

## Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Evaluation Cycle 2017-2018

### Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Route

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The opinions expressed in this independent expert report are those of the author, and do not engage the Council of Europe's Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes nor the European Institute of Cultural Routes.

## 1. Executive Summary

This report provides the results of a detailed mid-term evaluation process carried out through a combination of desk-based review of submitted documentation, online research and a 3 day field visit to the Route Association offices and key member sites in two countries. The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route has grown out of a transnational EU funded project, that from its very conception planned to create a top class cultural route that would fulfill the eligibility criteria of the award of the 'Cultural Route of the Council of Europe' certification under Resolution CM/Res(2013)67. The structured approach and funding support has resulted in the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route having very strong compliance with all the criteria.

### a. The theme is representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe

Reviewing the activities and information provided, **The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route still strongly fulfils all of the thematic criteria for certification as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.** The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route has a very strong representative theme that is based on a common heritage of the 'Art of the first humankind of Europe'.

### b Route activities pertain to the priority fields of action, while fulfilling the criteria defined for each field of action

Within the criteria of the regulations, there are five priority fields of action defined. The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route has illustrated a comprehensive list of actions carried out by the network within these fields and plans for future development in the coming 3 years. Activities within the priority fields of action have been implemented at both trans-national level and localised level

**The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Route has illustrated that it conforms to all the fields of action.**

### c. Conformity of the Route Network

The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route has a strong network association that fulfils all the criteria under Resolution CM/Res (2013)67 of the Council of Europe. The Network Association clearly fulfils all the criteria for network eligibility. It possesses a transnational office, a clear statute and supporting structures that will ensure a strong sustainable future for the route. It is a democratic association with an appropriate legal status registered under Spanish law. The route manager is hosted by the Cantabrian Rural Development Network and is active in promoting the route and strengthening its role within the Cultural Routes of Europe Program.

Financially the management of the network is sustainable through the support of the membership with a modest fee that funds network activity. Financing for the activities of members comes through a combination of their own funds and external funding. The route has a defined sustainable action plan for the coming 3 years and is also actively involved in seeking EU funding in collaboration with its members and partners.

**The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route clearly fulfils all the criteria for network eligibility.**

### d. Visibility of Certification

Whilst visibility of certification is strong at the core level there is room for improvement amongst the network members and partners. It is recommended that the Route undertakes activities to achieve a greater consistency of visibility across the route. The network has demonstrated improvement in this evaluation cycle and has presented clear achievable action plans for future improvement.

#### **Summary of the conclusions**

The theme still complies with the eligibility criteria for themes, CM/Res(2013)67, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.

The Cultural Route still complies with the criteria listed in CM/Res(2013)67, II. List of priority fields of action, CM/Res(2013)67.

The Cultural Route still complies with the criteria for networks, as in CM/Res (2013)67, III. List of criteria for networks.

## 2. Introduction

The Prehistoric Rock Art Route was certified as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2010.

The route is based on an extensive network of Prehistoric Rock Art Sites spread across Europe. Originally it was created with 14 members and 3 countries. Currently it has a membership of 36 members in six countries.

The theme of Prehistoric Rock Art is based on the most fundamental artefacts of European heritage, simple and complex art work created by the very first humanity of Europe. Many of the Rock art images only exist today because they were created deep underground in caves with steady and constant environmental conditions. In some cases, the caves were sealed for thousands of years by collapses of entrance ways or possibly by the inherent fear of the dark that modern man possesses.

Since the discovery and scientific recognition in recent history, they have become a focus of fascination of both experts and the public alike, who wish to make a connection with the lives of their earliest ancestors. Prehistory is a topic that sets young minds alight with curiosity through the content of school curricula and its portrayal in cartoons and films such as the animation Ice Age or the earlier Flintstones. The sites are very popular destinations for educational visits.

The uniqueness, rarity and almost spiritual qualities of the Rock Art sites made them very quickly an opportunity for tourism. As well as expert interest and study, the sites developed visitor access, introduced lighting and provided tours.

This mixture of the earliest European Heritage, importance for scientific study, educational visits and rural tourism provides the perfect combination for the creation of a cultural route. The sites in general are run in a manner that encompasses all the priority fields of action and attract knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff (often who's fascination with prehistory and Rock art started as a child and shaped their studies) deliver activities with passion and imagination.

A strength of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is that it grew out of an EU funded rural development project and from its earliest days had the intention of applying for the Council of Europe certification. Experience with other routes with similar origins such as ATRIUM has shown them to be more consistent in delivering activities in line with requirements for certification and requalification.

The following sections and the recommendation regarding the re-evaluation of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route within the Cultural Routes are based on a detailed review of the comprehensive dossier submitted by the network association, an online review of the routes and a selection of member websites and a 3 day field visit to the hosting offices of the network association and in the company of the route manager, visits to 4 of the member sites. These varied from a privately-owned site in France to the globally important centre of research in Altamira.

### 3 Main Body Evaluation

#### 3.1 Cultural Route Theme:

The theme of Prehistoric Rock Art as presented by the cultural route is strongly representative of common shared European values as it celebrates the very origin of European culture through the first art of humanity up to 35,000 years ago. The network of 36-member sites is based on the heritage of the very first layer of European Cultural Landscapes, defined before borders and governments. It spreads from the Iberian Peninsula across to the edge of the Caspian Sea.

In the thematic area of European memory, history and heritage, prehistoric rock art is the art of the first Europeans and has a continuous presence until recent times. It is probably according to experts that it is the only social action that has been produced without interruption for over 40 millennia. This graphical system allowed different groups of early Europeans to organise and understand the world they lived in and to transmit a record of their traditions and beliefs to those that came after them.

