



Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe

COUNTRY MAPPING DOCUMENT GEORGIA



March 2019

Commissioned by
the Enlarged Partial Agreement
on Cultural Routes
of the Council of Europe
(EPA)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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COUNTRY MAPPING DOCUMENT GEORGIA

Prepared by Dr Edith M Szivas
March 2019

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PREAMBLE	13
The Cultural Routes Programme and The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)	13
Cultural Routes National Country Mapping for Georgia	14
GEORGIA AND THE ENLARGED PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (EPA)	15
KEY RELEVANT CULTURAL AND TOURISM POLICIES IN GEORGIA	16
Key Facts	16
Georgian Culture Strategy 2025	17
Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025	17
SWOT Analysis of Cultural and Tourism Policies and Practices in Georgia	18
INVENTORY OF CURRENT CULTURAL ROUTES RELATED ACTIVITIES IN GEORGIA	20
CURRENT CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (EPA) IN GEORGIA	23
Routes and Responsible Organizations	23
Sites Included	23
Cartographic Data Mapping of Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia	24
Inventory and Analysis of Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia	26
Potential Extension of Existing Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)	31
Potential Additional Routes with Relevance to Georgia	32
Review of Financing Instruments Available Nationally for The Cultural Routes	32
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	34
CONCLUSION	35
APPENDICES	36
People and organizations consulted during the mission	36
Mission Agenda	38
List of References	39



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Executive Summary

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela. **The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are an invitation to travel and to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage.** They put into practice the values of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual exchanges across borders.

Currently over 30 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. They cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to the major figures of European art, music and literature. The certification “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” is a guarantee of excellence. The **networks implement innovative activities and projects** pertaining to **five main priority fields** of action: (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. Through its **programme**, the Council of Europe **offers a model for transnational cultural and tourism management** and allows **synergies** between national, regional and local authorities and a wide range of associations and socio-economic actors.

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) was established in 2010. It ensures the **implementation** of the Cultural Routes programme and seeks to **reinforce the potential** of Cultural Routes for cultural cooperation, sustainable territorial development and social cohesion with a particular **focus on themes** of symbolic importance for European unity, history, culture and values and the discovery of less well-known destinations.

The EPA helps to strengthen the **democratic dimension of cultural exchange and tourism** through (1) the involvement of grassroots networks and associations, (2) local and regional authorities, (3) universities and (4) professional organizations. It contributes to the **preservation of a diverse heritage through theme-based and alternative tourist itineraries and cultural projects.**

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) follows the Council of Europe’s policy guidelines, decides the programme strategy and awards “Council of Europe Cultural Route” certification. The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) is open to member and non-member States of the Council of Europe aiming at providing political support for national, regional and local initiatives to promote culture and tourism. Currently 32 States are members.

This Project

Following a decision by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) at its 2018 meeting, the Cultural Routes Programme has commissioned a **“Cultural Routes National Country Mapping for Georgia”**. This Report is the outcome of this initiative.

Georgia as a member of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)

In 2016 Georgia became 27th Member State of the Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes. Subsequently, on **27 February 2018** the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was **officially launched** in Georgia. In order to coordinate cultural routes related activities in Georgia and extend its inclusion in the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, a new division - **Cultural Routes Unit was established at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia in August 2018.**

Significantly, in 2021 Georgia will **host the Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.**

Georgia is currently **member of four routes** of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe:

- ▶ **Iter Vitis**, since 2009; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- ▶ **European Route of Jewish Heritage**, since 2004; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom

- ▶ **European Route of Historic Thermal Towns**, since 2010; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom

- ▶ **Prehistoric Rock Art Trails**, since 2010; Georgia joined in 2018; Members: Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Cultural relations between the Georgian cultural sector and its counterparts in the EU have **intensified** after the **EU Association Agreement in 2014**. Georgia is **member** of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) of the Council of Europe. Georgia has **ratified Council of Europe Conventions** and the **2005 UNESCO Convention** on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2008. In 2015 **Georgia joined the Creative Europe Programme**; several cultural projects and researches have been supported by Council of Europe, EU ENP and Eastern Partnership Culture Programmes. Georgia currently has **3 UNESCO cultural World Heritage sites**: (1) Gelati Monastery, (2) Historical Monuments of Mtskheta and (3) Upper Svaneti and a further **15 sites are on the UNESCO Tentative List.**

In 2015 Georgia prepared the **Georgian Culture Strategy 2025**. The preparation of the strategy followed a highly consultative, bottom-up approach and addressed the needs highlighted by the representatives of the sector in question. The document determines State’s vision, strategic goals and corresponding objectives committed to meet the challenges in the culture and creative sector in the long-run perspective and fully responds to the guiding principles of the Convention (**Source: UNESCO**).

Furthermore, **the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025** is a 10-year vision and strategic plan for increasing the value and importance of tourism for the benefit of the country’s economy and ultimately its citizens. It contributes to the achievement of the World Bank Group twin goals in Georgia.

The plan was formulated through a partnership between the government and the private sector with a view to maximizing tourist satisfaction, diversifying market and products, increasing the size and profitability of the industry in a sustainable way, and maximizing opportunities for job creation.

The Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia is in the process of developing and launching a **mobile app for the cultural routes**. The free mobile app will make the certified routes available for tourists. It is designed to be a great traveling companion for those wishing to plan their visit to cultural sites included in the routes. The features were created specifically for making the app flexible, easy to use and informative.

Furthermore, a **Grant Competition titled “Promotion of the Development of Cultural Routes”** was announced by the Ministry. The budget of the competition is 100 000 Gel. The competition aims to raise public awareness about the cultural routes, foster research and internationalise practices. In total 21 applications were received during the selection process of the grant competition. The Ministry aims to fund 4-5 projects that will demonstrate capability of developing the cultural routes’ environment through research, education and capacity building programmes.

The Grand Launching Event will take place early May 2019, where the Cultural Routes Programme will be reintroduced, the new initiatives will be presented, the mobile application will be made available and the results of the grant competition will be announced. High profile government officials, international delegations, public and private sector, cultural heritage institutions and NGOs will be attending the event. A special PR campaign will promote the event and the cultural routes during and after the Grand Launching Event.

Routes and Responsible Organizations

Route	Responsible Organization
Iter Vitis	Georgian Wine Tourism Association
Jewish Heritage	Jewish House
Thermal Towns	Sairme and Tskaltubo Municipalities
Prehistoric Rock Art	National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia – Site of Trialeti

Sites Included

Route	Sites Included
Iter Vitis	Kbilashvili Workshop, Ikalto Monastery, Shalauri Cellar, Cheese Farm, Winery Orgo, Winery Shumi, Tsinandali, Winery Schuchmann
The European Route of Jewish Heritage	30 sites identified by Jewish House
European Route of Historic Thermal Towns	Sairme and Tskaltubo
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails	Trialeti site

General Assessment of Current Routes

These **cultural routes very closely fit Georgia’s history and the vision of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)**. Georgia cultural assets and their historic connection offers an excellent base for membership in these four routes.

The routes can offer Georgia a very important tourism product which can help with the stated objective of the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 of (a) increasing tourists’ spending and (b) increasing the tourists’ length of stay. Importantly, these four cultural routes are also relevant to the domestic visitor market and could and should be developed to cater for domestic visitors as well.

Georgia’s membership in these routes offers opportunity for: (1) co-operation in research and development, (2) continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage in Georgia, (3) opportunity to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans, (4) inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices for site development, (5) promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development, (6) wide stakeholder cooperation, (7) local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs.

In order to maximise the benefits from the route for Georgia, there is a need for:

- appropriate interpretation and story-telling
- appropriate marketing and branding
- attention to sustainable tourism standards
- capacity building
- incorporation of new technologies
- effective signage
- identification of funding sources
- intensified international cooperation on research and development
- developing the routes as a ‘visitor experience’ rather than just focusing on tourism products and itineraries.

