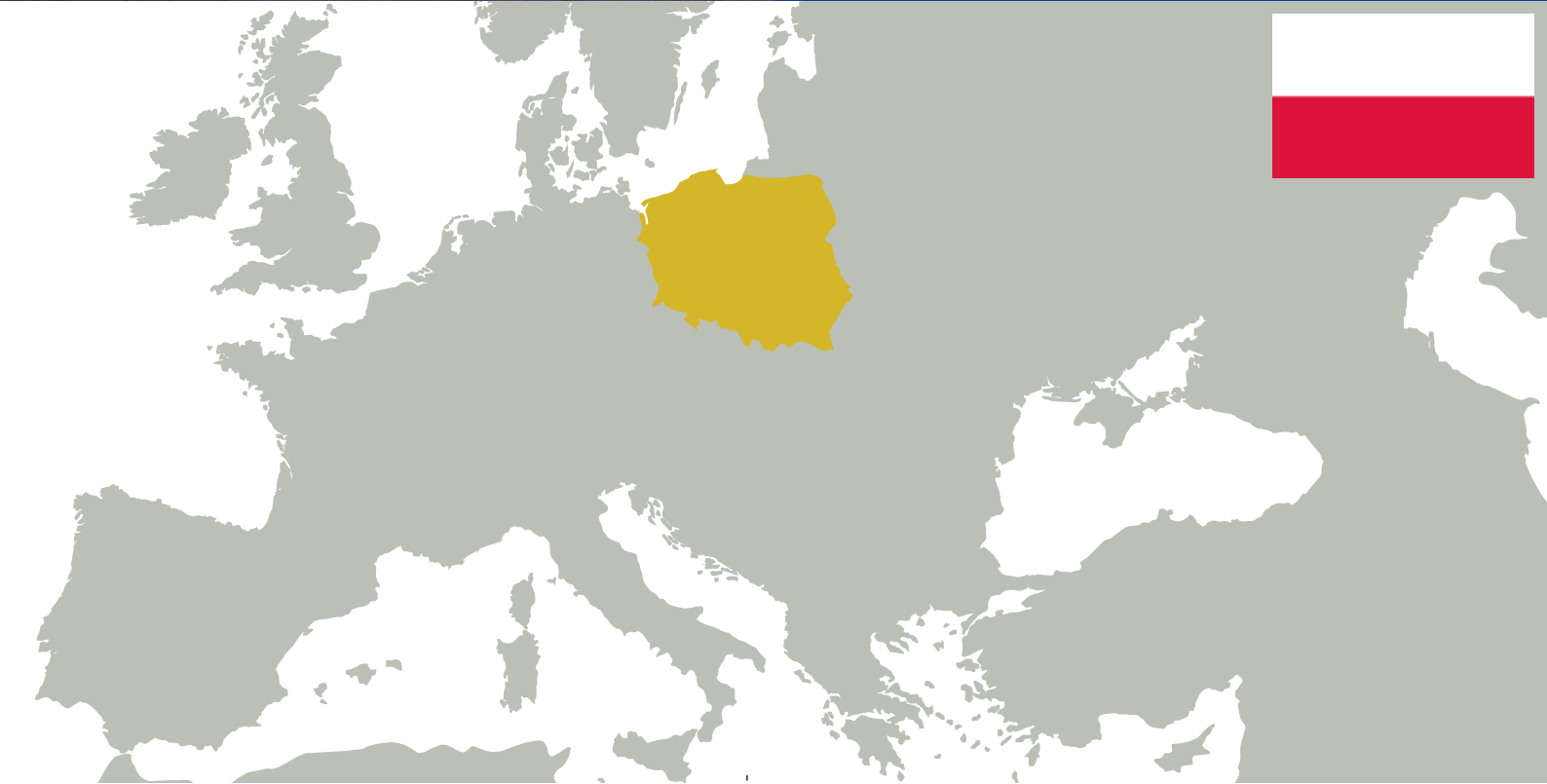




Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

NATIONAL COUNTRY MAPPING POLAND



April 2020

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

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

NATIONAL COUNTRY MAPPING POLAND

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Executive Summary

With over 1000 years of history, more than 300 cultural routes and 15 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, Poland presents a great potential not only for cultural tourism but also in terms of successful heritage management.

