



Evaluation Cycle 2017-2018 Council of Europe Cultural Routes

Réseau Art Nouveau Network

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



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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 present evaluation report is about the Réseau Art Nouveau Network, certified as a "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" in 2014.

The analysis of the Route - and its following evaluation - are required in order to check, three years after the certification, the compliance of the Route with the requirements of the Regulation pursuant to the Resolution CM/Res(2010)52 of the Council of Europe, related to the granting of the label. Therefore, the evaluation has been conducted following these requirements item-by-item (Chapter 3 of the report), arguing on the strengths and weaknesses of the project for each criterion, while adding, where necessary, specific recommendations or comments. Further recommendations - which did not find a relevant place in the main body of the evaluation - are reported in Chapter 4 of the report.

The first requirement of the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 on articulating the Cultural Routes projects around a theme matching a series of precise criteria, related to priority fields of action for the institution, does not seem sufficiently refined, in the sense that a portmanteau word built on a movement used as a keyword, such as Art Nouveau in this project, is not in itself sufficient to establish an evidence. Yet the individual measures introduced by the Network through its annual projects led us to acknowledge their compliance for themes, with some recommendations to be taken into consideration (see Chapter 3.1 and 4. of the report). In accordance with the certification, the label "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" as well as the logotype of the Council of Europe must appear on any communication medium (criterion IV.2 of the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 and Visibility guide, June 2016). On this issue, too, the Network has to work towards full compliance as soon as possible, even though it has to be acknowledged that the work is already partly underway.

As a whole, the Route fulfils the main objectives of the Council of Europe; the quality of its actions is ensured.

Summary of the conclusions

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

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

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

2. Introduction

From the house of William Morris, built with own means, to the architectures of Louis Sullivan or Frank Lloyd Wright on another continent, from the strict straight line imperceptibly softened by a woman, Margaret MacDonald Mackintosh, to Gaudi's Catalan heaven and hell, from Victor Horta to Otto Wagner through Chicago, with a Japanese detour, from the Sea of the Fleurs du Mal to eternal feminine and to synesthesia, and many more... An entire *fin-de-siècle* shares and competes for its contradictions, its upheavals, its decline, but also its need for fresh air, for changes, for modernity. Paradoxically - or not -, all of this is gathered under one name, composed of "new", "young", "modern", "free". Indeed, for over a quarter of century, the background of this whole movement was only made of variations on this theme: cultural, social, philosophical and, last but not least, political. This background scene will eventually be brutally torn apart by the first war - worldwide, that one too.

Which European history can thus be told nowadays through the Art Nouveau movement, which variation of these widely diversified works for the story to contribute to the interpretation of contemporary Europe's diversity? Which theme illustrating the European values and identity should be brought forward through these creative discourses, so that their impact on today's society would be able to trigger the development of innovative and sustainable projects and initiatives?

This is the challenge that the Réseau Art Nouveau Network is trying to take up since its decision to be part of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. However, for the RANN, taking up this challenge means accepting to move from an initial aim of "scientific project" (since the Network's creation in 1999) to an approach of European Cultural Cooperation, as specified in the Conventions, Charters, Resolutions and Recommendations of the Council of Europe.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1 Cultural Route Theme

According to the members of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network, the theme of the Route "is self-evident", and is called Art nouveau. They can be trusted. However, during the visit to Brussels last December to meet the Network's secretariat and the members of the Executive Board, I allowed myself to refer to the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, according to which self-evidences are rules. And to recall that these rules, for any certified Route, are the same - otherwise there is no Route.

Refining a theme can be, in most cases, a long-term yet rewarding effort: indeed, it is only after a fully-fledged process of in-depth reflection, carried out with the help of the expertise and knowledge of various researchers from different domains and, if possible, from different cultural areas, that a common argumentation can come forth and be accepted by all of the partners. And it is only from that moment on that working on the actions and projects of the Route can begin to materialise and to take on their full meaning.