Cartographic Data Mapping of Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia

Iter Vitis



European Route of Historic Thermal Towns



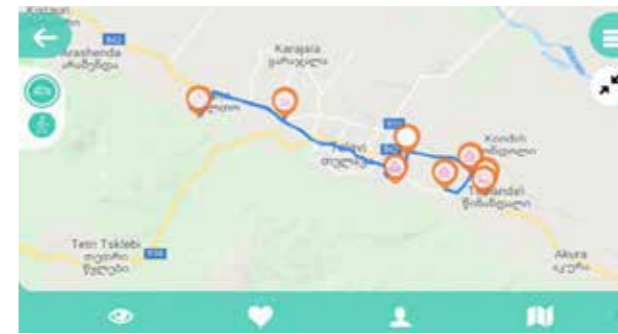
The European Route of Jewish Heritage



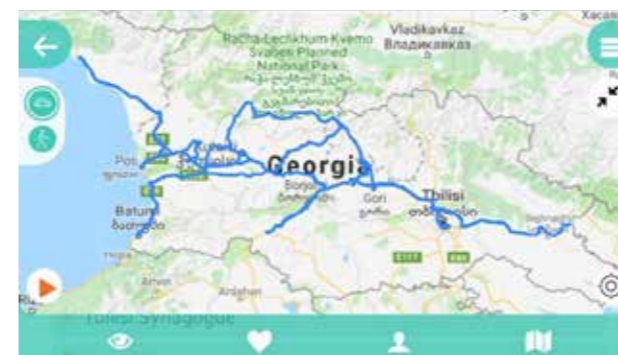
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails



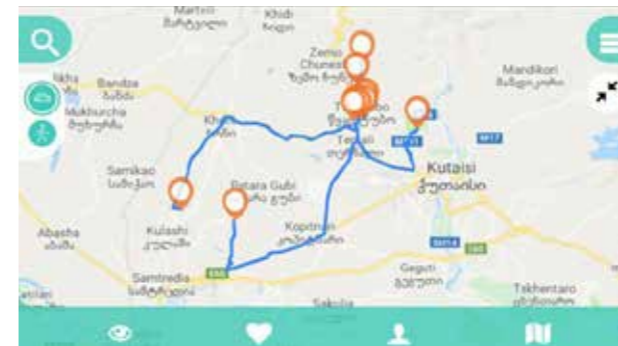
Iter Vitis in Georgia



The European Route of Jewish Heritage in Georgia



European Route of Historic Thermal Towns in Georgia



Prehistoric Rock Art Trails in Georgia



Possible Route Expansions

The significant number and the quality of relevant sites in Georgia provides excellent potential for expanding Georgia’s involvement by adding new places to the existing routes and also for joining new routes of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).

The proposed extensions would add significant value to the routes as they are illustrative of European memory, history and heritage. Furthermore, expansion would contribute to an important economic role by attracting more visitors both from within Europe and from third countries to the sites. And finally, the proposed extensions have relevance to Youth travel and would contribute to developing cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans.

More specifically

► Iter Vitis Route:

Significantly more representatives could be involved in the Iter Vitis Route in Georgia. Georgia has the oldest, 8 000 years of continuous wine-making tradition in the World. This ancient Georgian traditional Qvevri (clay vessel used for fermentation of wine) wine-making method was inscribed in 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

The expansion of the Iter Vitis route has significant potential as the number and quality of vine-ries using the traditional Qvevri method as well as modern wine-making techniques is very significant and it is steadily growing in Georgia. As mentioned earlier, the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA) lists some 200 wineries in its wine route. This route is well publicised in maps and other publications and the route is well sign-posted. There is clearly significant potential to develop the route and programme in Georgia to go beyond the currently promoted Kakheti tour and to potentially combine it with the existing wine route which was developed by the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA).

► European Route of Historical Thermal Towns:

At this stage only the Imereti Region with its two destinations (Sairme and Tskaltubo) is included in European Route of Historical Thermal Towns. At the same time, the capital of the country, Tbilisi with its historic bathhouses full of sulphur-rich water

and the historic resort town of Borjomi – a fine resort town famous for its mineral waters could also become members of this route. Including Tbilisi and Borjomi in the European Route of Historical Thermal Towns would add significant value to the route and it is, therefore, highly recommended.

► **European Route of Jewish Heritage:**

The representative of the route in Georgia – The Israeli House, has identified all the relevant sites in the country and therefore route expansion is not foreseen.

► **Prehistoric Rock Art Trails:**

Georgia currently only features one site, Trialeti in this route. There is good potential to expand this route as there are several further relevant sites in the country. However, it is recommended to fully develop and consolidate first this site before opening further sites in the route.

Potential Additional Routes with Relevance to Georgia

Regarding the certified routes of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA), Georgia has clear potential to join:

- ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory
- Réseau Art Nouveau Network

It is strongly recommended for Georgia to consider membership of these routes as these are relevant to its history, heritage and resources and participation would be in line with the *Georgia Culture Strategy 2025* and the *Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025*.

Other possible cultural routes:

- European Route of Industrial Heritage
- European Cheese Route

Funding

Adequate and sustained funding is crucial for the implementation of the programme, lack of funding would jeopardise programme implementation. Adequate funding is necessary for developing, restoring and managing sites related to the cultural routes and for capacity building. The Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia has its own annual budget that is one of the main financial instruments by the Government for supporting the cultural routes. The local Municipalities have their own budget and the financial support is available

for the routes crossing their region. In addition to this, The Municipal Development Fund that is coordinated by the Supervisory Board approved by the Government of Georgia and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure can be a major contributor in the development of the routes. In this regard, cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and the Fund has already begun. Furthermore, the Government of Georgia has elaborated several financial mechanisms, in particular tax credits to support on the one hand the flow of cultural goods and services and on the other hand preservation of cultural resources. The World Bank is already involved in several large-scale infrastructure and urban development projects which include the preservation and restoration of cultural and natural heritage. In addition, cooperation on specific cultural route related activities are possible. The World Bank could also play an important role in the rejuvenation of the thermal spa town of Borjomi. Further agencies such could also be relevant to the cultural routes such as for example SME development (USAID) and mountain tourism development (Austrian Development Agency).

Key Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations to the Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia

- Engage in transnational cooperation projects
- Engage in further capacity building activities for its own professionals
- Develop capacity building activities for cultural routes management organizations
- Become the leader in the promotion of incorporating sustainable practices into the cultural routes
- Inspire the cultural routes to include contemporary cultural and artistic practices in site development
- Inspire the cultural routes to engage in site development, heritage interpretation and seek to develop the broader tourism infrastructure
- Inspire the cultural routes to target themselves to the full spectrum of target audience such as:
 - domestic visitor
 - domestic overnight staying tourist
 - overseas visitor and tourist

In the case of the European Route of Jewish Heritage:

- consider the needs of both religious and non-religious visitors

- Promote attention to health and safety standards and practices for the cultural routes
- Inspire the cultural routes to create accessible sites along the cultural routes (for special needs visitors)
- Inspire the cultural routes to develop the sites in the spirit of the experience economy.

Recommendations for Cultural Routes Management Organizations

- Develop a marketing and branding strategies to promote the routes
- Develop appropriate signage
- Engage in capacity building for own staff and develop capacity building activities for the sites and service operators along the cultural routes
- Include contemporary cultural and artistic practices in site development
- Incorporate sustainable practices into the cultural routes
- Promote site development, heritage interpretation and seek to develop the broader tourism infrastructure
- Engage and research and development
- Seek participation in bidding for projects with the international partners in the cultural routes
- Engage in a wide variety of transnational cooperation projects
- Target the full spectrum of target audience such as:
 - domestic visitor
 - domestic overnight staying tourist
 - overseas tourist

In the case of the European Route of Jewish Heritage:

- consider the needs of both religious and non-religious visitors

- Pay attention to health and safety standards and practices along the cultural routes
- Create accessible sites along the cultural routes (for special needs visitors)
- Promote the development of 'visitor experiences' rather than think about single products.

Conclusions

This Cultural Routes National Country Mapping concludes that Georgia satisfies the criteria of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).

Given the significant efforts and achievements made in a relatively short timeframe, the high quality of the work of the Cultural Routes Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and that of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, together with the considerable efforts made by the cultural routes and the high relevance of the existing cultural routes to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA), it is recommended that Georgia is commended on its achievements and is supported in its future endeavours in developing its cultural routes programme and activities.