By signing the Enlarged Partial Agreement in 2017 Poland confirmed its interest in further development of route tourism which would be organized following European guidelines and standards promoted by the Council of Europe. While receiving the certification of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is a demanding, yet very rewarding process, the interest in participation in this very network is growing. It needs to be said, though, that the recognition of the Program is sufficient only within relatively small circles of tourist professionals, academics and some local/regional/national institutions dealing with culture.

At the same time, the benefits of participation if the networks constituting the Program are widely affirmed by the members and they include among others: access to funding opportunities available only to international consortia; international recognition of sites and monuments resulting in their higher symbolic and marketing value; possibility to learn about specific know-how of other route coordinators and operators as well as of sharing good practices

and lessons learnt; easy access to training, practical and competency-based opportunities of courses and international conferences. Yet not very many Polish members of the Program would admit that participation in it influenced the numbers of visitors.

The network of St James Pilgrim Ways plays one of the most important roles within the program not only in Poland but in Europe too. This is not surprising considering the fact that there is over 7000 km of pilgrim routes in Poland and the popularity of pilgrimage grows. One of the reasons for this is a clear and efficient management structure with the regular meeting of all national members as well as the well-rooted religious significance of this kind of tourism.

Among other routes which have gained recognition and may be definitely seen as successful one could list: The European Route of Industrial Heritage, Route of Jewish Heritage, Cistercian Route Cluniac Sites, the Route of Historic Gardens and the Hansa. Their management structures and outreach strategies are very diverse. It is clear that better communication among the members is needed, as well as some formal support from the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sports – preferably by establishing a unit devoted to cultural routes tourism, which could help with financing schemes and training opportunities.

One of the findings of the report is bigger consciousness of new paradigms in heritage, tourism and conservation resulting in attempts to apply the concepts of social inclusion, valorisation of everyday and private heritage, participative management of heritage sites and complexes where local communities are seen as major actors, promotion of minority narratives, sustainable development carried out in relation to landscape protection and intangible heritage. It is also very clear that the general understanding of routes as stabilizing structures for long term management of social capital as well as infrastructure is widely present among the Program participants, who also start to discover the potentials of interpretation-centred planning. Last but not least, cooperation with the world of academia is on the rise but also some good examples of cooperation with businesses can be found.

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are proved to be a vehicle of social change and they have a real potential for enhancement of social cohesion, quality of life and local/regional development. Yet, to fulfil their potential and successfully meet social needs, the Program needs support and considering expert recommendations based on the analysis used for the mapping for this report.

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe crossing Poland (2020)

- ▶ European Route of Industrial Heritage
- ▶ European Route of Jewish Heritage
- ▶ Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes
- ▶ Cluniac Sites in Europe
- ▶ European Cemeteries Route
- ▶ Impressionisms Routes
- ▶ Via Regia
- ▶ European Route of Cistercian Abbeys
- ▶ Viking Route
- ▶ Routes of Reformation
- ▶ European Route of Ceramics
- ▶ European Route of Historic Thermal Towns
- ▶ The Hansa
- ▶ European Route of Historic Gardens
- ▶ Destination Napoleon

Emerging themes

- ▶ Communist heritage and architecture
- ▶ Heritage of democratic opposition (Iron Trail)
- ▶ Wooden Architecture
- ▶ Medieval/feudal heritage
- ▶ Shrines of Europe.



Framing and context of the report

About this report

The need to map the domain of cultural tourism has been present for a long time and there have been several significant publications describing it. This mapping was initiated by the secretariat of the Enlarged Partial Agreement and carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport. The data was collected with the use of desk research, where all available Internet sources were gathered and analysed; survey, emailed to all recognized members of the Program in Poland (the response rate was more than 50 per cent); study visits and online consultations/meetings. Both tourist operators, as well as academics, were approached in order to include the community of professionals in the process of formulating diagnosis, expectations and evaluations regarding the main topic of the report. Reaching the goal of comprehensive analysis and interpretation was interrupted by the Pandemics of COVID-19 which dramatically changed the research environment by making it impossible to carry out study visits, as planned. Another consequence of

COVID-19 was the general lack of clear perspectives for the future actions within the Program, as all the tourism industry is suffering from different limitations and constraints. All available means of obtaining verifiable data have been used, but the situation has certainly diminished the scope of sources.