Prehistoric Rock Art has been the subject of extensive pan European research ever since the discovery of the cave art of Altamira in 1878 and its scientific recognition in 1902. Many fields of scientific and sociology have been involved in the study of the thematic area and the corresponding sites. They have included archaeologists, palaeontologists, art historians, chemists, physicists, geologists, conservators and theologians. The study of Rock Art, its origins, meanings and the challenges of conserving it for the future whilst also enabling it to be shared with the public have influenced many other fields of art study and conservation of culture.

The techniques of presenting cultural heritage from prehistory that is both very fragile and in often inaccessible locations have resulted in creating some of the strongest collaborations with scientists and specialists in tourism and heritage interpretation to create world standard innovative approaches. Many of the lessons learnt have been transferred to more contemporary cultural heritage issues.

The theme has excellent potential for engaging young people. The route has already developed cultural and educational exchanges at both regional level (UNSECO Schools 2015) and internationally through a transnational partnership between Dordogne (France), Cantabria (Spain) and Territorios do Coa (Portugal). Educational activity and exchange of best practice is core to the collective membership of the route. The increasing involvement of University partners will promote student exchanges.

Prehistoric Rock Art has provided a stimulus for cultural tourism ever since its discovery at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The caves provided some of the earliest organised tourism attractions. They received increasingly high visitor numbers over time and contributed to development of some of the first modern rural tourism destinations. The importance of balancing conservation of these irreparable and fragile artefacts with tourism has meant that it is one of the earliest areas of sustainable tourism development that has resulted in innovation in creating visitor experience alongside the managing visitor carrying capacity. Many of the sites included in the Cultural route are leading tourism attractions contributing to the rural economy of their regions.

The origin of the Prehistoric Rock Art Cultural Route lies in the context of a previous European funded rural development project. This heritage means that a primary strategic area of the route and its network is rural and sustainable tourism. The network is working across multiple regions of Europe in exchanging good practice on archaeological tourism with a special focus on sustainable approaches that promote conservation avoiding the detrimental experiences of the past. The network association is increasing activity in

collaboration with the tourism industry to develop packages, promote the destinations at tourism fairs and to build cooperation with other cultural routes to create cross route tourism offers.

## **3.2 Fields of Action**

### **3.2.1 Cooperation in Terms of Research and Development**

The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is committed to supporting the spread of best practice and promoting the improvement of the technical management of the rock art sites within the network. The nature of the theme of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails route, means that the majority of individuals connected have strong academic trained backgrounds related to archaeology, palaeontology and geology. The sites are often focusses of very diverse research related to understanding the origins, materials, significance, conservation and interpretation of the first art of humankind.

The route has a strong collaboration (and in some cases membership) of leading Universities and Research Institutions in the field. These combined with a 10-person scientific committee made up of some of the leading researchers and specialists in Rock Art provide an excellent environment for stimulating both route wide and small partnership research and development activities. Certain sites such as Altamira and are regarded as the international centres of excellence in their field.

The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route network association actively stimulates cooperation in areas of research and development through organising conferences and training workshops. The technical team provide good secretariat support for these events.

These activities primarily focus on two main fields of research and development – improving conservation techniques and managing tourism at the sites. These topics are critically linked as there is a need for enabling the public access to the most fundamental ‘First Art of Humankind’ to promote the understanding of and provide a very real connection between today's Europeans and their prehistoric ancestors. At the same time the biggest threat to this fragile heritage is the impact of visitors on the environment of the caves where the art is found.

An example of such a knowledge exchange was the organisation of a technical meeting between Cantabria and Dordogne on Rock Art in February 2017. This event resulted in the signing of a protocol of collaboration in the field of Rock art between these two regions and in the creation of the European Centre of Rock Art in Montignac.

This meeting was also a forum for the review and approval of the new manual for the certification of rock art sites open to the public within the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. This standardised certification scheme has been developed through transnational cooperation and integrated best practice accumulated by managers of rock art sites in the route. It is a good physical example of the quality of research outputs that the network creates.

The certification brings together 85 standards and good practices to provide a framework that can enable certification of the different categories of sites and stimulate self-assessment and improvement to raise management effectiveness. 34 are compulsory good practices and 51 recommended good practices to be considered by independent assessors.

The certification covers a wide range of areas from legal protection, physical protection, documentation of sites to the breadth of factors required to provide high quality visitor experiences and educational visits. It has been created to bring positive benefits rather than bureaucratic obstacles. This certification scheme should be regarded as a model of best practice that could be replicated for other routes based on fragile artefacts/sites that are visited by the public.

Another good example of the role of the route in promoting cooperation amongst its members is the organisation of training seminars for professional staff. To build on the success of the 2015 Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route seminar in Ciudad Rodrigo (Spain) and Foz Coa (Portugal), a training seminar for the staff of Rock Art destinations is being held in Morella (Spain) for 100 technicians from across the network. It is proposed that this seminar will have 3 main topics – Sustainable Uses in Rock Art sites, Quality attention to the Public, and the Labour problems of Rock Art guides.

The network association is intending to raise funding to organise more events transnationally and at an optimum level of 2 a year.

The importance of tourism and its challenges to the sites in the network make it an important field of research. In August 2017, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route conducted a seminar at the UMIP University in Santander for its members that looked at visitor issues and numbers. It calculated that in excess of 3 million visitors experienced rock art sites across the network. There is a proactive exercise amongst main destinations to develop research programmes in order assess visitor levels and characteristics, with the data being collated by the technical unit of the network association to create an overview of tourism numbers across the whole route.