Preamble

The Cultural Routes Programme and The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987 with the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are an invitation to travel and to discover the rich and diverse heritage of Europe by bringing people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage. They put into practice the values of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual exchanges across borders.

Currently over 30 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe provide a wealth of leisure and educational activities for all citizens across Europe and beyond and are key resources for responsible tourism and sustainable development. They cover a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to the major figures of European art, music and literature. The certification "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" is a guarantee of excellence.

The **networks implement innovative activities and projects** pertaining to **five main priority fields** of action:

- co-operation in research and development
- enhancement of memory, history and European heritage
- cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans
- contemporary cultural and artistic practice
- cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

◀ Tbilisi

Through its **programme**, the Council of Europe **offers a model for transnational cultural and tourism management** and allows **synergies** between national, regional and local authorities and a wide range of associations and socio-economic actors.

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) was established in 2010. It ensures the **implementation** of the Cultural Routes programme and seeks to **reinforce the potential** of Cultural Routes for:

- cultural cooperation
- sustainable territorial development and social cohesion

with a particular **focus on themes** of symbolic importance for European unity, history, culture and values and the discovery of less well-known destinations.

The EPA helps to strengthen the **democratic dimension of cultural exchange and tourism** through:

- the involvement of grassroots networks and associations
- local and regional authorities
- universities and professional organisations

It contributes to the **preservation of a diverse heritage through theme-based and alternative tourist itineraries and cultural projects.**

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) follows the Council of Europe's policy guidelines, decides the programme strategy and awards "Council of Europe Cultural Route" certification.

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) is open to member and non-member States of the Council of Europe aiming at providing political support for national, regional and local initiatives to promote culture and tourism.

Currently 32 States are members.

Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/about>

Cultural Routes National Country Mapping for Georgia

Following a decision by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) at its 2018 meeting, the Cultural Routes Programme has commissioned a “**Cultural Routes National Country Mapping for Georgia**”.

The Project comprised of three phases and was carried out in the period of December 2018 – 31 March 2019. The three phases of the project were:

- **Desk review in preparation of the Final Report** (SWOT, cartographic data mapping for Cultural Routes and other existing International/European heritage labels and initiatives, overview of potential extension of existing Routes, inventory of Cultural Routes related activities, inventory and analysis of existing cultural routes network candidates for certification, overview of potential new cultural routes with relevance to the member States, review of financing instruments available nationally for the Cultural Routes) by 31/12/2018.
- **3-day Field analysis** was carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia in the period of **18/03/2019 - 20/03/2019**.
- **Final Report** with recommendations and conclusions to be discussed with the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia drawn from both the desk review and the field analysis **by 31/03/2019**.



Prometheus Cave

Georgia and the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)

Key Facts

Georgia is **member** of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) **since 2016**

In order to coordinate cultural routes related activities in Georgia and extend its inclusion in Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme, **a new division - Cultural Routes Unit was established at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia in August 2018**

Georgia is currently **member of four routes** of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe:

- ▶ **Iter Vitis**, since 2009; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- ▶ **European Route of Jewish Heritage**, since 2004; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom
- ▶ **European Route of Historic Thermal Towns**, since 2010; Georgia joined in 2017; Members: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom
- ▶ **Prehistoric Rock Art Trails**, since 2010; Georgia joined in 2018; Members: Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Georgia will host the Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 2021.



Sataplia Reserve

Key Relevant Cultural and Tourism Policies in Georgia

Key Facts

Cultural relations between the Georgian cultural sector and its counterparts in the EU have **intensified** after the **EU Association Agreement in 2014**

Georgia is **member** of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) of the Council of Europe

Georgia **ratified Council of Europe Conventions**

Georgia **ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention** on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2008

In 2015 **Georgia joined the Creative Europe Programme**; several cultural projects and researches have been supported by Council of Europe, EU ENP and Eastern Partnership Culture Programmes

Georgia has **3 UNESCO cultural World Heritage sites**:

- ▶ Gelati Monastery
- ▶ Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
- ▶ Upper Svaneti

Georgia has **15 sites on the UNESCO Tentative List**:

- ▶ Alaverdi Cathedral
- ▶ Ananuri
- ▶ Colchis Wetlands and Forests
- ▶ David Gareji Monasteries and Hermitage
- ▶ Dmanisi Hominid Acheological Site
- ▶ Gremi Church of Archangels and Royal Tower
- ▶ Kvetra Church
- ▶ Mta-Tusheti
- ▶ Nicortsminda Cathedral
- ▶ Samtavisi Cathedral
- ▶ Shatili
- ▶ Tbilisi Historic District
- ▶ Uplistsikhe Cave Town
- ▶ Vani
- ▶ Vardzia-Khertvisi

Georgian Culture Strategy 2025

In 2015 the Georgian Culture Strategy 2025 was prepared. The preparation of the strategy followed a highly consultative, bottom-up approach and addressed the needs highlighted by the representatives of the sector in question. The document determines State's vision, strategic goals and corresponding objectives committed to meet the challenges in the culture and creative sector in the long-run perspective and fully responds to the guiding principles of the Convention (*Source: UNESCO*).

Vision of the Strategy: Georgia is a creative country and regional hub where innovation and creativity, along with safeguarding and revitalising national heritage and cultural diversity are the fundamental pillars of social wellbeing and sustainable development.

The mission of the Government of Georgia: is to create a favourable and enriched environment where national heritage and cultural diversity are well-preserved and their potential is fully unleashed, creative businesses are developed and the diversity of cultural life is encouraged.

Goals:

- Culture and creativity is integrated across all levels of the education system and the public is aware of its importance.
- Culture is accessible to all members of the society and the freedom of cultural expression is safeguarded.
- Culture and creativity help other key areas, contribute in a wider sense to the State's sustainable development and social well-being.
- The sustainability of cultural funding is safeguarded, diverse and transparent funding mechanisms are introduced and employment in cultural sector is attractive.
- Creative industries represent an important source for job creation, economic growth and innovation, it is a competitive sphere of activity.
- Georgia is an active participant of international cultural processes; it is a subject of interest for the rest of the world with its rich cultural heritage, vibrant cultural life and arts.

- Cultural policy is evidence-based and professionals and general public participate in an open and transparent policy-making process.

Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025

The Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 is a 10-year vision and strategic plan for increasing the value and importance of tourism for the benefit of the country's economy and ultimately its citizens. It contributes to the achievement of the World Bank Group twin goals in Georgia. The plan was formulated through a partnership between the government and the private sector with a view to maximizing tourist satisfaction, diversifying market and products, increasing the size and profitability of the industry in a sustainable way, and maximizing opportunities for job creation.

The strategy strives to achieve the following **eight strategic objectives**:

- respect, enhance, and protect Georgia's natural and cultural heritage
- create **unique and authentic visitor experiences** centered on those natural and cultural assets
- enhance **competitiveness**, through delivery of **world-class visitor services**
- attract **higher spending markets**, through increased and more effective marketing and promotion
- expand and enhance Georgia's ability to collect and analyze **tourism data** and measure industry performance
- expand **public and private sector investment** in the tourism sector
- enhance the **business environment**, to facilitate increased foreign and domestic investment
- build **partnerships** between government, industry, non-governmental organizations, and communities that will be needed to achieve all of the above (*Source: The World Bank*).