The structure of the report

Following the executive summary, the report offers an insight into the current situation in the domain of collective memory and heritage in Poland and as such is designed to support especially non-Polish possible partners. The mapping includes also the inventory of some good practices by Polish members of the Program and suggestions for emerging themes or existing routes that should be considered as potential future members. Special attention is given to several micro case studies which illustrate the developments and describe spectacular successes. SWOT analysis and expert recommendations conclude the mapping together with a list of literature for further reading.

Introductory remarks

Poland as the domain of heritage

Heritage is one of the most crucial issues that construct Poland's public discourse, and the past is considered to be one of the most important reference frameworks. Poland's confidence in having a rich history together with its citizens' activism in the field of collective memory may be one of the reasons why in 2021 there are around 300 cultural routes of all kinds⁹ and 1510 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in this country.

Since 2017 Poland has been a member of the Enlarged Partial Agreement, which remains the most important legal document concerning Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and Poland should be seen as relatively active in the field.

⁹ See: Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Gaweł, Góral „Cultural Routes as a medium for cultural change”, NID, 2015.

¹⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/poland>

The concept, as well as the label of the Program¹¹ of the certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, is gaining importance in the field of tourism, especially its cultural subdomain. The routes which are active in the Program are, however, only a small part of many diverse heritage-related activities which are a significant part of the public discourse and especially in many debates around the Polish collective identity where the past does not seem to be the most relevant reference framework.

In a very general sense, the popularity of the Program may be seen as one of several attempts to gain recognition for Poland's heritage in Europe and by Europeans. Many Poles, as much as their institutions, share and promote the image of their country as a unique place full of ubiquitous traces of the past. There are indeed many monuments and sites which may be seen as testimonies to Poland's interesting and multi-dimensional heritage. It seems, however, that the reference frameworks which are used to create coherent content out of numerous fragments of the past are not readable for those who might be potentially interested in Poland.

The reason for this is not only a general lack of knowledge about Poland's history, especially outside this country but also very specific characteristics of national heritage construction in Poland. It could be said that collective identity formation is very closely connected with Poland's mythology and not that much with the processes of its interpretation. As a result, traditional national narratives promise to be stabilizing symbolic resources in terms of identity construction but not necessarily are they used for debates about who we are, who we might be and how we imagine ourselves. It needs to be said that any contextualization of Poland's past presents a chance of enriching its identity debate, but Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe not only offer chances for expanding self-reflection but also provide Programme participants with well developed, practical tools for everyday route management.

In the following chapter, I intend to demonstrate that Poland's presence in one of the most spectacular programs of the Council of Europe offers/provides an enormous chance for the country and its citizens in terms of expanding national as well as European discourse centred around identity, and – as such – **should gain a priority status** in the activities of Poland's cultural policies. Some themes of the

Programme represented in Poland such as ??? seem to be unrelated directly to identity formation, yet even with topics such as ceramics or impressionism, they all reveal some aspects of identity-making processes. As it demands a further explanation, I will briefly present some issues connected with constituting Poland's identity discourse, where the past plays a very significant role. Poland's presence in the Program of Cultural Routes should be seen as enriching and revitalizing the discourse, but in order to fulfil this goal, it has to be recognized and acknowledged by a larger group of interest than today.

Because the past is accessible through its numerous fragments and traces, it needs to be reconstructed by its users as a coherent story. In this sense, Poland, along with many other countries, attempts to build its image by referring to its heroes rather than the diversity of the past. The reason why this is so important in the context of reflection upon the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is that participation in this program provides our country with the opportunity for wider contextualization of history which would eventually enrich the identity debate. As it will be demonstrated later on in this text, Europeanization of heritage – which is seen here as the main social process behind the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – allows to include perspectives other than Poland centred one by strengthening the paradigm of multivocality and heritage interpretation. One of the main goals of this text is to shed light on the relations between the processes of Europeanization of heritage and the practicalities as well as challenges of managing the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Poland. It will be therefore vital to present some findings regarding this topic so that the routes' potential might be developed in relation to them.

