



# Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Booklet for Cultural Routes

2023

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# Overview



## Council of Europe

■ The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all the members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

## Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

■ The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was launched in 1987 to demonstrate, via journeys through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries in Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage. The programme acts as a channel for intercultural dialogue and promotes better knowledge and understanding of European cultural identity, while preserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage as a source of cultural, social and local development.

## The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)

■ In 2010, the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) of the Council of Europe was established in order to strengthen the programme politically and financially. The EPA, based on criteria established by the Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res (2013) 67, awards the certification "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" during the meetings of its Governing Board. Each year in autumn, during an Annual Advisory Forum, EPA member states and Cultural Routes, as well as international organisations, non-governmental organisations and international experts meet to discuss current issues and trends and to explore best practices.

## European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)

■ The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), located in Luxembourg, is the technical agency of the EPA and Cultural Routes programme. Set up in 1998 under an agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Institute 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.

## Key highlights

- 48 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- Over 60 countries crisscrossed by Cultural Routes
- 3000+ network members, 1500+ local authorities
- 90% are in the rural areas
- 12% of local employment is linked to tourism
- 1987: the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes became the first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe
- 2019: Carlos V European Award

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
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# Benefit of being a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe



## Visibility and communication

Being a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe brings more visibility, both nationally and internationally, through the website of the Cultural Routes programme and thanks to a networking effect, which makes it easier for visitors to find relevant information on the routes and their European sites. The routes are represented at major international conferences and fairs, and network members are included in all promotional and communication materials.



## Capacity building

The programme provides a unique opportunity for Cultural Routes managers and members, operators of heritage sites, researchers, creative entrepreneurs, tourist operators and public authorities to network with partners across the continent, share good practices, and learn from global trends and developments. It also offers access to world-class knowledge on cultural heritage and tourism management tools and methods, through tailor-made training organised by the Cultural Routes programme on a yearly basis.



## Advocacy

Cultural Routes network operators enjoy greater access to regional and local policy makers and thus are able to better convey to institutional stakeholders the need for sustainable protection and promotion of our shared European heritage. Further support comes from closer interaction with national ministries of culture and tourism, and members of the EPA attending programme events, such as the Annual Advisory Forum, Governing Board meetings and the Training Academy.



## Networking

Certification gives access to a wide range of international partners and experts in heritage management, research, cultural tourism development and promotion. The programme offers opportunities to network between routes, providing better access to national authorities, European stakeholders, international organisations and NGOs.



## Funding opportunities

When heritage sites and related projects apply for funding, certification as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certification gives a guarantee of quality. In the last five years, certified Cultural Routes have obtained €17 million in European funds, redistributed among Cultural Routes partners at the local and regional level.



## Sustainability

Cultural Routes follow the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and thus contribute to improving local development, creating better opportunities for education and learning, taking action to fight climate change, promoting responsible production and consumption, and building more sustainable communities.



### Sustainable cultural tourism

Cultural Routes diversify the tourism offer by proposing new destinations with wider geographical reach. They implement new tourist products and services, create additional visibility for cultural heritage sites away from the most visited tourist centres, and prolong the tourist season. Tourism is the third largest economic activity in Europe; tourism goods and services account for 10% of Europe's gross domestic product, while 12% of local employment is linked to tourism services. Cultural Routes are ideal tools for the development of sustainable cultural tourism.



### Certification and quality assurance

The certification "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" is a quality label, recognised across Europe by visitors, tourism operators and public authorities alike. The certification and rigorous evaluation process lead to greater recognition and opportunity to develop membership, secure project funding and increase visitor numbers throughout network member countries.



### Community involvement

Cultural Routes highlight less-known destinations, while promoting local management of sites and activities ensuring access for all to cultural heritage. Cultural Routes operators work with local musicians, artists, writers, filmmakers, designers, architects, craftsmen, festival organisers and many other creative professionals, but also with schools and local businesses, thus creating synergies between different players in the local cultural scene. As 90% of the Cultural Routes cross rural areas, this brings additional cultural, social and economic opportunities to lesser-known destinations.



### Access to Council of Europe events and trainings

Representatives of Cultural Routes regularly attend a variety of events and training courses; these include the Annual Advisory Forum, which brings together representatives of Council of Europe member states, Cultural Routes operators, candidate networks and local, regional, national and international stakeholders to discuss trends and challenges, and the Annual Training Academy, which provides training to Cultural Routes managers and operators on specific current issues in the field of cultural heritage management and tourism promotion.



### Network development

Cultural Routes operators support the development of national, regional and local cultural heritage, and tourism clusters around the certified Cultural Routes. They also help to expand the existing networks by reaching potential sites and involving additional stakeholders across Europe.



### Scientific research

To obtain certification, Cultural Routes are required to establish a scientific committee active in academic research on the route's topic, thus giving scientific validity to its network membership and to its programme of activities. The Cultural Routes programme works in close collaboration with a network of universities providing support to the programme through research, expertise and advice.

# How to become a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

## Step 1: defining a theme

The theme must represent European values and be common to at least three countries in Europe. It must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe.

## Step 2: identifying heritage elements

In co-ordination with their scientific committee, project initiators should identify the elements of tangible and intangible heritage linked with the route's theme and define a common narrative for the sites recognised as part of the route.

## Step 3: creating a European network with legal status

A European network with legal status, bringing together the sites and the stakeholders, needs to be established, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations, with members in at least three Council of Europe member states. Each network has to work in a democratic and participatory way with respect to its management, research and programme of activities. The route's initiators must ensure that the association responsible for managing the cultural route is organisationally and financially viable.