SWOT Analysis of Cultural and Tourism Policies and Practices in Georgia

Strengths

- The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of Georgia, the Cultural Routes Unit within the Ministry and the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation see the cultural routes as an important asset and are working intensively and effectively to promote and support the development of cultural routes in Georgia
- The *Georgia Culture Strategy 2025* highlights the development of cultural tourism focusing on capacity building, awareness raising programmes about the economy and marketing of cultural tourism, synergy between cultural resources and creative industries, promotion of public-private partnership engaging various state and non-state actors, cultural professionals, entrepreneurs and policymakers in developing cultural tourism
- The *Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025* gives strong importance to cultural heritage and cultural tourism as expressed by the first two objectives: (1) respect, enhance, and protect Georgia's natural and cultural heritage and (2) create unique and authentic visitor experiences centered on those natural and cultural assets. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of developing and promoting routes and trails as part of tourism development
- The cultural heritage of Georgia is strongly linked with European memory, history and heritage and contributed to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe – meeting a key certification criteria of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- *The Georgia Culture Strategy 2025* puts strong emphasis on the cultural and exchanges of young people – which is in line with another key certification criteria of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- *The Georgia Culture Strategy 2025* and the *Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025* pave the way for innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism, sustainable cultural development and tourism product development – which is in line with another key certification criteria of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
- Georgia has rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage and natural heritage resources, such as monuments, archaeological sites, cultural and natural landscapes
- The policies actively promote culture and cultural tourism with the aim to promote and exploit the economic potential of cultural resources and to develop creative industries in urban and rural areas for creation of unique and internationally competitive tourist experience
- The protection of cultural and natural heritage and environment from potentially negative impact of tourism has been stated as a policy priority
- One of the priorities stated is Georgia's integration in transnational cultural routes (e.g. the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme, UNWTO Silk Road Programme)
- Georgia's appeal to international tourists has increased dramatically in recent years
- Lonely Planet included Georgia on its list of 'Ten of the World's Most Intriguing Wine Regions' in 2015 and named Georgia as one of ten countries it thinks should be a priority for tourists in 2018
- Georgia is known for its welcoming people offering warm hospitality to visitors
- Local communities are in favour of cultural tourism development
- High quality food and wine provides excellent base for gastronomy tourism and for rural/agri-tourism
- The World Bank has active collaboration with the Georgian government to support the increased contribution of tourism to the local economy. Its latest Regional Development Project for Georgia (RDP III) focuses on Samtskhe-Javakheti and Mtskheta-Mtianeti regions, with total funding of US\$ 75mn. The project is planned to finance 1) urban regeneration of old towns and villages, including restoration of building facades and roofs, public spaces, museums, roads and water, and enhancement of cultural and natural heritage sites; and 2) institutional development to support institutional capacity and performance of implementing partner agencies, including GNTA and the Municipal Development Fund (MDF). These projects are related to development of cultural tourism (The World Bank).

Weaknesses

- The general infrastructure and the tourism infrastructure need further strengthening
- There is limited understanding outside of the governmental level about the importance of domestic tourism and that of the wider visitor economy
- Despite the dynamic growth in international tourist arrivals, per capita tourist spending remains relatively low
- The cultural routes are often seen as a mere tourist itinerary by the operators
- Despite the rich culture and history of wine making, the infrastructure around wine tourism needs further development
- There is limited awareness about the importance and relevance of sustainability to the cultural sector
- There is currently a shortage of data on cultural tourism
- Knowledge gaps regarding cultural routes and cultural tourism
- There is a need to increase awareness of tourism and cultural tourism at local government level
- There is limited awareness by the operators about the need to think about the 'visitor experience' in the context of the cultural routes
- Tskaltubo, a member of the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns is a well-known resort area in the Imereti region since the Soviet era. The Partnership Fund is actively facilitating the development of Tskaltubo into a modern, internationally competitive spa destination. The Fund enlisted the help of international consultancies to devise a master plan for the privatization of the 18 state-owned buildings in the resort town, three of which have already been sold to local and foreign investors (Galt & Taggart, 2016, Georgia Tourism Industry Overview). Furthermore, the government has attracted support from The World Bank and an estimated US\$ 28mn is planned for the overhauling water and sanitation systems and renovating public buildings and a 70 hectare public park in Tskaltubo. Furthermore, the Partnership Fund is partnering with Redix Group on the development of a high-class hotel in Abastumani, an important resort area. The estimated investment volume of the project is US\$ 26mn (Galt & Taggart, 2016, Georgia Tourism Industry Overview).

Opportunities

- Utilising the cultural routes as part of efforts to increase international tourist spending and length of stay and to promote domestic tourism
- 8000 years of winemaking, over 500 grape varieties and the traditional qvetry winemaking offer excellent opportunity for further developing the wine routes and wine tourism
- Revitalising Borjomi and its surrounding as a major historic thermal spa town
- The stated Georgian government initiative of cash incentive for films that popularize Georgia by depicting UNESCO cultural heritage sites in Georgia offers an excellent marketing opportunity for the cultural routes
- Developing cultural tourism along the ancient Silk Road
- Developing the cultural routes as a 'visitor experience' rather than just as a product or sets of itineraries.

Threats

- Focusing solely on increasing visitor numbers instead of focusing on attracting visitors with higher spending would put pressure on the cultural heritage
- Insufficient coordination amongst the numerous stakeholders would hamper efforts to maximise the benefits from the cultural routes
- Insufficient funding for the cultural routes would also hamper efforts to maximise the benefits from the cultural routes
- Insufficient technical knowledge and skills would hamper efforts to maximise the benefits from the cultural routes.



European Route of Prehistoric Rock Art, Trialeti petroglyphs

Inventory of Current Cultural Routes Related Activities in Georgia

Description	Evaluation
<p>In 2016 Georgia became 27th Member State of the Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes. The agreement reinforces the member states to participate in the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme and to implement the guidelines of the agreement.</p> <p>Subsequently, on 27 February 2018, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme was officially launched in Georgia.</p> <p>Georgia is member of 4 cultural routes of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA): (1) "Iter Vitis", (2) "The European Route of Jewish Heritage", (3) "European Route of Historical Thermal Towns" and (3) "Prehistoric Rock Art Trails".</p>	<p>Highly relevant and beneficial - given the significant potential for developing cultural routes in Georgia and the potential offered by the cultural routes for strengthening the tourism products and experiences in Georgia and for the promotion of domestic tourism.</p>
<p>In order to coordinate cultural routes related activities in Georgia and extend its inclusion in the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, a new division - Cultural Routes Unit was established at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia in August 2018.</p>	<p>This is a highly commendable measure as leadership, coordination and capacity building is vital for the development of the cultural routes in Georgia.</p>

Description	Evaluation
<p>A National Board on Strategic Development and Certification of Cultural Routes of Georgia has been established, as a multidisciplinary, advisory body of the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Georgia, which supports the participation of Georgia in the activities of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and also, the development of local cultural routes. There are representatives of different Governing bodies in the National Board.</p> <p>The objective of the Board is to collect the scattered information about existing cultural routes, also to support the development of new cultural routes and to raise the interest to get involved in international cultural routes, such as The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.</p> <p>The Board supports the development and certification process of local cultural routes as well.</p> <p>According to the approved criteria and terms of the competition, the Board will stimulate the development of new projects, which are committed to enhance the history, memory, identity, heritage, cultural traditions and cultural diversity of Georgia; also, to create new initiatives and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable development of culture; to develop new tourism products for different groups of society and to promote the existing ones in active collaboration with travel agencies, cultural and tourism operators.</p>	<p>Another important measure as part of implementing the programme.</p> <p>Particularly important is that this Board should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness about the programme • Bring together scattered information • Consult and bring on board a broad spectrum of stakeholders • Promote stakeholder partnership and collaboration • Stimulate the development of new projects • Stimulate the development of new tourism products and experiences.
<p>The Grand Launching Event will take place early May 2019, where the Cultural Routes Programme will be reintroduced, the new initiatives will be presented, the mobile application programme will be made available and the results of the grant competition will be announced. High profile government officials, international delegations, public and private sector, cultural heritage institutions and NGOs will be attending the event. A special PR campaign will promote the event and the cultural routes during and after the Grand Launching Event.</p>	<p>This is an excellent initiative for raising awareness of the cultural routes.</p>
<p>The Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia is in the process of developing and launching a mobile app for the cultural routes. The free mobile app will make the certified routes available for tourists. It is designed to be a great traveling companion for those wishing to plan their visit to cultural sites included in the routes. The features were created specifically for making the app flexible, easy to use and informative.</p>	<p>This is an excellent initiative as it will help to promote the cultural routes and to help the visitor (international and domestic) to explore the routes.</p>
<p>Furthermore, a Grant Competition titled "Promotion of the Development of Cultural Routes" was announced by the Ministry.</p> <p>The budget of the competition is 100 000 Gel. The competition aims to raise public awareness about cultural routes, foster research and internationalise practices. In total 21 applications were received during the selection process of the grant competition.</p> <p>The Ministry aims to fund 4-5 projects which will demonstrate capability of developing the cultural routes' environment through research, education and capacity building programmes.</p>	<p>This is an excellent initiative which raises awareness about the cultural routes and promotes innovation for the cultural routes.</p>
<p>At the end of 2018, the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia that represents the country in Prehistoric Rock Art Trails participated in the annual forum of Rock Art Route in Lascaux, France. A team of the Agency presented a project for the infrastructural development of the Georgian petroglyphs site in Tsalka, (Kvemo Kartli region).</p>	<p>Excellent initiative as it is important for the teams from Georgia to participate in key international events/forums for knowledge exchange and for the setting up of cross-border cooperative projects.</p>