Having said this it should be expressed that no Poland's historical or cultural policies whatsoever should be seen as threatened when the multivocal/interpretive approach is fully applied. It is believed here that exposing Poland's past in its greatest complexity would have a positive effect on the public discourse as a whole. Yet, in order to achieve such a goal, the program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe must gain recognition in the country and it needs to develop its visibility on a much higher level. This process will not be successful without including national institutions such as the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage, and Sports, Polish Tourism Organisation, regional or local authorities in the activities of Poland's partners of the Program.

Heritage as a platform for identity construction

The most general, yet probably also the most important statement that should be formulated with this report, bases on the conviction that the program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe should be regarded as a platform and a tool of heritage Europeanization. While the concept of Europeanization of heritage will be elaborated and examined in greater detail in the following parts of this report, already at this point it needs to be stated very clearly that although Europeanization of heritage is seen here as processes that are centred around identity it is at the same time a perfect way of developing Poland's heritage. The program is a very unique way of celebrating the differences without seizing to be a dialogical platform for identity negotiations. It is significant, therefore, to consider it – as a whole – as an effective way of supporting civil society and democracy. In other words, Europeanization of heritage is not only far from being defined as imposing specific norms or values that would limit the Polish sense of identity. It is exactly the opposite: Poland's presence in the program is an opportunity to strengthen Poland's heritage seen as a significant part of national identity as well as provide chances of debates around shared, European identity. The attitude which characterizes the Europeanization of heritage is indeed very directly related to collective identity formation, but at the same time, it affirms its inner dynamics challenging the monolithic and univocal understanding of heritage at large. The key approach to heritage as seen from such a perspective could be found – on the one hand – in the contextualization of its diverse contents and in enhancing its participative aspect, on the other. Some other aspects which are as important but not that crucial as those mentioned above would include: competence-based education, raising social awareness or dignity based modes of interpretation of the past.

At the same time, Poland's presence in the program is much more than fulfilling its search for Europe's recognition, as it offers concrete methods for activation on the economic level. In order to analyse the Routes as institutions supporting the economic growth which accentuates sustainable development and transnational cooperation, this report will shed light on some organizational aspects of the program, as it is applied in Poland. The importance of doing this is most of all motivated by the need to look at different kinds of organizations managing the elements of the program, yet this report presumes that all of the different aspects of the Routes' activities in Poland should be analysed **concerning practices of Europeanization of heritage**.

It needs to be noted here that the diversity of the routes management strategies in Poland is huge and it reflects the differences in their organizational cultures, their philosophies of heritage and their economic goals, to name just a few. This is mainly why one of the most significant recommendations of this report will be connected with **the need to gather the managers** and participants of the Program in Poland, preferably during an event organized under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture. At the moment there is virtually no contact between the participants of the programme so it is very uncommon to be exchanging information or good practices and this could certainly be helpful.⁴ The potential for more general debate is not used either, which – when heritage is seen as a set of dynamic social practices – remains crucial.

What is also important, besides the diversity of managing strategies within the program in Poland it needs to be said that the same goes for the awareness related to participation in the European structures. For many member institutions, it is not very clear what actually the label of the Program stands for. The same should be said about the European dimension of participation in the program and especially what kind of support may be received (and given) once the route is certified and before that happens. Unfortunately, as a consequence the brand of the Program is not very strong: it is generally hardly recognized, although for many participating institutions it is seen as connected with prestige. Considering the above this report will present some of the meanings associated with the Europeanness concerning the brand of the Program. It needs to be said though that several institutions is deeply conscious and all of them declare the desire to cooperate within the wider environment of European tourism.

Translocality

Following the initial concepts lying behind any cultural route, it should be said that the direct relationship between sites and their meanings remains crucial for the effectiveness of practices related to cultural tourism. It is also undoubtedly that linearity of personal travellers' experiences, as well as networking between significant sites and experiences related to their unique characteristics, create a great potential for the Program.

Yet if the uniqueness of the sites should be observed, it should be based on the direct involvement of local communities. No matter if the cultural route is

¹¹ Whenever the term "Program" is used in this report it relates to the Programme of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in general.

more abstract than rooted in real space, it presents an opportunity to involve local communities who should be seen – in a symbolic sense – as hosts to the historic sites of their vicinity⁹. In this way, tourist experiences offered by the Routes are appreciated for their authenticity providing travellers with motivations to visit them.