Rural Development Associations are strongly represented in the membership of the network and these are collaborating to carry out research on the economic impact of Rock Art destinations on their respective territories. When completed this study will be a valuable tool in raising political support for the importance of Rock Art to local communities and their sustainable economic development.

### **3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European Heritage**

The fundamental characteristic of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is that it is based on the very origins of humanity in Europe and that through both the similarities and distinctions between the art of the different sites regionally and internationally it promotes the concept of a common and shared heritage.

This is promoted to the public of all ages through a range of heritage interpretation facilities across the sites. The majority have excellent face to face interpretation and fixed interpretive displays in the entrances or nearby centres. Several the sites such as Altamira (Spain) and the Pôle Internationale de la Préhistoire (Périgord, France) have internationally recognised world class interpretation.

The techniques of good interpretation are a common theme for training and capacity building activities. A good illustrative example of this is the forthcoming training seminar for the staff of Rock Art destinations is being held in Morella (Spain) for 100 technicians from across the network. A focus of this is providing high quality interpretive visitor experience through guided activities and providing a network forum for exchange of knowledge between guides and other frontline staff from rock art sites internationally.

The Rock Art sites do not just promote understanding of their ancient heritage but also recount the recent history since their discovery and recognition. Across the sites there is a vivid storytelling of the evolution of archaeology, palaeontology and the sciences connected to the conservation and interpretation of prehistoric rock art.

The research centres hold the archives of research going back to the 1900's along with many of the artefacts from the original excavations and exploration.

In addition to the base connection between the first humanity of Europe with modern Europeans through the actual Rock Art, there is a common heritage of science involved in the research and conservation activities. The major sites and research centres attract scientists and scholars from across Europe and globally. Techniques of conservation and

interpretation are regarded as international best practice. This field of science is a great leveller of humanity and promotes unified research activities that reach across national ethnic and religious boundaries.

The routes have a strong connection with the international conventions and charters for conservation including the work of UNESCO and ICOMOS. Nine of the member sites are listed as World Heritage and through those sites, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is instrumental in supporting rock art conservation and visitor management in sites internationally, including those outside of the network.

### **3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans**

The route has an excellent capacity in the field of action related to education and young people. This is based on the fact that the majority of sites in the network have a primary function of promoting understanding and educational function. This has developed since they were first scientifically recognised and opened to the public.

In common with dinosaurs and spaceships – prehistoric life is a topic that provides fascination for the very young as a result of preschool and primary school curricula along with the visual influence of cartoons and children's books. This fascination is often carried forward into later life – or rekindled through the direct experience the Rock Art sites provide.

The creation of the network association and the bringing together of the collective rock art site management teams has enabled an exchange in best practice in delivering educational activities to young Europeans of all ages. Many of the sites are key educational visit locations for local and visiting schools attracting a huge number of day visits. They are also a very popular destination for families who wish their children to undergo recreational learning experiences.

The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route has enabled the lessons learnt and techniques of opening minds and bringing to life prehistoric European life developed by the well-resourced major centres to be shared across the network through the exchange of best practice. This has enabled the educational standards and opportunities for high quality experiences for young people to be raised. Examples of this were shared during the field evaluation visit to the visitor centre at the Altamira Cave. Reviewing the websites of the member sites confirmed the strength of delivery of educational activities in accordance with the principles and ethos of CM/Res(2013)67.

The educational programmes of the members of the network are in general innovative and interactive. In order to put prehistoric life in Europe in context and to bring it to life, there is a need for using creative and reconstruction activities. The process of trying to recreate the hunter gatherer life of humanity around the time of the ice ages requires stimulation of imagination and challenging the practical abilities of modern children more used to computers, tablets and smart phones.

The emotional connection between the children and their ancestors that can be created from experiencing the rock art and through the skills of the excellent guides/educators in the network is a powerful tool for creating an awareness of shared identity and heritage.

The practical experience of building shelter with just natural materials, lighting a fire using friction and trying to catch their meal with a simple bow or spear are all classic team building and personal development activities. The group work nature of many activities contributes to building understanding and tolerance through the need to collaborate.

The network association has been instrumental in developing major exchange programmes. During the last 3 years, there were some experiences in relation to the exchange of Youth groups, both at national level and at international level:



In 2015, collaboration in the organization of the First Inter-Autonomic Meeting on Palaeolithic Cave Art, UNESCO World Heritage, Asturias-Cantabria-Basque Country was conducted in the context of the UNESCO associated schools programme.

The experience of the 200 students from schools attached to the UNESCO schools programme was aimed promoting the values of the declaration of UNESCO World Heritage that apply to the caves of the Cantabrian Region, a common heritage of the 3 Autonomous Regions.

The cooperation with the UNESCO associated schools programme is planned to be continued and expanded especially as the route now has 9 areas with Prehistoric Rock Art declared as World Heritage.

In cooperation with the two partner regions of Dordogne (France) and Cantabria (Spain), an International Work Camp for young people focussed in Rock Art Heritage has been developed in 2017 and a new edition will take place in 2018 in Valderredible (Cantabria).

The network is committed to broadening this experience of youth camps and exchanges across the network internationally. The concept is being promoted through the managers of rock art sites as they are in regular contact with teachers and directors of the schools connected to their sites.

