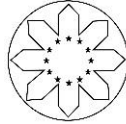




REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM



EUROPEAN
INSTITUTE
OF
CULTURAL
ROUTES

Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe
Itinéraires culturels
du Conseil de l'Europe



CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND LANDSCAPES:

Advancing Heritage Protection through Cultural and
Sustainable Tourism

The 14th Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe

*Cappadocia, Türkiye
22-24 October 2025*

Concept Note

Preliminary Information

The Forum

The Cultural Routes Annual Advisory Forum is a key activity of the [Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe](#) programme. The Forum addresses current trends and challenges related to Cultural Routes, offers a platform for sharing experiences, reviews the programme's progress, discusses emerging professional practices, and supports the launch of new initiatives and partnerships.

The Advisory Forum brings together a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of member states, certified and candidate Cultural Routes networks, international heritage and tourism organisations, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, foundations and donor organisations, as well as professional bodies in the fields of tourism, heritage and culture.

This year's Forum will reflect the growing urgency of protecting Europe's natural and cultural landscapes in the face of increasing climate change, pollution, and development pressures. Recognising landscapes as repositories of natural, living, tangible and intangible heritage, the event will emphasize the role of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in safeguarding heritage through sustainable, even transformative cultural tourism practices. This focus is especially fitting, given the exceptional setting of Cappadocia and the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the [Council of Europe Landscape Convention](#).

As in previous years, the Forum will offer a unique opportunity to gather, exchange ideas and learn together. A variety of side events will also be held in conjunction with the Forum, providing additional possibilities to experience the cultural landscape of Cappadocia – an exceptional tourism destination.

The Forum is co-organised through a partnership between the [Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe](#), the [European Institute of Cultural Routes](#), the [Ministry of Culture and Tourism](#) of the Republic of Türkiye, and the [Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency](#), with the support of local authorities of the Cappadocia Region.

Landscapes, essential to well-being

The Council of Europe Landscape Convention was adopted in Florence in 2000 and is the first international treaty specifically dedicated to the protection, sustainable management, and participatory planning of Europe's diverse landscapes. The Convention underscores that all landscapes—urban or rural, exceptionally beautiful or degraded—are essential to human well-being, cultural identity, and overall quality of life. Furthermore, the Convention identifies landscapes as crucial elements of Europe's heritage and foundational to a shared European identity, offering a holistic framework for conserving both natural and cultural heritage.

The Council of Europe [Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#) (2005), known as the Faro Convention, supports the Landscape Convention by placing people and human values at the heart of a broader cultural heritage concept. These two Conventions have broadened the scope of the [European Cultural Convention](#) (1954) by expanding the concept of heritage to integrate natural and cultural dimensions, enhance public participation, promote sustainable development, and foster European identity.

Europe's urban, rural, and natural landscapes feature remarkable beauty and heritage, both tangible and intangible. These attributes attract domestic and international visitors, providing communities with diverse income opportunities and boosting local economies. However, these landscapes face growing threats from unsustainable agriculture and industry, harmful forestry practices, mining activities, urban sprawl, expanding transport networks, and escalating climate change effects.

Modern development trends are eroding the authentic characteristics of cultural landscapes, leading to increasing homogenisation. In parallel, the rise of low-cost travel and aggressive marketing of heritage destinations have contributed to the phenomenon of overtourism - the concentration of large numbers of visitors at specific locations. This surge, along with growing "touristification" (the transformation of a place to serve the needs and desires of tourists, often at the expense of local communities and resources), is having a profound impact on towns and cities with historic districts, culturally distinct urban landscapes, archaeological sites, monuments, and both natural and cultural landscapes. As a result, the quality of life for local residents is steadily diminishing.

In 2024, Europe — the world's leading destination, with 747 million international arrivals — experienced a significant resurgence in tourism, surpassing pre-pandemic levels. This unprecedented scale of global travel occurs amid a climate emergency, marked by natural disasters, droughts, and loss of biodiversity, conditions further intensified by environmental degradation, pollution, and geopolitical conflicts. The latest 2024 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Report alarmingly notes stagnation in 18 percent and regression in 17 percent of all targets compared to the 2015 baseline - including those directly related to sustainable tourism.

With approximately 90 percent of the Cultural Routes passing through rural, cultural and natural landscapes, they are exemplary of a more sustainable, responsible and community-centred tourism model with cultural heritage at its centre. They provide significant opportunities to enhance heritage protection through sustainable and transformative cultural tourism, thereby fostering greater appreciation and preservation of Europe's diverse landscapes.