On the one hand, networking of local sites should result in expanding the interpretive horizons of heritage presented with the framework. On the other hand, it is a chance for the partners to cooperate (for instance within marketing and promotion) among SMEs, NGOs and cultural institutions, but also more vertically – with the ministries and the government. Cultural routes should be seen as a laboratory for trans-local cooperation, where the European instruments are exercised in order to eventually increase the quality of life. It is Europe that is the most promising framework for trans-local cooperation and this potential should not be underestimated.

The routes

The concept of cultural routes is based on connecting meanings and ideas with places. Such connections are established based on both tangible and intangible heritage. The fact that routes cross Europe makes them a natural and engaging context for various identity negotiations. In this way, the routes may be seen as a platform for communication, where diverse elements of heritage are being presented and accessed by local communities, cultural institutions, tourists/pilgrims/travellers. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe aim to be important reference frameworks allowing all of the aforementioned to establish long-lasting relationships with Europe: its idea and its set of values.

Taking all this into account the cultural routes of the Council of Europe should be seen as dynamic and very hybrid forms of heritage institutionalization. They certainly have the potential of bridging the gap between the abstract ideology of Europe and the practicalities of heritage management, which is strictly connected with sustainable development as well as many aspects of the economy. While all these issues will be discussed in this report, first a more

⁹ According to regulations of EPA as well as recommendations of the Council of Europe, there needs to be a legal body in order to formally take part in any Route consortium.

theoretical aspect of the topic will be presented, as it should give an overview of all the components of the situation described here.

Challenge: From discrepancy to complementarity

The main idea of the approach examined below is to regard the program as a system for managing symbolic resources, where the program of the Council of Europe should be regarded as providing specific frameworks for setting priorities in the management processes. Strengthening Council of Europe's message as a critical guideline should not be seen as limiting democratic instruments of equal participation of all the program members, but much more than this promote the concept of heritage Europeanization, which itself is a fully inclusive and empowering one. (see: the chapter on Europeanization of heritage).

The history of the Council of Europe, as well as some other European institutions, proves that overcoming particularities of national, regional and local heritage should not be seen as a critical problem. It might be, however, recognized as a tool for imposing symbolic violence (for instance where a particular heritage is regarded as interpreted from the external perspective).

A very clear case where the perspective of heritage interpretation is seen as "over" European can be found in the activities of Polish Ways of St James. In Poland the activities of the Way are mainly centred around religious experiences, so cooperation with the Church is expressed as essential. As expressed in the questionnaire prepared for this report the managers are concerned about the assistance of priests who should be expected to carry out their religious duties, as this issue is not precisely defined in their formal regulations: because of the geographical scope of the route, it needs to be precise who coordinates their duties as assisting pilgrims spiritually. The members of the Polish Association of El Camino de Santiago are, however, very active, having managed to establish a repeatable scheme of encounters, where all ongoing problems can be discussed. The main activism on the Pilgrim Routes of St James should still, however, be found in organized walks along some stages of the Route.

Religion and human dimension

Probably one of the biggest and still undiscovered potentials of Poland's heritage lies in its traditionalism and especially religiosity. The problem is, however, that the sense of what is sacred and how it is celebrated is far from being obvious or at least understandable for many – mainly foreign – visitors. Faith, tradition and religion are still important elements of Polish life, and many customs and rituals connect religion with the concept of the Polish nation. For cultural tourism, where authenticity plays an important role but religion belongs to the sphere of sensitive heritage, this may create some tension. On the one hand, religion remains an intimate part of the human condition, while on the other hand, it does have an impact on local colour and as such is much appreciated by tourists.

A very general solution to this possibly conflictual relationship has been offered by the Council of Europe in its cultural route program, where the emphasis has been placed not on religious systems or dogmas, but people's stories and experiences connected with religions. In this way, several aspects of identity have been reinterpreted to allow travellers, host communities and organizing bodies to sustain the challenging balance between public and private as much as between sacred and profane. Instead of celebrating St James as a central figure in medieval Christianity, the decision was made to celebrate a community of believers and the networks of welcoming sites. In this way, religious heritage could be commemorated with respect and tolerance, yet without imposing secularity on what was seen as sacral or spiritual.