This reflection is proved necessary for bringing nuances to a strong, unanimously accepted theme: indeed, its absence makes the Network's long-term strategy consist only of individual, occasional actions. In spite of a clear attempt of organisation and a remarkable presentation, these actions remain limited to subjects which are also chosen without criteria grids as a background, and especially without real collective work from an active Network towards a defined objective, narrating a story according to a common thread. This does not mean that the actions in question do not respond, as such and independently of each other, to certain eligibility criteria, but the absence of a unitary vision and of cooperation - other than purely logistic - between the partners is reflected in their absence of synergy. And absence of synergy means non-existence of Network reflection.

Recommendation: The Network should form an operational Scientific Council as soon as possible, composed by members from several countries of the Partial Agreement and other partner countries of the Route, by prominent personalities coming from complementary areas of research, from the academic sphere, the arts sector, and even law professionals, who might be prone to offer a framework for reflection, based on research relating to the general theme of the Route.

3.2 Fields of Action

3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development;

European themes bringing together dispersed knowledge about Art Nouveau have been chosen for a large number of seminars or workshops gathering European experts:

- *Consistency of inner and outer spaces in European Art Nouveau architecture*, Riga, 5 September 2014
- *Final conference on the "Art Nouveau & Ecology" project* (2010 - 2015, supported by the European Commission Culture programme 2007-2013), 20 March 2015, Ljubljana
- *The Nature of Art Nouveau*, Travelling exhibition, 2013-2015 (see p. 72 RANN) and the catalogue of the exhibition: *A strange world, Metamorphosis and Hybridation in Art Nouveau and Symbolism*
- International seminar: *From Research to Restoration - Art Nouveau Heritage*, Subotica, 11 September 2015
- International seminar: *The Conservation of Art Nouveau Interiors - Glasgow, Scotland & Europe*, Glasgow, 22 April 2016
- Internal seminar: *Art Nouveau Interiors: a First Overview - Glasgow, Scotland & Europe*, Glasgow, 21 April 2016
- International Conference and Master class: *Henri Sauvage, From Art Nouveau to Art Deco: restoration projects*, Brussels, 25 March 2017
- International Conference on *Restoration/Reconstruction*, Brussels, March 2018 - to be confirmed.

A list of 8 Universities and research centres, involved in research pertaining to the Route, is provided in the Evaluation form; however, at present, the Network works with them only on an occasional basis, while waiting for the planned amendment to the statute which will allow for the integration of academic members, with low membership fees.

On the RANN website ([www. artnouveau-net.eu](http://www.artnouveau-net.eu)), a section provides an index with the documentation centres as well as the doctorate (PhD) researches concerned with Art Nouveau.

Recommendation: carrying out research and interdisciplinary analysis, both theoretical and practical.

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage;

The answer of the Art Nouveau Route to this criterion is not the Network's strongest point, even though some occasional projects and actions have been realised since the certification.

Concerning the enhancement of rural or industrial areas, while it is true that it might be more evident for the Catalan partner to work on the rural area where Gaudi set its projects of countryside villas, a common work with several members of the Network would be highly desirable.

During our working visit to the RANN headquarters, the question of raising awareness among political leaders has been suggested - informing the decision-makers and the local stakeholders about heritage issues and its protection requirements can be associated with a safe future, not only for cultural heritage, but also for a European future. Actually, we provided nothing more than a reminder of the Regulation pursuant to the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans;

The potentially strongest (if not, at least remarkable) point of the work carried out by this Route is represented by encounters and cultural exchanges for young audiences. Organised on a more or less regular basis by nearly all partners of the Network, these activities can take the form of commented tours, Art Nouveau workshops, origami creation, decorated objects, mock-ups for children or painting. The Horta Museum seems to be leading these initiatives, dedicating a specific place as well as qualified staff to the youth. These enriching experiences have been exported to Havana on the occasion of a Belgian week in Cuba, organised by the Network.