The Routes actively promote shared European heritage, history, and memory, serving as exemplary education, heritage and tourism cooperation initiatives. They have strong potential to facilitate and foster better practices in sustainable and transformative cultural tourism and development.

Aims, objectives, outputs

The three-day event will explore the role of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the conservation of European landscapes and their heritage, showcasing future-oriented and transformative policies, practices and innovative approaches that use heritage to foster inclusivity, resilience and sustainable cultural tourism development.

The Forum aims to strengthen the role of Cultural Routes in applying and promoting sustainable tourism for safeguarding Europe's landscapes by engaging the variety of stakeholders of the Routes in dialogue and exchange about practices and principles for action.

The programme will explore a range of perspectives and practical realities related to Europe's landscapes and sustainable tourism practices, such as:

- Transformative policies and practices in tourism
- Collaborative and sustainable management of Cultural Routes for balancing tourism and heritage conservation
- Innovative and inclusive heritage interpretation for enhancing public awareness and visitor experience
- The living heritage of landscapes and the role of Cultural Routes in fostering local development and community empowerment
- The Cultural Routes as strategic cultural tourism products
- The role of the Cultural Routes in revitalising local food traditions.

The Forum has four main objectives

- To share and discuss principles and approaches to develop sustainable tourism practices and support the development of cultural landscapes through Cultural Routes
- To present exemplary and promising practices in the management of Cultural Routes that support sustainability and integrate principles of protecting cultural landscapes
- To identify proposals and guidelines for further integration of sustainability principles in the running of Cultural Routes by the variety of stakeholders and actors
- To strengthen the common purpose and values of the Cultural Routes programme and value of the cultural heritage and landscapes of Cappadocia.

The main output of the event will be the **Forum Conclusions** which will propose stakeholders and partner organisations of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme a framework of experiences and proposals to enhance Europe's landscapes and their rich heritage, while empowering local communities and promoting sustainability of tourism practices.

The Forum will take place in the extraordinary cultural landscape of Cappadocia, where, over millions of years, volcanic eruptions and erosion sculpted the famed fairy chimneys - towering rock formations of soft volcanic tuff capped by harder rock layers. Amid these formations lie Byzantine-era cave dwellings, rock-hewn churches, and monastic complexes carved directly into the landscape — tangible traces of early Christianity—alongside a vibrant living heritage that continues to thrive today.

CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE 14th ANNUAL ADVISORY FORUM

Cappadocia, Türkiye, 22-24 October 2025



REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
AND TOURISM



CAPPADOCIA
THE LAND OF FAIRYTALES



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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER

- 08:30-12:30 Registration of participants
- 09:30-12:30 Meeting of representatives of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (by invitation)
- 10:30-12:30 Meeting of the University Network for Cultural Routes Studies (by invitation)
- 10:30-12:30 Informal meeting of the Governing Board of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (by invitation)
- 11:00-15:30 Cultural programme (by registration)
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch (by invitation)
- 13:00-14:00 Press conference (by invitation)
- 16:00-18:30 Official opening of the 14th Advisory Forum
- Forum keynote speech
- High-level Dialogue - **Protecting Europe's landscapes and heritage in times of vulnerability: The need for transformative policies and practices in tourism**
- Ceremony marking the **accession of new member states** to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes
- Certification ceremony - **new Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**
- 19:00-22:00 Welcome dinner

THURSDAY 23 OCTOBER

- 08:30-12:00 Registration of participants (continued)
- 09:00-09:15 Introduction to the 14th Advisory Forum
- 09:15-10:45 General session 1 - **Balancing Tourism and Heritage Conservation in Europe's Cultural Landscapes: Collaborative Pathways through Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**
- 10:45-11:15 Coffee break
- 11:15-12:45 General session 2 - **Innovative and Inclusive Heritage Interpretation: Enhancing Public Awareness and Visitor Experience along Cultural Routes and in Cultural Landscapes**
- 13:00-14:30 Lunch
- 14:30-15:45 Panel discussion - **Beyond the Destination: Reimagining Cultural Tourism through Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**
- 16:30-18:30 Experiencing Cappadocia's heritage
- 20:00-22:30 Cultural event and dinner

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER

- 09:00-10:30 General session 3 - **Living Heritage of Landscapes: The Role of Cultural Routes in Sustainable Cultural Development and Community Empowerment**
- 10:30-11:00 Coffee and refreshments
- 11:00-12:30 Thematic session - **Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe as culinary journeys: Revitalising local food traditions**
- 12:30-14:00 Lunch
- 14:00-14:45 Conclusions and recommendations of the Advisory Forum
- 14:45-15:15 Coffee break
- 15:15-16:45 "B2B" sessions - EPA Governing Board members meet Cultural Routes representatives (by registration)
- 17:00-18:00 Closing session
- "Inspiring Practices of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" awards ceremony
- Renewal of certification for Cultural Routes
- Presentation of the 2026 Advisory Forum
- Presentation of the 2026 Training Academy
- Closing remarks
- 19:00-22:00 Gala dinner

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Dates and venue

The Forum will take place from 22 to 24 October 2025 at the Barceló Cappadocia Hotel, in the Cappadocia region, Türkiye.