Similarly, following the spirit of Europeanization, monastic heritage present in at least two Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, is re-conceptualized mostly with regard to civilizing processes that were introduced by monks and monasteries. Architecture and art remain very important elements of monastic heritage, but what is more important is their connection with wider, civilizational currents.

Europeanization of heritage

Heritage – presented, interpreted and accessed within the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – by all means demonstrates big diversity and managing this diversity could be seen as the most important task of heritage-related institutions which operate

under European labels. Diversity is undoubtedly seen as a value constituting a large part of the European ideology, yet it would be superficial without affirming another central concept that organizes a lot of Europe's normative order. Dignity, considered widely to be a central European value, has a secure position in the world of European heritage and it can be found in many heritage narratives, sites and activities, where there is a human element... so virtually everywhere.

Dignity should be seen as a central term in the Europeanization of heritage, as accepting and affirming human value has many consequences for the shape of the civilizational discourse. In a way, dignity provides logic for tolerance and respect for others, as everyone is granted it unconditionally. In this respect, heritage becomes a very important platform for transmitting the value, for instance by highlighting the individual input into history, but also by empowering minority groups, whose voices become heard as part of the complex, pluralistic domain where the past is reinterpreted.

The program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe promotes such diversity based on dignity for instance by supporting networks based on themes where the difference is cherished. In Poland, the Reformation Routes (represented by four monuments of Lower Silesia) may be seen as a good example of focusing on the non-dominant aspects of social life. Even though they sometimes may be seen as marginal, they all shed light on much more than the identity of minority groups, reflecting much wider phenomena. At the same time singularity of such sites and monuments which are connected with minority groups often constitute major tourist attractions: their uniqueness and singularity are undoubted. What's more, storytelling centred around religion always requires high sensitivity, even if the narrative concerns mainly history. For the sake of strengthening democracy, it is also very important to recognize the different views presented by non-dominant groups.

Other values, which play big parts in the European universe of meanings and as such have a huge impact on heritage, are progress and utility. While the first one reflects civilizational optimism and in a way affirms the right direction Europeans have chosen, it also marks ambiguities connected with a social price that is paid for many technological developments. With Industrial Revolution being a sign of dramatic social change at a very high price, reconsidering progress results in a lot of consequences found in European heritage – it is where official histories need to be balanced with individual testimonies and private heritages. On the other hand, the Holocaust

made it impossible to accept progress as a central civilizational value leaving Europe with a sense of loss and identity confusion. They both might be overcome, however, by referring to the spirit of utility, very well rooted in the Renaissance and polished by the Enlightenment thinkers. Utility may be also seen as one of the pillars of contemporary education, where competency-based learning reflects the idea of ???

Social participation and social inclusion are also important elements of contemporary heritage, including route tourism. It has become undisputed that host communities should be granted special rights in interpreting their heritage, but it also needs to be mentioned that there are more and more opportunities for travellers to make an impact on tourism-related situations. Models of exchange and network-based cooperation present many chances for promoting sustainable tourism but also require good content-based management.

It needs to be stressed that Route tourism gives many splendid opportunities for including diverse voices which otherwise would be difficult to listen to. The reason for this is that in monuments that are interpreted traditionally it is mostly official history that is told, while the voices of backstage and background actors are excluded. Yet, as the Cultural Routes offer a different pace of sightseeing it becomes easier to redesign storytelling as well as reflect on the whole programs of education to make them more multidimensional and diverse.

Finally, heritage becomes a very complex set of social practices which are all centred around identity, stimulating its negotiations. Europeanization of heritage should be seen as its democratization, with emphasis on the inclusion of minority narratives, social inclusion and empowerment of local communities. Dignity together with diversity remains two key reference frameworks, adding an important value to heritage interpretation. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe may be seen as agents of Europeanization of heritage, yet at the same time, they support and sustain national, regional and local identities. Europeanization should be understood as a general approach to heritage, where the human dimension is fundamental, while the past does not cease to be the domain of diversity, (at least) as much as contemporary life is. It needs to be made clear, however, that unlike the natural experience of everyday life, which is always intermediated by culture, there is no direct access to the past, which is only available with its fragments which need to be contextualized and narrated. This tendency for narrativity characterizes heritage as a whole but

for Europe, it could also be seen as a sign of special awareness connected with the dynamics of heritage promoting general self-reflection as well as critical thinking.