The increasing awareness of the individual rock art sites both as part of a modern network – the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Route and also as part of the 20,000 year old network of the first humankind of Europe, and the promotion of this through educational and interpretive activities lends itself to also fostering ‘virtual’ cultural and educational exchanges of youth through discovery of other sites in the network and the story of the hunter/gatherer movements during the impact of the last ice ages.

The technological innovation of virtual reality and other developments allowing the imagination and minds of young people to travel and explore in a structured way should be considered a form of exchange, along with the ease through technology of collaboration between site educators, children in the classroom and twinning opportunities for ‘rock art’ connected schools.

### **3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice**

This field of action was initially perceived as the weakest area within the route in the submission of the evaluation dossier by the route manager.

However, during the evaluation process, the definition of this field was discussed in conjunction with the activity programmes of many of the member sites and it was realised that in reality many of the member sites actually delivering activities in the context of linking the Rock Art, their cave environments and contemporary art practices.

The context of the wonder of the incredible pieces of art created 20,000 years ago and the spiritual connection between the first humanity of Europe and modern artists provides inspiration for a great diversity of contemporary cultural and artistic interpretation.

The network manager carried out a follow up survey amongst the members and are now able to present the following as key examples of positive activity in this field of action.

The review highlighted that exhibitions, performances and workshops are developed by the museums and interpretation centres of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route network. Musical experiences are frequently performed as part of the activity programmes of sites (including some based in creation of modern perceptions of prehistoric music), such as the concerts and festivals that are organized by Isturitz- Oxocelhaya Grottes (Basque Country, France) that has a small stage area in a less sensitive cavern in the cave complex. The specific acoustics of the underground environment provide unique opportunities, and

some caves are utilizing this as tool in providing interpretive experiences to visitors.

In the field of action related to the contemporary art field and its relations with the first art of the Humankind, the Altamira Museum (Cantabria, Spain) and the Pôle Internationale de la Préhistoire (Périgord, France) lead this kind of activities, with a regular programming of exhibitions, workshops and performances that are visible on their websites. During the field evaluation, an excellent and creative photographic exhibition related to the sites aligned with UNESCO was present in the Altamira Museum.

Previous reference examples of this type of activity include an internationally recognised photography exhibition by Teresa Correa (<http://galeriasaroleon.com/artista/teresa-correa>) in Altamira Museum, 2016 and the award winning exhibition and performance « Humanimalité », by Agata Kawa (<http://cargocollective.com/agatakawa>) in Pôle Internationale de la Préhistoire (Les Eyzies de Tayac, France), 2016.

The centre at Lascaux has delivered workshops for contemporary artists to study the prehistoric art and to develop modern contextual interpretations, these then resulted in a public exhibition and publication.

The route presented evidence of a further diversity of contemporary artistic activity across sites including dance, cave architecture related interpretation and the production of contemporary jewellery based on the prehistoric rock art.

This process of further investigation during the evaluation process alters the perception of this field of action as being a weakness of the cultural route to a reality that actually it is an area of strength and fully compliant with the requirements for recertification.

### **3.2.5 Cultural Tourism and sustainable cultural development**

Tourism related activity is a strong area of activity for the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route – driven both by a combination of the origins of the route through a tourism related EU project, and that the majority of the member sites operate as cultural heritage tourism attractions.

Key network members recently took part in a seminar dedicated to assessing the impact of tourism and developing tools and indicators to measure visitors across the network. It was calculated that more than 3 million visitors experienced rock art sites across the network.

Visitors to all sites receive structured visits with guides and other interpretation provided

The fact that many sites are in rural areas, their importance as part of rural economies is critical. As well as direct spend at the sites and the employment opportunities offered (including seasonal work that is important for young people), they also have a wider impact on the surrounding rural economy. In many cases the sites act as focal points for promoting other local offers and points of sale for traditional local products and handicrafts.

Innovation in the field of tourism and visitor experience is strong within the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route. The fragile and irreplaceable nature of the original Rock Art artefacts mean that the members have been involved in developing new tools for giving visitor virtual access and interpreting the meaning and story of these elements of common European heritage.

The accurate replica cave in the visitor centre at Altamira in Northern Spain – a replica so perfect that it is used for study by scientists and other specialists from across the world, is at one end of the spectrum, whilst the activities under current development through the project ARTPOINTS (digital signage for the creation of the cultural and touristic on-line network of rock art), with the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports of the Government of Spain will provide solutions for smaller destinations.

The ArtPoints project will provide rock art destinations without guide service, or other interpretive facilities, online tools to improve the quality of the self-visits, using NFC (Near Field Communications) technology that will offer voiceovers, videos, didactic images, and even sign guides for deaf people.

With this project that is currently running, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails network will be equipped with a new offer for its tourist-cultural rock art destinations especially designed for small rock sites that lack infrastructures and visitor services. It could also provide a model of technology use for other routes to learn from.

In the area of tourism promotion, a collaboration with TourSpain and the other Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, enabled the routes to be integrated into the national offer and Spain diversification away from sand and sea on the international market. The routes are presented on the national tourism website and a range of supporting material was produced and presented. The routes took part in international travel fairs such as ITB in Berlin.

Additionally, in December 2014 a collaboration accord was agreed with the touristic WEB TURINEA ([www.turinea.com](http://www.turinea.com)) for promoting the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route across the international breadth of the network. In the first stage development, 9 route itineraries were agreed for development that include network members in Spain, France and Italy. The next defined step within the PRAT CARP action plan is to seek funding sources and to further refine the material and promote it through international travel fairs.