Working languages

Working languages of the Forum will be English, French and Turkish, with simultaneous interpretation provided throughout all plenary sessions.

Participation, financial conditions

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. Invited participants will receive a registration link and further logistical information by email. Participants are responsible for arranging and covering their own travel and accommodation costs.

Culture and tourism programme

An optional cultural and tourism programme will be on offer before and after the Forum for registered participants wishing to discover the rich natural and cultural heritage of Cappadocia and Türkiye.

Additional information

Further practical information (including accommodation suggestions, contacts, and local logistics) will be made available in a dedicated document on the Forum webpage : <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/2025-cappadocia-forum>

ABOUT

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, as defined in the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2013)66, are cultural and educational heritage and tourism co-operation projects, that aim the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and foster understanding and respect for common European values. They demonstrate how heritage and cultures of different and distant regions of Europe contribute to a shared cultural heritage. The Routes can be described as transnational networks of sites or geographical areas that share a common theme, whereby community-based actions are linked by the values of the Council of Europe.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was launched in 1987, with the certification of the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, connecting significant historical, cultural, and natural sites across the continent and further, and offering a way to explore their shared heritage. The programme promotes cultural diversity, intercultural exchange, sustainable tourism, and the protection and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage, as a foundation for cultural, social, and local development.

There are currently 49 certified 'Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe', illustrating different themes of European memory, history and heritage, and contributing to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe. Together, the Routes constitute a transnational network of more than 3000 members in over 60 countries in Europe and beyond.

The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)

Since 1998, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme has benefited from the support of the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), which serves as the technical agency of the programme. The EICR is based in Luxembourg and was established as part of a political agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. It organises training and seminar sessions for representatives of Cultural Routes and candidates for certification, assists the EPA with the evaluation and certification cycle, and provides advice and assistance to candidate networks and certified routes.

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)

In 2010, member states interested in developing Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe created the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) to enable closer co-operation between them and to provide greater political and financial support to the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme. To date, 43 States have become EPA members. Every year in May, the Governing Board of the EPA meets to grant the certification of 'Cultural Route of the Council of Europe' to Routes under regular evaluation as well as to networks seeking certification, based on criteria outlined in the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2020)32.

The Annual Advisory Forum brings together EPA member states, representatives of Cultural Routes, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and experts to discuss current challenges, emerging trends, and share best practices.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye is the national authority responsible for preserving the country's rich cultural heritage and promoting sustainable tourism. Through a legal framework the Ministry protects movable and immovable cultural assets, historical and archaeological sites, supports cultural institutions, cultural and creative industries and fosters tourism that respects local communities and cultural values. Working in cooperation with regional councils, museums, NGOs, and the private sector, it aims to align Türkiye's cultural and tourism policies with global sustainability standards. The Ministry's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan prioritizes safeguarding cultural heritage, advancing sustainable tourism, and ensuring environmental responsibility, reinforcing Türkiye's position as a leading cultural destination. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye serves as the official representative body within the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, actively contributing to the promotion of cultural cooperation, heritage preservation, and sustainable tourism through the Cultural Routes programme.

The Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA)

Established in 2019, Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), is committed to promote Türkiye as a brand and a popular destination both in international and domestic tourism markets. While working to discover and promote Türkiye's tangible and intangible cultural heritage and natural assets, rich in biodiversity TGA also continues its efforts to support the promotion of the country, through campaigns and communication activities in over 200 countries worldwide. TGA also develops various projects to diversify tourism products and target markets, to extend the tourism season, and to create demand for all provinces within the country. TGA also shows great efforts to create a sustainable tourism industry, by leading and supporting initiatives and projects, to protect and ensure the sustainability of Türkiye's cultural heritage. Türkiye's unique destinations and experiences are highlighted under TGA's global umbrella brand [GoTürkiye](#). The GoTürkiye.com platform plays a vital role in promoting Türkiye as a global tourism brand with personalized content as well as a new platform structure and updated design.

The Cappadocia Region

(Information coming soon)