Description	Evaluation
Recently, the Israeli House has announced a call for a photo contest to document Jewish heritage in Georgia.	Excellent initiative as the development of narratives and site interpretation of such sites requires a good portfolio of high quality images. The photo competition will help with this – and in addition it also raises awareness about the route and promotes it.
In the spring of 2019 an annual forum of European Route of Jewish Heritage will be held in Tbilisi with coordination of The Israeli House and with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Georgia.	Excellent initiative as this will highlight Georgia’s contribution to the European Route of Jewish Heritage internationally, will promote the route within Georgia. Furthermore, it can be a catalyst for further projects and initiatives and can help with attractive funding for investment for the route.
Two local routes are in the process of being certified by the Cultural Routes Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retracting the Route of Alexandre Dumas • German Settlements With further cultural routes being suggested from grass-route level – for example a Cheese Route.	This is excellent as it supports the cultural routes programme and there is a potential for some of the routes to later become transnational European routes.



Iter Vitis, Vineyards in Kakheta

Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia

Routes and Responsible Organizations

Route	Responsible Organization
Iter Vitis	Georgian Wine Tourism Association
Jewish Heritage	Jewish House
Thermal Towns	Sairme and Tskaltubo Municipalities
Prehistoric Rock Art	National Agency for Cultural Heritage of Georgia – Site of Trialeti

Sites Included

Route	Sites Included
Iter Vitis	Kbilashvili Workshop, Ikalto Monastery, Shalauri Cellar, Cheese Farm, Winery Orgo, Winery Shumi, Tsinandali, Winery Schuchmann
The European Route of Jewish Heritage	30 sites identified by Jewish House
European Route of Historic Thermal Towns	Sairme and Tskaltubo
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails	Trialeti site

Cartographic Data Mapping of Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia

Iter Vitis



European Route of Historic Thermal Towns



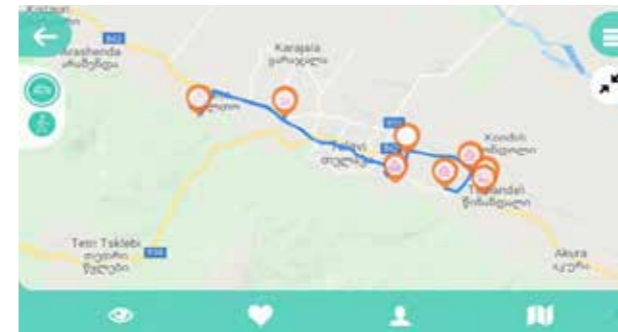
The European Route of Jewish Heritage



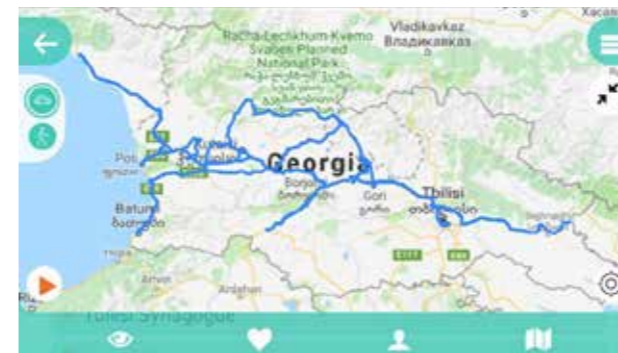
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails



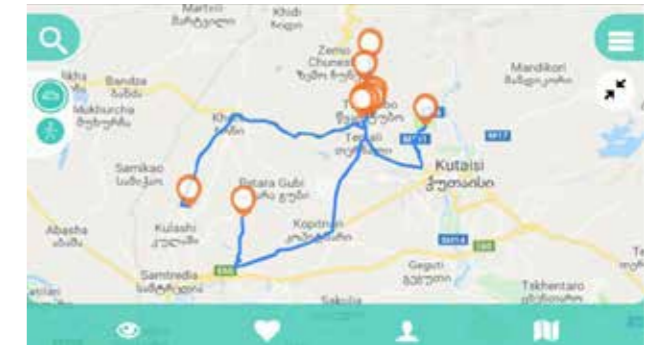
Iter Vitis in Georgia



The European Route of Jewish Heritage in Georgia



European Route of Historic Thermal Towns in Georgia



Prehistoric Rock Art Trails in Georgia



Inventory and Analysis of Current Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) in Georgia

Georgia is member of four cultural routes of the Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes.

Description	Evaluation
Route 1. Iter Vitis, since 2009	
<p>The culture of the vine, winemaking and viticultural landscapes are an important part of European and Mediterranean food culture. Since the domestication of the vine, in the fourth millennium BC, its evolution and spread has been considered a great human achievement, which shaped Europe's landscapes, both in terms of its territory and its people.</p> <p>The European rural landscape is considered as an important heritage with high added value. Wineries, and the people and the technology associated with this tradition, are important components of our culture, which are also expressed through different forms of oral traditions. Moreover, the quality of life in rural areas can be considered as a model for the future and a heritage to be preserved.</p> <p>Wine is a territorial message that travels and causes people to travel. Winemaking, and especially working on the land, provide an incentive for migration and mobility. In the same spirit, the traveller can discover remote lands from the Caucasus to Western European vineyards, learn about cultivation techniques, vinification, storage and transport, and become familiar with the myths and symbols around this rich culture. A variety of educational and cultural meetings are also organised within the route countries.</p> <p>Source: www.coe.int</p> <p>The Route is described on the local website as:</p> <p>Programme:</p> <p>The rugged province of Kakheti is known as Ground Zero for Georgian wine, producing 68% of the country's wine, with 75% of grapes grown for production. Divided into sub-appellations, it's home to 14 of the 18 Protected Designations of Origin (PDOs). Since ancient times Georgia has been known as a country of grapes and wine. Wine production is hardly imaginable without a Qvevri – a handmade, egg-shaped clay vessel that's buried in the ground up to its collar. Wine-making in these traditional vessels goes back at least 8000 years and is still practiced today. This ancient method is considered one of Georgia's many cultural achievements and treasures. Wine plays a central role in the social lives of Georgians. It's considered a crucial part of hospitality – a valuable offering in the facilitation of goodwill and friendship.</p> <p>The tour starts with a visit to the studio of a Qvevri maker, where you'll see Qvevri created by the hands of the true masters. Next is a visit to the Ikalto monastery complex, founded in the 6th century and where one of the oldest wine schools was founded in the Middle Ages. Visitors will see the remnants of the once existing wine culture that had developed within the walls of this spectacular place. You'll also pass by the new Qvevri school and academy. Then a jaunt to the small village for a visit to the artisanal winery, overlooking the Alazani Valley and snow-capped Caucasus Mountains. This boutique winery produces all of their wines in the Qvevri and are known for their dry red and white wines from different indigenous Georgian varieties, using natural farming techniques and a low-interference vinification process. You'll meet the cheese maker and sample the rare tasty cheeses made on-site. Afterwards, a delicious lunch made by the farm owners will be served.</p>	<p>This route very closely fits Georgia's history and the vision of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).</p> <p>Georgia's excellence in wine making and offers an effective way to celebrate a unique historical way of wine making.</p> <p>Georgia's membership in this route offers opportunity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operation in research and development • continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage in Georgia • opportunity to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young European • inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices for site development • promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development • wide stakeholder cooperation local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs <p>In order to maximise the benefits from the route for Georgia, there is a need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for the route to go beyond a single programme or tour itinerary • the route should be enlarged to give justice to the large number of wineries and wine related sites and enterprises in Georgia. For example, GNTA (Georgia National Tourism Association) in its wine route has some 200 wineries recorded, listed in maps and publications and signpost