Tourism related activities are a focus of the 2017 – 2020 action plan as defined by the governing board. In order to ensure a manageable and achievable set of objectives at the core network association level, an initial programme that can be achieved with in existing resources was created:

- Definition of Tourism Packages – this builds on the previous pilot activities in cooperation with TourSpain of 2016, the intention is to build a group of thematic/geographic itineraries to promote the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route offer at local and interregional level through the tourism sector.
- Certification and Signing of the Rock art sites
- Preparing EU and national project calls
- Greater coordination between site managers to organise joint events – especially relevant to the key fields of action.

However, based on the evidence presented from previous years and discussion with the route manager, site managers etc, it is expected that level of activity will greatly exceed that through the efforts of individual sites and micro collaborations.

The proposed certification scheme will also be an effective tool for stimulating self-evaluation by members and promoting further improvements in visitor experience.

### **3.3 Cultural Route Network**

The Prehistoric Rock Art Cultural Route has a very well-established network and a well-managed network association. The network association, route manager and technical coordinator are hosted by the Cantabrian Network for Rural Development.

The network association is officially called the Asociacion Internacional Caminos de Arte Rupestre Prehistorico ( A.I. CARP). It was officially created in 2007 by fourteen institutions from three countries and now currently has 36 full members from six countries. It is registered in Spain but with a fully European vocation. It is staffed by a Route Manager and a Technical Coordinator.

The membership is constantly increasing, and the route network currently comprises over 150 rock art sites open to the public, with visitation levels in excess of 3 million visitors a year. Membership has expanded from the 3 founding countries to reach as wide as Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The full members of the association are principally the governmental and regional administrations responsible for the management of the heritage sites. Very few sites are in private ownership. The association additionally has 18 (at time of evaluation) collaborators that comprise research institutes, universities and museums from 9 different countries. This research and academic collaboration strengthens the capacity of the route in the field of research and development.

The association has a clearly defined legal status and is supported by a set of statutes that clearly define its activities, management and administration in conformity with CM/Res(2013)67.

The governing board of directors is fully representative of the international nature of the route and comprises members from all the principle countries represented.

The Association's head office is currently in Cantabria, Spain and is coordinated administratively and technically by the Cantabrian Network for Rural Development. The functions of A.I. CARP are to monitor the functioning of this Council of Europe Cultural Route, encourage joint activities among its members, manage the route which brings together European rock-art destinations administratively and culturally, and verify that the objectives of the route are achieved, are in full accordance with Resolution (98) 4 of the Council of Europe about European Cultural Routes.

The Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route network has achieved a reasonable level of financial sustainability through membership fees and participation in calls for EU and other project-based funding. This is confirmed by the evidence provided by the route in the form of financial statements for the last 3 years and the financial reports submitted to the AGM of the association that was held on 17<sup>th</sup> November alongside the International Congress of Rock Art in Andalusia.

The Cantabrian Network for Rural Development is committed to ongoing support to host the network association and provides full support to the activities of the route manager. The route manager, technical coordinator and colleagues in the Cantabrian Network for Rural Development office are actively developing strong proposals for future funding led project activity in conjunction other members of the route. The heritage of the route originating from an EU project and the teams previous experience results in strong well written submissions with a good opportunity for success. Prospects for future activities are good.

The network associations governing board has defined a core action plan for 2017 – 2020 that will be achievable under the austerity of limited funding and is based on optimising limited funds. It is intended to maximise visibility through ensuring that members activities are delivered under the banner of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. It also defines 4 main aspects:

- Definition of Tourism Packages
- Certification and Signing of the Rock art sites
- Preparing EU and national project calls
- Greater coordination between site managers to organise joint events – especially relevant to the key fields of action.

### **3.4 Communication tools**

In general, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trail Cultural Route has good visibility of both its own identity and membership of the Cultural Routes of Europe programme. This is illustrated clearly on their website and in all promotional and communications materials.

The membership of the Cultural Routes of Europe programme and the certified status is proudly displayed at all levels within the website – to a much greater standard than many of the other Cultural Routes. Good clear explanatory information is provided about the programme and references to other routes are included.

Direct links to the Council of Europe are provided from the home page of and header of the website.

The network management has excellent design skills that results in attractive and informative material that presents the route and the programme in a professional and interesting manner. From experience of evaluating previous routes over many years, I would concur that this is a model approach to share with new and existing routes.

All the sites visited as part of the field assessment clearly displayed their membership of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trail Cultural Route by displaying a uniform sign at the entrance. This signage also clearly promotes the membership of the route within the Cultural Routes of Europe programme.

Visibility and cultural routes awareness from interviewed frontline visitor staff appeared good when the topic was raised with them, and the awareness of potential cross overs with other Cultural Routes of Europe was also promoted in discussion. The Prehistoric Rock Art Trail Cultural Route is very active in capacity building of tourism staff and guides – and through the quality of these activities they ‘indoctrinate’ awareness and enthusiasm amongst members.

There are varying levels of visibility across the members websites as some members have restrictions due to the political control of their sites or that the ability to update the core design of websites as they were initially funded by projects etc and there is not currently budget. The Route Manager said members were committed to rectifying this as the opportunity arose – and it will be a criterion within the new Prehistoric Rock Art Cultural Routes Certification Scheme

The feedback from the route manager is that amongst some national and local governmental officials and politicians there is either a low level of support or awareness regarding the Cultural Routes of Europe programme of the Council of Europe.

The Route Managers and members are actively attempting to counter this by including a good overview of the overall routes programme in every presentation given to officials and politicians with regard to the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route. The feedback is that this is having a drip feed effect on altering perception amongst that sector.