Further initiatives designed for the youth have been implemented in the framework of the **project "Art Nouveau & Ecology"**:

- An educational booklet complementary to the exhibition "The Nature of Art Nouveau", developing a better understanding of the exhibition - 2013;
- An educational booklet in the form of a herbarium "Art nouveau Herbarium", allowing them to learn how to recognise the flowers and plants that inspired Art nouveau artists all over Europe and their importance, awakening them to sustainable behaviours and to botany - 2015;
- New online activities introducing Art nouveau in a playful manner, while bringing awareness to the current environmental issues - 2015

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice;

As mentioned earlier, one of the Network's strong points is represented by a first exposure for young Europeans to plastic arts, visual arts, Art Nouveau crafts and, even with modest skills, applying innovative techniques to cultural heritage. From what we have seen in Brussels, this initiative does not leave the youth indifferent.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

As mentioned in the Evaluation form, for most of the Network's members, a tourist structure allows them to offer guided tours and to sell their own tourism products.

The Network does not mention in his statutes the development of cultural or sustainable tourism as an objective. The old opposition between tourism and culture can be noticed in their discourse, as well as an approach to the topic rather conceived by way of scientific studies.

"The Réseau Art Nouveau Network, which is a non-profit-making association, aims at establishing active co-operation and an exchange of experiences among the many European participants actively involved in the study, protection, extensive promotion and dissemination of the European and international "Art Nouveau" heritage. It also aims to stimulate the interest of the public and authorities responsible for preservation with regard to this heritage, certain aspects of which remain unrecognized or at risk."

However, on the website of the RANN, there is a "tourism" tab for each concerned city. Moreover, every partner city of the Network celebrates the Art Nouveau World Day on June 10th, with guided tours of their heritage.

As mentioned several times, a division of tasks within the Network is advised, based on the skills and penchant of every member, prone to stimulate interesting synergies.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

The Réseau Art Nouveau Network was created in 1999 following an idea mooted by the Brussels Region Department of Historic Sites and Monuments, in order to gather in a first European Network several partners coming from several countries and concerned with the study, preservation and enhancing of Art Nouveau heritage. In 2007, it became a non-profit-

making Association under Belgian law and membership has been opened to the full members (cities, regions, institutions) as well as to the individual support members (since 2013). A project is under way so as to open the Network to Universities and research centres, with reduced membership fees. At present, the RANN gathers 22 members from 16 countries ([Austria](#) [Belgium](#) [Cuba](#) [Spain](#) [France](#) [Germany](#) [Hungary](#) [Italy](#) [Latvia](#) [Norway](#) [Portugal](#) [Romania](#) [United-Kingdom](#) [Serbia](#) [Slovenia](#) [Switzerland](#)). In several of these countries, at least two Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe - if not many more - are to be found.

Recommendation: as much as possible, create synergies between the different Cultural Routes expanding on a common area.

The Network advocates a scientific approach for Art Nouveau heritage; in addition to several European funding for their projects, it was awarded, in 2014, with special mention from the jury as part of the Europa Nostra Awards / European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage [Conservation category, Horta Museum (home and atelier of the architect), duration of the project from 1989 to 2013, cf. : http://www.europeanheritageawards-archive.findbuch.net/php/main.php?ar_id=3748&be_kurz=17#43415445474f52592031x1201401].

Also in 2014, the Network has been certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe". The 2014 Evaluation report of the application file included a recommendation (accomplished since then) of partnership, of synergy with an organisation created in Barcelona in 2000 and gathering many members of the RANN, as well as other partners from Eastern Europe (including Moscow) and from the American continent (Argentina with several cities, Mexico, Puerto Rico) or even the African continent (Namibia). The name of this association may lead to confusion if the role of each one of the partners is not well defined; furthermore, the address of their website (Art Nouveau European Route, www.artnouveau.eu) could also be mistaken for the website of the RANN.

Recommendation: given that the association created in Barcelona seems more tourism-oriented, a field of action that does not represent a priority for the research- and scientific-oriented RANN, a fair division of tasks within the Network could benefit to all members.