Description	Evaluation
<p>Next up is a visit a small family-owned winery focusing on producing high quality wines made in Qvevri. Family's fourth generation winemakers and a rising star in Georgian winemaking. Visit to premium wine company, which sits in the appellation of Tsinandali within Georgia's largest wine region. Winery Shumi grows grapes in and around Tsinandali on the right bank of the Alazani River where the winery is located. The word, 'Shumi', means genuine, undiluted wine and in this case theirs is made only from their own fruit grown in unique micro-zones, famous for their geographical locations, climate, and wine-making history. Shumi owns a small vine nursery of 294 unique and 93 foreign grape varieties. A little museum will reveal some interesting old artifacts about Georgian wine culture. And finally, travel to Aleksandre Chavchavadze House Museum in Tsinandali. Chavchavadze was the first Georgian nobleman to produce and bottle Georgian wine according to European methods. Built in 1835, this winery contains 16,500 bottles of wine, including a bottle of Saperavi wine from 1839– the first harvest at Tsinandali. Production in this vineyard continues, with the highly regarded, dry, white Tsinandali wine still produced.</p> <p>Not included: Flights, travel insurance, services & beverages except described.</p> <p>For more details and booking: Georgian Wine Tourism Association; Address: 9, Machabeli Str., 0105, Tbilisi, Georgia.</p> <p>(Source: http://culturalroutes.gov.ge/Routes/saqartvelos-kulturuli-marshrutebi.aspx)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate branding • attention to sustainable tourism standards • capacity building • incorporation of new technologies • effective signage • identification of funding sources • it is recommended to develop a website in foreign languages according to the main tourist target markets set out in the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 • It is recommended to think about the route development as a 'visitor experience' rather than just focusing on tourism products and itineraries

Description	Evaluation
Route 2: European Route of Historical Thermal Towns	
<p>Certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" in 2010</p> <p>Thermalism - the therapeutic use of hot springs - has been prevalent in Europe from ancient times to the present day. Many of the towns along this route were known during Roman times, and several have impressive ruins of baths and associated spa buildings. The most famous towns reached the height of their renown during the 18th and 19th centuries, when a wide range of new medical and health treatments were developed, and when travel became much easier with the arrival of the railways. The prestigious political and cultural elite travelling to Europe's spas, creating centres of cultural exchange in numerous cities, may be said to have launched modern tourism as we know it. These celebrities cemented the reputation of the thermal spa towns and gave birth to a real trend, the development of prestigious hotels and a variety of leisure activities, ranging from the first casinos to musical theatres, to covered promenades and landscaped gardens for the entertainment of fashionable tourists.</p> <p>Baden-Baden, Bath, Budapest, Karlovy Vary, Spa and Vichy are only a few of the most famous European spa towns, but Europe is home to many more spa towns with unique urban personalities, different styles of architecture, and different spa traditions, built around bathing or drinking of the thermal waters. This spa culture, in all its variety and different local flavours, can truly be considered a unique European heritage. In order to catalogue and celebrate this heritage the Thermal Atlas of Europe is currently under development.</p> <p>Today, our towns tell the stories of an important European memory through annual festivals, events, and a wealth of artistic and creative activities in which tourists can participate. Above all, the traveller can actively enjoy the pleasures and benefits of the thermal waters, relax and experience a real multi-sensorial tradition.</p> <p>Source: www.coe.int</p>	<p>This route very closely fits Georgia's history and the vision of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).</p> <p>Georgia's thermal springs and its historic connection with spas offers an excellent base for membership in this route.</p> <p>This route can offer Georgia a very important tourism product which can help with the stated objective of the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 of (a) increasing tourists' spending and (b) increasing the tourists' length of stay.</p> <p>Georgia's membership in this route offers opportunity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operation in research and development • continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage in Georgia • opportunity to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young European • inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices for site development • promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development • wide stakeholder cooperation • local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs

Description



Imereti's SpaTowns



Evaluation

In order to maximise the benefits from the route for Georgia, there is a need for:

- appropriate interpretation and story-telling
- appropriate marketing and branding
- attention to sustainable tourism standards
- capacity building
- incorporation of new technologies
- effective signage
- identification of funding sources
- it is recommended to develop a website in languages according to the main tourist target markets set out in the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025
- it is recommended to think about the route development as a 'visitor experience' rather than just focusing on tourism products and itineraries

Description

Route 3: European Route of Jewish Heritage

Certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" in 2004

The Jewish people are an integral part of European civilisation, having made a unique and lasting contribution to its development through the millennia right up to today. The Cultural Routes programme is an innovative and exciting way of bringing this remarkable story to the attention of a wider audience.

The European Jewish heritage is widely present across Europe. Notable examples include archaeological sites, historic synagogues and cemeteries, ritual baths, Jewish quarters, monuments and memorials. In addition, several archives and libraries, as well as specialised museums devoted to the study of Jewish life, are included in the route. This route foster understanding and appreciation of religious and daily artefacts

and also recognition of the essential role played by the Jewish people In European History.

Travelling today

The routes vary in scale from neighbourhood to city, region to country and even assume a trans-national dimension. Through these routes covering virtually the whole of the European continent, the traveller can become immersed in the Jewish story, across borders and centuries. They also provide extensive information and materials and regularly organise events such as The European Day of Jewish Culture.

Georgia has been home to one of the oldest Jewish Diasporas in the world. There are different views about its origin. According to one source, the Jewish people arrived after Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem in 586 BCE and the Babylonian exile. Another chronicle ascribes the Jewish migration into Georgia to Alexander the Great in the 4th century BCE.

It is highly likely that Jewish people came to Georgia as traders, emigrants and refugees from various lands of their dispersal. For centuries the Jewish people have lived in Georgia without the antisemitism that has characterized so many other countries. The Jewish population reached a peak of about 100,000 in the 1970s, though the number decreased sharply when Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union became possible and the majority made aliyah to Israel or moved to other countries. Nowadays about 30,000 Jews live in Georgia mostly residing in Tbilisi while there are also Jewish settlements in Kutaisi, Gori, Surami, Oni, Akhaltsikhe, and Batumi.

Jewish Heritage Cultural Routes in Georgia

The Georgian Jews diaspora is antique. It is an ethno linguistic group of the Jewish people Jews appeared and settled down in Georgia, after destruction of the rest temple by Nabukhodonosor (586 B.C) and after their persecution from Jerusalem. The language of Georgian Jews in Kartli, Lechkhumi, Racha and Akhaltsikhe was different from the local Georgian dialects, and only in Imereti (Kutaisi, Sachkhere, Kulashi) was founded the Georgian-Jewish language "Kivruli", which contained a small radius of Jewish and Aramaic linguistic formations. The Jewish heritage tour shows the whole history of the Jews in Georgia, by passing through 21 towns and 43 Jewish heritage locations in whole Georgia: Synagogues, Jewish monuments having status of cultural heritage, museums, graves and Jewish archaeology artifacts

(Source: Cultural Routes of Georgia)

Evaluation

This route very closely fits Georgia's history and the vision of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).

Georgia's connection with Jewish history, heritage and living culture, offers an excellent base for membership in this route.

The route can play a significant role in preserving this history, heritage and culture and sharing it with visitors from Europe and beyond – as well as with the local populations.

This route can offer Georgia a very important tourism product both for the international and the domestic market which can help with the stated objective of the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 of (a) increasing tourists' spending and (b) increasing the tourists' length of stay.