In the Spanish context, the route has a strong connection with the other 4 routes present in the country and collectively they work closely with Spanish tourism marketing to promote not just the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Route but the wider programme.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

**The overall conclusion is that the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route successfully fulfils the criteria for recertification according to CM/Res (2013) 67 under the 2017/18 midterm evaluation.**

##### A.- Conclusions

There are no major issues that need resolving – in fact the standard of activity and compliance with the regulations of CM/Res(2013)67 is very high. This is indicative of routes of new generation that are born out of often EU funded project activity and were designed from the start to fit the Cultural Route criteria.

It is also indicative of the enthusiasm and passion that surrounds the archaeological and palaeontological fields. These fields of study attract devoted young expertise, and this shows in the diversity and standards of activity the member Rock art sites deliver.

The theme of the 'Art of the First Humanity of Europe' – the core thematic area of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails cultural route is in full compliance with the criteria of CM/Res(2013)67 of the Council of Europe. Prehistoric Rock Art as presented by the cultural route is strongly representative of common shared European values as it celebrates the very origin of European culture through the first art of humanity up to 35,000 years ago. The network of 36 member sites is based on the heritage of the very first layer of European Cultural Landscapes, defined before borders and governments. It spreads from the Iberian Peninsula across to the edge of the Caspian Sea.

The theme of Prehistoric Rock Art provides excellent opportunities for the network to deliver innovative and comprehensive activities in the specified fields of action.

'Cooperation in Terms of Research and Development' is a very strong area of activity based on the fact that the member sites are all of great scientific importance and irreplaceable. All the sites are heavily involved in constant improvement of their conservation techniques and many of them are the focus of ongoing activity to greater understand their origins and meanings. Additionally, due to their importance to local economies as tourism and educational destinations, the fields of visitor management, interpretation and education are focal areas of research and practical development.

The members cooperate amongst themselves on both a one to one basis and within the context of the network to share best practice. The network association organises international and regional seminars and conferences on a variety of themes for the staff of the member sites. The route has strong membership and collaboration with some of the worlds leading centres of excellence in prehistoric Rock art and with an excellent network of universities and research institutes.

Regarding the field of action of 'Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage', the route is in full compliance. The fundamental characteristic of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is that it is based on the very origins of humanity in Europe and that through both the similarities and distinctions between the art of the different sites regionally and internationally it promotes the concept of a common and shared heritage.

This is promoted to the public of all ages through a range of heritage interpretation facilities across the sites. The majority have excellent face to face interpretation and fixed interpretive displays in the entrances or nearby centres. Several the sites such as Altamira have internationally recognised world class interpretation. The network association is actively promoting best practice in this area through training events and the proactive exchange of knowledge.

The routes have a strong connection with the international conventions and charters for conservation including the work of UNESCO and ICOMOS. Nine of the member sites are listed as World Heritage and through those sites, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route is instrumental in supporting rock art conservation and visitor management in sites internationally, including those outside of the network.

The route has an excellent capacity in the field of action related to the 'Cultural and Educational Exchanges of Young Europeans'. This is because the majority of sites in the network have a primary promoting understanding and educational function. This has developed since they were first scientifically recognised and opened to the public.

The creation of the network association and the bringing together of the collective rock art site management teams has enabled an exchange in best practice in delivering educational activities to young Europeans of all ages. Many of the sites are key educational visit locations for local and visiting schools attracting a huge number of day visits. They are also a very popular destination for families who wish their children to undergo recreational learning experiences.

The network association has been instrumental in developing major exchange programmes. During the last 3 years, there were some experiences in relation to the exchange of Youth groups, both at national level and at international level:

In 2015, collaboration in the organization of the First Inter-Autonomic Meeting on Palaeolithic Cave Art, UNESCO World Heritage, Asturias-Cantabria-Basque Country was conducted in the context of the UNESCO Associated Schools Programme.

The theme of Prehistoric Rock Art provides excellent opportunities for actions in the field of 'Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Practice'. This results in full compliance with the criteria and provides strong evidence for evaluation.

The context of the wonder of the incredible pieces of art created 20,000 years ago and the spiritual connection between the first humanity of Europe and modern artists provides inspiration for a great diversity of contemporary cultural and artistic interpretation.

The evaluation process highlighted that exhibitions, performances and workshops are developed by the museums and interpretation centres of the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route network. Musical experiences are frequently performed as part of the activity programmes of sites including some based in creation of modern perceptions of prehistoric music. The specific acoustics of the underground environment provide unique opportunities, and some caves are utilizing this as tool in providing interpretive experiences to visitors.

In linking the contemporary art field and its relations with the first art of the Humankind, the Altamira Museum (Cantabria, Spain) and the Pôle Internationale de la Préhistoire (Périgord, France) lead this kind of activities, with a regular programming of exhibitions, workshops and performances that are visible on their websites

The route presented evidence of a further diversity of contemporary artistic activity across sites including dance, cave architecture related interpretation and the production of contemporary jewellery based on the prehistoric rock art.

'Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural Development' is a strong area of activity for the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route – driven both by a combination of the origins of the route through a tourism related EU project, and that most of the member sites operate as cultural heritage tourism attractions.

In a recent event focussed on developing monitoring tools to study visitor impact it was estimated that over 3 million visitors passed through participating member sites in a year. The location of the majority of sites in rural areas mean that they are a powerful tool for

sustainable rural development – this is reflected in the fact that many of the core members of the network association are rural development agencies and rural administrations responsible for the management of the Rock Art sites.

Innovation in the field of tourism and visitor experience is strong within the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route. The fragile and irreplaceable nature of the original Rock Art artefacts mean that the members have been involved in developing new tools for giving visitor access and interpreting the meaning and story of these elements of common European heritage.