Recommendation: without necessarily wanting expansion at all costs, we cannot but ask ourselves why some relevant institutions in cities like Paris, Berlin, not to name New York and Chicago, are not part of the Network yet...

In terms of financial viability, the Network was able to benefit from European funding until 2015, extended to 2016, a beneficial year, too.

The Art Nouveau & Ecology project, within the framework of the European Union Culture programme 2007 – 2013, has been financed by an amount of 4.000.000 € over 5 years (2010-2015) and enabled the implementation of all planned activities.

On the other hand, in 2017, the only grant came from the Brussels-Capital Region by way of the provision of staff resource, namely Mrs A.L. Alleaume, the only person in charge of the secretariat (and of the coordination) of the Network, amounting to 34.000 €. The Horta Museum provides one of the premises of the secretariat and some free entries to the Museum on the occasion of encounters and meetings, while the subscription fees for the members amount to a total of 40.750 €. Some meeting rooms are also made available by the Brussels-Capital Region, such as the room where the Executive Board of Monday 18 December 2017 took place, which I was able to attend.

From the end of 2017, a part-time employee (2 days a week) will be hired by the Network, which should at least improve the important lack of human resources at the secretariat of the Route.

Also from 2017, a new two-year project suggested by a partnership from several East European members of the Network (Romania - project holder, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia) will benefit from Interreg funding (Art Nouveau Danube, 1.650.000 €). The Network itself is only an associate partner, without any financial implications, but makes available the skills of its members to the project, ex gratia.

The Network's strategy for the next three years depends directly on European funding... or on their absence. In January 2018, a new project has been submitted (INSIDE ART NOUVEAU - Research project, enhancement of Art nouveau interiors and development of skills for students and professionals, 2018-2022, 4.000.000 €) - we are waiting for the results.

3.4 Communication tools

Concerning the communication tools, the Route created a logo used by most members of the Network at the moment, even though the coordination with the Council of Europe logotype and with the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" label is not systematically present on their tools.

The Network has created a website entirely dedicated to the itinerary, www.artnouveau-net.eu, all the information are translated at least in English and in French and, in most cases, a translation can be found in the 11 languages of the partnership.

The only downside is the confusion that can be made with the website of a member of the Network, namely the website of the ANER: www.artnouveau.eu

Regarding the social networks:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ReseauArtNouveauNetwork/> (5 142 users like the page)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/24406319/>

Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.fr/artnouveaunet> (beautiful pictures of Art Nouveau heritage of the partner cities – in this case, only with the Network's logo...)

Leaflets, brochures and posters of the events organised by the RANN are freely available in the dedicated space at the RANN.

The "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" label as well as the Council of Europe logotype **must appear on any communication medium**, including press releases (cf. CM/Res(2013)67, IV.2), and this, as soon as possible.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

As a whole, the Route elaborated by the Réseau Art Nouveau Network is a beautiful project which, apart from the fact that it was able, until now, to benefit from substantial European funding, was recognised by important awards: mention from the Europa Nostra Award/ European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, certification by the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, support from the Brussels-Capital Region, which became member of the Network.

Still broadly speaking, we can confirm that the actions carried out within the framework of the Route comply with the Regulation pursuant to the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, and the certification may, consequently, be maintained, even though improvements, further additions and important reflection are still necessary.

- The Network should form an operational Scientific Council as soon as possible, composed by members from several countries of the Partial Agreement and other partner countries of the Route, by prominent personalities coming from complementary areas of research, from the academic sphere, the arts sector, and even law professionals, who might be prone to offer a framework for reflection, based on research relating to the general theme of the Route.

- As the Network is, at present, expanding over 16 countries, it would be advisable and enriching to create synergies between the Cultural Routes situated on the same area.

- Barcelona's ANER association seems more tourism-oriented, a field of action that does not represent a priority for the research and scientific-oriented RANN: a fair division of tasks within the Network could benefit to all members. Moreover, working on rural areas and less widely known heritage could also be considered, starting by the Catalan modernism.