Georgia's membership in this route offers opportunity for:

- co-operation in research and development
- continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage in Georgia
- opportunity to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young European
- inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices for site development
- promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development
- wide stakeholder cooperation
- local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs

In order to maximise the benefits from the route for Georgia, there is a need for:

- appropriate interpretation and story-telling
- meeting the needs of both international and domestic visitors
- appropriate marketing and branding
- attention to sustainable tourism standards
- capacity building
- incorporation of new technologies
- effective signage
- identification of funding sources
- it is recommended to develop a website in foreign languages according to the main tourist target markets set out in the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025
- it is recommended to think about the route development as a 'visitor experience' rather than solely focusing on the sites in the context of the religion

Description	Evaluation
<p>Route 4: Prehistoric Rock Art Trails</p> <p>Certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" in 2010</p> <p>Prehistoric Rock Art is one of the oldest form of cultural heritage, present in almost all regions of the planet and living testimony of past life forms. Europe hosts some of the best known and most significant evidences of Prehistoric Rock Art, representing over 40% of all the world's rock art sites. This Art is closely linked to the landscape. Culture and Nature therefore come together in this route, which also contributes to the sustainable development of the rural communities where all the sites that compose the Cultural Route are located. Prehistoric Rock Art is the art of the first Europeans. It appeared in Europe 42,000 years ago and continued until the Early Iron Age in some regions. Since the scientific recognition of the Cave of Altamira in 1902, Prehistoric Art has constituted an important cultural and tourism resource for Europe, as the first major cultural, social and symbolic expression of humankind.</p> <p>Each year nearly 3.1 million visitors come to the places where the first inhabitants of Europe produced their transcendental rock art, an art full of symbolism motivated by religious belief and full of references to nature. This was initially a naturalistic art form, but later also became schematic and with a capacity for abstraction that would not be repeated until the early 20th century. It consists of figurative manifestations, schematic forms and abstract shapes composed of drawings, paintings or prints on the walls of caves, rock-shelters and open-air rock outcrops, and on some Megalithic constructions too.</p> <p>More than 200 rock art sites are open to the public in Europe, concentrated in countries like Norway, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Georgia, Azerbaijan, France and Spain. Many are small sites, but there are locations with significant tourism infrastructure where it is possible to visit large archaeological sites. In addition, the traveller can also see some excellent facsimiles of caves and rock shelters, which make it easy to display this art without endangering the original sites, many of which can only receive a few visitors per day or no visits at all. More info: www.prehistour.eu/carp-guide/</p> <p>Since it obtained its recognition, the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe "Prehistoric Rock Art Trails" has been managed by the International Association "Prehistoric Rock Art Trails" (or A. I. CARP) a non-profit-making organisation founded in 2007 by the institutions which promoted the candidacy of the trail. The Association's head office is currently in Cantabria, Spain and is coordinated administratively and technically by the Cantabrian Network for Rural Development, the organisation that will hold the Presidency of the Association until 2016. 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, in accordance with Resolution (2013)67 of the Council of Europe.</p>	<p>This route very closely fits Georgia's history and the vision of The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).</p> <p>This route can offer Georgia a tourism product which can help with the stated objective of the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 of (a) increasing tourists' spending and (b) increasing the tourists' length of stay.</p> <p>Georgia's membership in this route offers opportunity for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-operation in research and development • continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage in Georgia • opportunity to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young European • inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices for site development • promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development • wide stakeholder cooperation • local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs <p>In order to maximise the benefits from the route for Georgia, there is a need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate interpretation and story-telling • meeting the needs of both international and domestic visitors • appropriate marketing and branding • attention to sustainable tourism standards • capacity building • incorporation of new technologies (for example apps, geo- location) • effective signage • identification of funding sources. • it is recommended to develop a website in foreign languages according to the main tourist target markets set out in the Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015-2025 • is recommended to think about the route development as a 'visitor experience' rather than just focusing on tourism products and itineraries • it is important to ensure visitor safety

Potential Extension of Existing Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA)

The significant number and the quality of relevant sites in Georgia provides excellent potential for expanding Georgia's involvement by adding new places to the existing routes and also for joining new routes of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA). The proposed extensions would add significant value to the routes as they are illustrative of European memory, history and heritage. Furthermore, expansion would contribute to an important economic role by attracting more visitors both from within Europe and from third countries to the sites. And finally, the proposed extensions have relevance to Youth travel and would contribute to developing cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans.

The next steps to be taken for effective implementation should focus on:

- continued efforts in co-operation in research and development
- continued enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage
- continued effort to promote cultural and educational exchanges of young European
- inclusion of contemporary cultural and artistic practices
- promoting cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development
- wide stakeholder cooperation
- local community participation, with particular emphasis on youth, women and SMEs
- appropriate marketing strategies (websites, branding, social media)
- attention to sustainable tourism standards
- capacity building
- incorporation of new technologies
- effective signage
- identification of funding sources.

More specifically

► Iter Vitis Route:

Significantly more representatives could be involved in the Iter Vitis Route in Georgia. Georgia has the oldest, 8 000 years of continuous wine-making tradition in the World. This ancient Georgian traditional Qvevri (clay vessel used for fermentation of wine) wine-making method was inscribed in 2013 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

The expansion of the Iter Vitis route has significant potential as the number and quality of wineries using the traditional Qvevri method as well as modern wine-making techniques is very significant and it is steadily growing in Georgia. As mentioned earlier, the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA) lists some 200 wineries in its wine route. This route is well publicised in maps and other publications and the route is well sign-posted. There is clearly significant potential to develop the route and programme in Georgia to go beyond the currently promoted Kakheti tour and to potentially combine it with the existing wine route which was developed by the Georgian National Tourism Administration (GNTA).

► European Route of Historical Thermal Towns:

At this stage only the Imereti Region with its two destinations (Sairme and Tskaltubo) is included in European Route of Historical Thermal Towns. At the same time, the capital of the country, Tbilisi with its historic bathhouses full of sulphur-rich water and the historic resort town of Borjomi – a fine resort town famous for its mineral waters could also become members of this route. Including Tbilisi and Borjomi in the European Route of Historical Thermal Towns would add significant value to the route and it is, therefore, highly recommended.

► European Route of Jewish Heritage:

The representative of the route in Georgia – The Israeli House, has identified all the relevant sites in the country and therefore route expansion is not foreseen.

► Prehistoric Rock Art Trails:

Georgia currently only features one site, Trialeti in this route. There is good potential to expand this route as there are several further relevant sites in the country. However, it is recommended to fully develop and consolidate first this site before opening further sites in the route.

Potential Additional Routes with Relevance to Georgia

Regarding the certified routes of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA), Georgia has clear potential to join:

- ▶ ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory
- ▶ Réseau Art Nouveau Network

It is strongly recommended for Georgia to consider membership of these routes as these are relevant to its history, heritage and resources and participation would be in line with the *Georgia Culture Strategy 2025* and the *Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025*.

Other possible cultural routes:

- ▶ European Route of Industrial Heritage
- ▶ European Cheese Route

Review of Financing Instruments Available Nationally for The Cultural Routes

Adequate and sustained funding is crucial for the implementation of the programme, lack of funding would jeopardise programme implementation. Adequate funding is necessary for developing, restoring and managing sites related to the cultural routes and for capacity building.

The Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia has its own annual budget that is one of the main financial instruments by the Government for supporting the cultural routes.

The local Municipalities have their own budget and the financial support is available for the routes crossing their region.

In addition to this, The Municipal Development Fund that is coordinated by the Supervisory Board approved by the Government of Georgia and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure can be a major contributor in the development of the routes. In this regard, cooperation between the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and the Fund has already begun.

The Government of Georgia has elaborated several financial mechanisms, in particular tax credits to support on the one hand the flow of cultural goods and services and on the other hand preservation of cultural resources. Most notably, the Tax Code of Georgia provides VAT exemption for reconstruction activities on cultural heritage objects; in particular according to the c subparagraph, of 2nd paragraph of 168th article of the Tax Code of Georgia, "conducting restoration, rehabilitation, design and research works and activities by a person in agreement with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia on cultural heritage that is part of the world heritage list and/or has the status of national heritage and/or is of cultic and religious purpose is exempt from VAT. According to the 2nd paragraph of 168th article of the Tax Code of Georgia arts and sport educational services for children under 18 years are exempt from VAT. According to the decree N 1149 issued by Government of Georgia in 2015, simplified procurement regulations apply to certain cultural institutions: orchestras, ensembles, music centres, arts education institutions by encouraging creation, production and distribution of cultural goods and services.