Regarding the criteria requiring a certified route to have a functioning, sustainable and legally established network and network association, the Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route fully fulfils this. A legally registered association with a route manager, technical co-ordinator, governing board and scientific committee exists and functions to a high standard. It is a credit to the collective work and enthusiasm of the route manager, board members and association members that the association delivers a strong programme of cross network activities in all fields of action.

The network association achieves financial sustainability through a combination of membership fees, the support of the host organisation for the route manager and a successful track record in accessing project funding. Good management practice means that action plans are created that are achievable within the resources of the organisation and that good levels of additional activity take place each year through secured additional funding and the input of the members own activity programmes.

The Route has excellent visibility and visibility tools promoting both itself and the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. There is a good online presence with direct linkage to the Council of Europe and the Institute for Cultural Routes. The physical visibility appears to be strong across the majority of member Rock Art sites with standardised signage. Online visibility and within printed material varies across the network but in general is good.

Where there is poorer visibility it is due to mainly to two constraints – a lack of understanding amongst governmental masters of the respective sites and financial limitations of poorer sites to update material.

The network is committed to efforts to rectify these issues. Regarding the lack of awareness of the value and importance of being part of the wider Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, the network manager and members always include a briefing within all presentations they make and actively lobbies at all levels to raise awareness.

And in relation to the second constraint, members will be encouraged to resolve this through the sharing of good practice and through the implementation of the new certification criteria. As new material is developed, put online and printed, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe visibility will be improved.

## **B. Recommendations**

With regard to recommendations for improvement, the strength of the route and its compliance with the criteria, there are very few points that could be identified.

The main area for improvement would be that the network association continues with activities to increase Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route and Council of Europe visibility especially online and in print amongst those members where it is weak. The network manager is aware of this and committed to improving this.

The other areas of recommendation are not linked to fulfilling the criteria for the Cultural Routes of Europe but to supporting an issue that is probably common across many members.



Many of the sites are struggling for resources to modernise facilities in the caves especially regarding infrastructure such as lights. In most caves these have been installed for many years. The older light bulbs are detrimental to the fragile rock art and their use is monitored. In addition, the older technology is less energy efficient than the more suitable modern alternatives.

During discussions with site managers during the field visit this issue was raised as needing resolution, but it was also pointed out that in the current economic climate the authorities responsible do not have the funding available.

From the experience of the evaluator in working with diverse sources of funding, it would seem that this could be an interesting project for seeking funding from a combination of Corporate Social Responsibility programmes of private sector companies and/or a Crowd Funding exercise through visitors and friends of the caves

It is suggested that the network association provides support and training in this topic to assist members to seek alternative funding from CSR , crowd funding and the public to support heritage conservation in times of government funding cuts and austerity.

Another recommendation for across the Cultural Routes of Europe programme is to create an ordered system or database type application for recording activities related to criteria to ease evaluation process. A simple, ease to use system would ease the evaluation preparation process for the routes and the evaluators, and at the same time would reveal the breadth of activity in certain fields that may go unreported and uncredited. ...

## 5. List of References

The Network Association provided a comprehensive set of documentation to support the evaluation process.

- 0 LETTER TO MR DOMINIONI.pdf
- 1a EN DOSSIER EVALUATION 2017 PRAT CARP.doc
- 1 b dossier complementary PRAT CARP 2017 ENG.pdf
- 1b Website prehistour STATISTICS.pdf
- 1c CARP TECHNICAL REPORT 2014.pdf
- 1c CARP TECHNICAL REPORT 2015.pdf
- 1c CARP TECHNICAL REPORT 2016.pdf
- 2 SELF ASSESSMENT GRID EVALUATION PRAT CARP.xlsx
- 3 EN DECLARATION HONOUR 2017 PRAT CARP.pdf
- 4 LOIS PRAT CARP French.pdf
- 4 ESTATUTOS CARP aprobados 21/07/2011.pdf
- 4 STATUTES PRAT CARP English.pdf
- 5a Current list of partners PRAT CARP.pdf
- 5b LIST OF SITES AND DESTINATIONS PRAT CARP.pdf
- 6 1 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY GENERAL Bayonne 2014.pdf
- 6 2 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY GENERAL Valladolid 2015.pdf
- 6 3 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY GENERAL Villacarriedo 2016.pdf
- 7 1 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY EXTRAORDINAIRE Bayonne 2014.pdf
- 7 2 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY EXTRAORDINAIRE Valladolid 2015.pdf
- 7 3 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY EXTRAORDINAIRE Madrid 2016.pdf
- 7 4 PV LÔÇÖASSEMBLY EXTRAORDINAIRE Villacarriedo 2016.pdf
- 8 2014 BALANCE AND RESULTS ACCOUNT 2014.xls
- 8 2015 BALANCE AND RESULTS ACCOUNT 2015.xls
- 8 2016 BALANCE AND RESULTS ACCOUNT 2016.xls
- 8 ECONOMIC REPORT 2014-2016.pdf
- 9 Three Year Programme of activities forecast.pdf
- 10 brochure PRAT CARP 2016 ENGLISH version.pdf
- 10 brochure PRAT CARP 2014 FR-EN.pdf
- 10 brochure PRAT CARP 2016 FRENCH version.pdf
- 11 EN Certification rock art sites PRAT CARP revised V2.pdf
- 11 FR Certification sites rupestres CARP V2.pdf
- 12 GRAPHIC IDENTITY HANDBOOK PRAT CARP CR.pdf
- 13 PRAT CARP presentation 2017.pdf
- 14 GUIDE Routes-Culturelles-d-Espagne-2016-Petit-Fute.pdf
- 15 PROCEEDINGS INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM RAMALES 2014.pdf
- 16 VERONIA TOURS ROUTE ROCK ART.pdf

An additional complementary report was submitted to the evaluator post field visit to provide additional information requested.