## Step 4: co-ordinating common actions

The route has to encourage cultural co-operation and stimulate scientific and social debate around its theme. The Cultural Routes must be active in five priority fields of action, including (1) co-operation in research and development; (2) enhancement of memory, history and European heritage; (3) cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; (4) contemporary cultural and artistic practice; and (5) cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

## Step 5: creating common visibility

To ensure visibility across Europe, each route is required to create a visibility charter with a common logo designed for the route. Following certification, both the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" logo and the Cultural Route's

own logo designed for the route must appear on all of its signs and communication materials.

## Key steps after being awarded certification:

**Reporting.** Certified Routes must submit

- an annual programme of activities and an annual report to the EPA.

**Evaluation.** Every three years, certified

- Cultural Routes are required to submit a comprehensive report to enable the Governing Board of the EPA to evaluate the route's activities in order to ascertain whether it continues to satisfy the certification criteria.

**Communication.** The route's visual identity

- and the certification logo should be used consistently by all members and for all network activities.

**Participation.** Representatives of the

- Cultural Routes are expected to actively participate in events and training courses organised within the Cultural Routes programme, including the Annual Advisory Forum and the Training Academy.

**Information.** The certified routes are

- expected to share all information relevant to the implementation of activities and development of the routes, as well as to promote the Cultural Routes to the wider public.

***Cultural Route:** a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at 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 significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.*

***Cultural Route operator:** an organisation or a grouping of organisations legally registered in one or several of the Council of Europe member States, or a public institution, which carries the legal, financial and moral responsibility for the management and functioning of a cultural route and represents the route vis-à-vis the Council of Europe.*



# Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

## Routes on history and civilisations

The Hansa (1991)  
Viking Route (1993)  
Routes of El legado andalusí (1997)  
Phoenicians' Route (2003)  
VIA REGIA (2005)  
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (2010)  
European Route of Megalithic Culture (2013)  
Via Habsburg (2014)  
Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015)  
European Routes of Emperor Charles V (2015)  
Destination Napoleon (2015)  
Via Charlemagne (2018)  
Iron Curtain Trail (2019)  
Liberation Route Europe (2019)  
Aeneas Route (2021)  
Iron Age Danube Route (2021)

## Routes on arts and architecture

European Mozart Ways (2004)  
TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage (2007)  
European Cemeteries Route (2010)  
European Route of Historical Thermal Towns (2010)  
ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory (2014)  
Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014)  
In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson (2015)  
Fortified Towns of the Grande Region (2016)  
Impressionisms Routes (2018)  
European Route of Industrial Heritage (2019)  
Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades (2019)  
European Route of Historic Gardens (2020)  
Alvar Aalto Route - 20th Century Architecture and Design (2021)  
European Route d'Artagnan (2021)  
European Fairy Tale Route (2022)  
Women Writers Route (2022)

## Routes on religious heritage

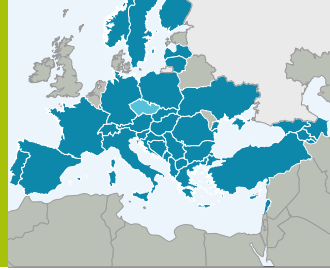
Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes (1987)  
Via Francigena (1994)  
European Route of Jewish Heritage (2004)  
Saint Martin of Tours Route (2005)  
Cluniac Sites in Europe (2005)  
European Route of Cistercian Abbeys (2010)  
Route of Saint Olav Ways (2010)  
Huguenot and Waldensian Trail (2013)  
Routes of Reformation (2019)  
Via Romea Germanica (2020)  
Cyril and Methodius Route (2021)

## Routes on landscape and handicrafts

Pyrenean Iron Route (2003)  
Routes of the Olive Tree (2005)  
Iter Vitis Route (2009)  
European Route of Ceramics (2012)  
Historic Cafés Route (2022)



# Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Member States




 Andorra (2012)

 Albania (2022)

 Armenia (2015)

 Austria (2011)

 Azerbaijan (2011)

 Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016)

 Bulgaria (2011)

 Croatia (2016)

 Cyprus (2011)

 Finland (2018)


 France (2011)

 Georgia (2016)

 Germany (2013)

 Greece (2011)


 Holy See (2018)

 Hungary (2013)

 Italy (2011)

 Latvia (2019)

 Lebanon (2022)

 Lithuania (2012)


 Luxembourg (2011)


 Monaco (2013)

 Montenegro (2011)

 Norway (2011)

 Poland (2017)


 Portugal (2011)

 Republic of North Macedonia (2022)

 Romania (2013)

 San Marino (2017)

 Serbia (2012)

 Slovak Republic (2014)

 Slovenia (2011)

 Spain (2011)

 Sweden (2020)

 Switzerland (2013)

 Türkiye (2018)

 Ukraine (2021)

## International Organisations

### Observers with the EPA:

European Union - European External Action Service (EEAS)  
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)  
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)  
United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

### Participative Status with the EPA:

Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)  
Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI)  
International Federation of Equestrian Tourism (FITE)

## International NGOs

### Participative Status with the EPA:

European Ramblers' Association (ERA)  
European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG)

### **Council of Europe**

Directorate General of Democracy  
F-67075 Strasbourg

### **Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes – Council of Europe**

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**[www.coe.int/routes](http://www.coe.int/routes)**

With the Support of



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG  
Ministère de la Culture

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