The World Bank is already involved in several large-scale infrastructure and urban development projects which include the preservation and restoration of cultural and natural heritage. In addition, cooperation on specific cultural route related activities are possible. The World Bank could also play an important role in the rejuvenation of the thermal spa town of Borjomi.

Further agencies such could also be relevant to the cultural routes such as for example SME development (USAID) and mountain tourism development (Austrian Development Agency).

Key recommendations

Recommendations to the Cultural Routes Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia

- Engage in transnational cooperation projects
- Engage in further capacity building activities for its own professionals
- Develop capacity building activities for cultural routes management organizations
- Become the leader in the promotion of incorporating sustainable practices into the cultural routes
- Inspire the cultural routes to include contemporary cultural and artistic practices in site development
- Inspire the cultural routes to engage in site development, heritage interpretation and seek to develop the broader tourism infrastructure
- Inspire the cultural routes to target themselves to the full spectrum of target audience such as:
 - ▶ domestic visitor
 - ▶ domestic overnight staying tourist
 - ▶ overseas visitor and tourist
- In the case of the European Route of Jewish Heritage:
 - ▶ consider the needs of both religious and non-religious visitors
- Promote attention to health and safety standards and practices for the cultural routes
- Inspire the cultural routes to create accessible sites along the cultural routes (for special needs visitors)
- Inspire the cultural routes to develop the sites in the spirit of the experience economy.

Recommendations for Cultural Routes Management Organizations

- Develop a marketing and branding strategies to promote the routes
- Develop appropriate signage
- Engage in capacity building for own staff and develop capacity building activities for the sites and service operators along the cultural routes
- Include contemporary cultural and artistic practices in site development
- Incorporate sustainable practices into the cultural routes
- Promote site development, heritage interpretation and seek to develop the broader tourism infrastructure
- Engage and research and development
- Seek participation in bidding for projects with the international partners in the cultural routes
- Engage in a wide variety of transnational cooperation projects
- Target the full spectrum of target audience such as:
 - ▶ domestic visitor
 - ▶ domestic overnight staying tourist
 - ▶ overseas tourist
- In the case of the European Route of Jewish Heritage:
 - ▶ consider the needs of both religious and non-religious visitors
- Pay attention to health and safety standards and practices along the cultural routes
- Create accessible sites along the cultural routes (for special needs visitors)
- Promote the development of 'visitor experiences' rather than think about single products.

Conclusion

This Cultural Routes National Country Mapping concludes that Georgia satisfies the criteria of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA).

Given the significant efforts and achievements made in a relatively short timeframe, the high quality of the work of the Cultural Routes Unit of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia and that of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation, together with the considerable efforts made by the cultural routes and the high relevance of the existing cultural routes to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA), it is recommended that Georgia is commended on its achievements and is supported in its future endeavours in developing its cultural routes programme and activities.

Appendices

People and organizations consulted during the mission

Position	Name	Contact information
18.03.2019 - Visit in Borjomi and Likani		
Deputy Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports	Levan Kharatishvili	N/A
Assistant Specialist at the Cultural Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia	Tinatin Meparishvili	tmeparishvili@mes.gov.ge
General Director of National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	Nikoloz Antidze	N/A
Head of UNESCO and international affairs at of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	Manana Vardzelashvili	N/A
Senior Specialist of Museums and Educational Programs at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage	Eka Kacharava	N/A
Co-Investment Fund Ltd. Likani Residence	Besik Bugianishvili	N/A
19.03.2019		
Head of Cultural Unit at the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia	Teona Jakeli	teonajakeli@mes.gov.ge
Senior Specialist, Culture Department, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia	Salome Jamburia	N/A
Head of the Department of Tourism Product and Infrastructure Development	Tamar Maisuradze	t.maisuradze@gnta.ge
Main Specialist of the National Tourism Administration	Tamar Kakhidze	tamkakhidze@gmail.com
The Head of Research and Planning Department	Giorgi Bregadze	g.barjadze@gnta.ge
Leading Specialist of the Department of Tourism Product and Small-Scale Infrastructure Development	Zviad Kelenjeridze	N/A
Deputy head of the Culture, Education, Sports and Youth Unit	Maka Nasrashvili	N/A
Head of the Cultural Programmes Coordinator	Tamar Topuridze	N/A
Senior Education Specialist at the World Bank	Nino Kutateladze	nkutateladze@worldbank.org
World Bank Consultant in the field of Cultural Heritage and Tourism	Ivane Vashakmadze	v.vashakmadze@gmail.com
Chairwoman of Georgian Incoming Tour Operators Association	Ia Tabagari	iatabagari@gitoea.ge

20.03.2019		
Head of Georgian Cheese Production Association	Ani Mikadze	N/A
Chairman of Israeli House	Itsik Moshe	itsikmoshe@israelihouse.net
Consultant at Israeli House	Giorgi Bershtein	goglagio3@gmail.com
Chairwoman of Israeli House Supervisory Board	Iamit Moscovich	N/A
Jewish Heritage Route Manager at Israeli House	Mariam Kapanadze	N/A
Representative of Israeli House Marketing Board	Nino Parkauli	N/A
Founder of Wine Tourism Association	Elene Bukhaidze	elene@travellingroots.com
Head of UNESCO and international affairs at the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	Manana Vardzelashvili	manana_v@hotmail.com
Representative of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	Nika Jibuti	nika_jibuti@yahoo.com
Deputy of the General Director of the National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation	Paata Dolidze	N/A
Deputy Head of Tourism Development Center in Tskaltubo	Irakli Maisashvili	N/A
State Representative's Administration in Imereti. Deputy State Representative-Governor	Ioseb Khakhaleishvili	i.khakhaleishvili@imereti.gov.ge
Head of Tourism Development Department of Bagdati	Gocha Khorava	N/A

Mission Agenda

18.02.2019

05:55	Pick up from Tbilisi International Airport
11:00	Departure for Borjomi
13:00 - 13:30	<i>Conference</i> European Cultural Routes of Georgia (MESCP)
13:30 - 14:00	<i>Conference</i> Potential Resources of Borjomi in the context of the European Cultural routes: Balneology Spa Resort; Historic Mineral Water Industry, Historic Electro Stations (National Agency)
14:00 - 15:00	Meeting with representatives during lunch break
15:00 - 17:00	Site visit in Borjomi
17:00	Departure for Tbilisi

19.02.2019

09:30 - 10:30	Meeting with a representative of the National Tourism Administration
10:30 - 11:30	Meeting with the Deputy Minister Mr. Levan Kharatishvili and the Cultural Routes Unit
12:00 - 12:30	Meeting with the Tbilisi Mayor's office
13:00 - 14:30	Free time
15:00 - 16:00	Meeting with the World Bank
19:00	Official Dinner

20.02.2019

7:00 - 11:00	Breakfast at the hotel
10:00 - 11:00	Meeting with the Cultural Routes Unit
11:30 - 12:30	Meeting with Head of Georgian Cheese Production Association
12:30 - 14:00	Free time
14:00 - 16:00	Meeting with the partners/members/certified routes representatives
16:00 - 17:30	Site visit of Jewish heritage and thermal bath in Tbilisi
17:30 - 18:00	Meeting with Georgian Co-Investment Fund

21.02.2019

3:00	Check out from the hotel and airport
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List of References

Documents consulted:

Galt & Taggart (2016) Georgia Tourism Industry Overview
<https://galtandtaggart.com/upload/reports/12160.pdf>

Georgia Culture Strategy 2025 Georgia Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025

UNESCO Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Georgia 2016 Report
<https://en.unesco.org/creativity/monitoring-reporting/periodic-reports/available-reports-29>

Principal websites consulted:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes?desktop=true> <http://culturalroutes.gov.ge/Home.aspx?lang=en-US>

<http://culturalroutes.gov.ge/Routes/saqartvelos-kulturuli-marshrutebi.aspx>

Partner websites consulted:

<https://www.jewishheritage.org/web/> <http://itervitis.eu/> <http://www.prehistour.eu/> <https://ehhta.eu/portal/>

International Organizations:

<http://silkroad.unwto.org/>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ge>

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/georgia>

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