## 6. Programme of Field Visit

Accompanied and facilitated by Ramon Montes ( Technical Coordinator)

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January

- Travel Romania to Bilbao
- Overnight in hotel

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January.

8:45. Exit from hotel at Bilbao

10:30. Visit to Istutitz-Oxocelhaya (France) - Joëlle Darricau and Guy Aubertin, managers of Grottes of Isturitz-Oxocelhaya

13:00. Lunch

16:00. Visit to Ekainberri (Zestoa, Gipuzkoa) - Juan José Aramburu (manager), Eneko Calvo and Aitziber Gorrotxaterri, staff of Ekainberri

20:00. Accommodation in Santander.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January.

9:00. Exit from the hotel (Santander).

9:30. Visit to Altamira Museum (Santillana del Mar, Cantabria) - Pilar Fatás (director) and Constantino Rodríguez (guide), Altamira Museum

11:45. Visit to Monte Castillo caves (Puente Viesgo, Cantabria) - Daniel Garrido (manager) and Rebeca Fernández-Lavin (guide), Monte Castillo Caves

13:30. Lunch and Meeting at the headquarters of Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route (Santander, Cantabria) - Fernando Isasi (manager Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route) and Ramon Montes ( Technical Coordinator)

16:00. Museum of Prehistory of Cantabria

18:00 Return to Hotel

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January.

8:30 – 9:30. Transfer to Bilbao Airport and return to Romania

7. COE CULTURAL ROUTES EVALUATION CHECK-LIST - Prehistoric Rock Art Trails Cultural Route

		Yes	No
3.1 THEME	Does the theme of the Route		
	- represent a common value - historical, cultural, or heritage -to several European countries?	1	
	- offer a solid basis for		
	youth cultural and educational exchanges?	1	
	innovative activities?	1	
	cultural tourism products development?	1	
	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	1	
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development		
	Does the Route		
	- offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	1	
	- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	1	
	- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1	
	- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1	
	- have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1	
	- have a multidisciplinary scientific committee?	1	
	Does the scientific Committee		
	work on its theme at the European level?	1	
	carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on:		
	- theoretical level?	1	
	- practical level?	1	
	3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage		
	Do the Route activities (according with the theme)		
	- take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	1	
	- promote the CoE values?	1	
	- promote the CoE CRs brand?	1	
	- work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	1	
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	1		
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	1		

- valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?		0
- contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	1	
- enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	1	
- 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 (European Cultural Convention, Faro convention, European Landscape Convention, World Heritage Convention, ...)?	1	
<b>3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans</b>		
<b>Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to</b>		
- develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	1	
- emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	1	
- encourage social integration and exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe?	1	
- offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	1	
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts?	1	
- set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	1	
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	1	
<b>3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</b>		
<b>Do the Route's cultural activities (contemporary cultural and artistic practice related)</b>		
- promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?	1	
- encourage artistic projects that establish the links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	1	
- encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	1	
- encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?*	1	
-encourage debate and exchange - in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective - between various cultural and artistic expressions in different countries of Europe?	1	
- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?	1	
- highlight the most innovative and creative practices?	1	

<b>3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION</b>	- link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***	1	
	<b>3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development</b>		
	<b>Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development)</b>		
	- assist in local, regional, national and/ or European identity formation?	1	
	- actively involve 3 major means to raise awareness of their cultural projects: print, broadcast and social media?	1	
	- promote dialogue between		
	urban and rural communities and cultures?	1	
	developed and disadvantaged regions?	1	
	different parts (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	1	
	majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?	1	
	- open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?	1	
	- draw decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory?	1	
	- aim to diversify of cultural product, service and activities offers?	1	
- develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	1		
- develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	1		
Did the network prepare and use tools all along the route to raise the number of visitors and the economic impacts of the route on the territories crossed?	1		
<b>3.3 NETWORK</b>	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	1	
	Was the theme of the network chosen and accepted by its members?	1	
	Was the conceptual framework for this network founded on a scientific basis?	1	
	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its project(s)?	1	
	Is the network financially sustainable?	1	
	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	1	
	Does the network operate democratically?	1	

	Does the network		
	- specify		
	its objectives and working methods?	1	
	the regions concerned by the project?	1	
	its partners and participating countries?	1	
	the fields of action involved?	1	
	the overall strategy of the network in the short- and long term?	1	
	- identify potential participants and partners in CoE member states and/or other world countries?	1	
	- provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	1	
	- provide details of its operational plan?	1	
	- append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?	1	
3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS	Does the Route have its own logo?	1	
	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?	1	
	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	1	
	Is it the website translated into English and French?	1	
	Is it the website translated into other languages?	1	
	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	1	
	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	1	
	if yes, are the brochures translated in English?	1	
	if yes, are the brochures translated in French?	1	
	<i>For Certified Cultural Routes only:</i>		
	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?	1	
	Is the logo of the Council of Europe present on all communication materials ?	1	
	Is the CoE logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	1	
	Are the logos (Cultural Route + CoE) provided for all the members of the Route?	1	

	Does the Council of Europe logo appears on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?	1	
	SCORE	80	0