest surviving indigenous architecture of northwest Europe. Understanding this heritage is essential to trace our very origins.

Megalithic monuments are among the most widespread remains of man in time and space. Europe has a vast megalithic heritage, which can be explored through many different routes covering, up to present date, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Great Britain. The traveler can thus explore not only the megalithic monuments but also the manifold features of the surrounding landscape.

An extension of the existing network of Megalithic Routes to the Alpine Region should be discussed, both from the point of view of the exhibits (with particular interest to such artifacts as Stele statues, one of the greatest expressions of megalithism in most European countries, as well as Menhir statues, anthropomorphic Steles and engraved stones) and from the point of view of the Countries and Regions covered, in a view to cover the Alpine Region.