- The "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" label as well as the Council of Europe logotype must appear on any communication medium, including press releases (cf. CM/Res(2013)67, IV.2), and this, as soon as possible.

- Raise awareness among the decision-makers and the local stakeholders about heritage issues and its protection requirements by considering specific training designed for them: indeed, informed and sensitized decision-makers can ensure a future, not only for cultural heritage, but also a European future.

Last but not least, the Regulation pursuant to the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 should be well-known and implemented by all members of the Network, for all actions carried out within the framework of the Route. In case of doubt about certain aspects of the criteria, the European Institute of Cultural Routes is there to provide any assistance needed, one only has to ask clear questions and to ask for help.

5. List of references

- Regular 3-year evaluation form
- Self-Assessment Grid
- Up-to-date legal Statutes of the RANN Association
- Up-to-date list of members
- Minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary General Assemblies of the RANN Association
- Budget documents of the RANN Association
- Three-year activity plan of the RANN Association
- Evaluation report 2012-2013 Cycle
- Websites of the RANN and its partners

6. Field visit programme

This section has to include the field visit programme, a list of the visited places and a list of the persons met/interviewed by the expert (name, function within the Network).

The field visit has taken place from December 16th to 20th, 2017, in Brussels, where the Réseau Art Nouveau Network's headquarters and secretariat are situated. The dates have been chosen in accordance with the suggestion of Mrs Anne-Liese Alleaume, Network Coordinator, in order to meet the largest number of representatives of the partners of the member countries. As a matter of fact, the Network's last Executive Board was scheduled on 18.12.2017.

16. 12. 2017

- arrival in Brussels, from Bucharest

17. 12. 2017

- Day dedicated to the identification of the Network's sites
- Preparation of the meeting with the RANN Board.

18. 12. 2017

- Executive Board of the RANN; meeting with the members of the Board, Question and Answer session about the Evaluation form and about the Network's short- and medium-term strategy. Further discussions concerned the criteria provided for in the Regulation pursuant to the Resolution CM/Res (2013)67, as well as the short- and medium-term financial viability.

19. 12. 2017

- Morning dedicated to the encounter with one of the team members collaborating with the Network, namely for the conception of activities for the young audiences, at the Horta Museum;

- Afternoon working with Mrs Anne-Liese Alleaume in the headquarters of the association on additional information that has to be provided for the evaluation of the Route (operating budget, three-year forecast budget plan, European funding, three-year strategy and activity plan).

Places visited:

1. Office of the Secretary of State Cécile Jodogne (Brussels-Capital Region)
Botanic Building – 14th floor
Boulevard Saint-Lazare 10, 1210 Brussels

2. Horta Museum, (member of the Network)
Rue Américaine 23 • 1060 Brussels

3. Ministry for the Brussels-Capital Region,
Administration of Housing and Regional Planning,
Monument and Sites Directorate, C.C.N.,
Rue du Progrès 80 bte 1, 7th floor,
B-1035 Brussels.

List of the persons met/interviewed:

Théo Huguenin-Elie	<i>Chairman of the RANN</i>	
	La Chaux-de-Fonds	Switzerland
Tove Land	<i>Vice-chairman of the RANN</i>	
	Ålesund	Norway
Philippe Thiéry	<i>Secretary General of the RANN</i>	
	Brussels	Belgium
	(Brussels Regional Public Service, Brussels-Capital Region)	
Jean-Daniel Jeanneret	<i>Treasurer</i>	
	La Chaux-de-Fonds	Switzerland

Igor Bizjak	<i>Member of the RANN</i> Ljubljana	Slovenia
Anne-Lise Alleaume	<i>Secretary of the RANN</i> Brussels	Belgium
Caroline Styfhals	<i>Secretary of the RANN</i> Brussels	Belgium

Apart from the persons interviewed during the field visit, we have had long discussions with the representatives of the Romanian partner of the Route, namely with Mrs Ramona Novicov, art critic and professor at the University of Oradea, former coordinator of the Romanian Network.

7. Checklist

Excel Document sent separately, within the same message than the Evaluation report.