Last but not least, European Cultural Routes demonstrate that despite its diversity, Europe can be seen as a complex community based on some shared ideas. The efforts of imagining Europe as one collective being are strengthened by processes of sharing, interpreting and promoting heritage in different forms. The program plays a major role in establishing long-lasting relationships with a heritage which in turn should lead to reinforcing democratic public discourse.



SWOT analysis

The following analysis is a summary of desk research, a survey carried out among the route operators, study visits and online consultations with tourist experts (both independent and affiliated with the academia or tourist organisations). It should be noted that the findings should be related mainly to the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe but they need to be contextualized as a part of the domain of cultural tourism, heritage management and social capital.

Strengths

1. Poland is very rich in diverse and hybrid historical heritage that can serve as objects of cultural tourism, so the potential for creating and developing cultural routes based on relevant contents is very promising.
2. Landscapes and natural diversity make Poland

a perfect tourist destination, especially when it is combined with historical resources such as monuments. These assets however are not sufficiently used in the promotion of Poland.

3. Heritage is a very significant element of Polish identity and as such is widely recognized as a domain to be protected, conserved and researched, therefore heritage-related activities are more than superficial. Therefore the program of cultural routes gives opportunities for further development of conscious, sustainable and identity-related tourism, but most of all it allows to contextualize Poland's heritage and as such increase its relevancy.
4. Professionalization of tourism in terms of competent staff, many different organizations involved in the domain, general valorisation of heritage in diverse forms and experience with various sources.
5. Mostly due to the accession to the EU and the

possibility to use the EU funds for culture and cultural infrastructure many monuments and heritage sites have been restored. Many of them have significantly increased accessibility standards as well as improved their communication/marketing strategies.

6. There are several good academic centres where tourism is researched. Scholars specializing in tourism studies are generally in close contacts with tourism professionals, with whom they eagerly exchange ideas during conferences and other professional meetings. It is also true that their work is taken into account by many tourist and regional authorities.
7. The consciousness regarding intangible heritage has been much bigger nowadays than two decades back.
8. Poland has very strong pilgrimage and hiking traditions, which contextualize most tourism activities, including cultural route tourism. At the same time recontextualizing, these routes as cultural routes remain to be a huge challenge.
9. An interpretational shift in heritage where official, monolithic History has been replaced by more hybrid, human-oriented heritage has reshaped the scene. The interpretational approach to the past makes it easier to see heritage as a significant part of the processes of heritage Europeanization, which should be seen as empowering the domain of heritage as well as public discourse as a whole.
10. Thematic tourism (and its various products) have gained an unquestionable position as providing an offer for holidays and free time, especially for family tourism, but also as a significant part of professional tourism. In this respect, cultural routes may enrich the offer of cultural tourism.

Weaknesses

1. The program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe has very low recognition in Poland while its monuments and sites remain to be tourist attractions that are not referred to as the route members. At the moment the program is recognized mainly by tourist professionals and researchers.
2. For the majority of actors involved in tourism and heritage, it is not evident nor clear what the benefits of joining the program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are. Since members often need to pay membership fees, the decision concerning participation in the

program often requires convincing local/regional authorities in which case it is very challenging to proceed with payments due to bureaucratic limitations.

3. The infrastructure allowing to accommodate tourists still needs improvement, especially considering the potential impact of family/organised tourism on local economies, where overnight stays result in bigger spendings on local SME and their products. Therefore it needs to be accentuated that membership in the Program strengthens capacity for effective and sustainable management of infrastructure (including investing in roads, conservation of monuments and accommodation) not only in tourism.
4. Very low accessibility of many sites and monuments located in small villages, especially churches, combined with scarce information about opening hours.
5. Route related monuments/heritage sites located in metropolitan areas get excluded from marketing policies aimed at coherence in terms of the solid brand of the cities, which often choose to promote themselves with iconic monuments/heritage sites that are valorised for their immediate recognition.
6. Solely religious (as opposed to cultural) interpretation of heritage (abbeys, churches, shrines, pilgrim routes) limits the potential of diversity based heritage interpretation. It needs to be stated that religion is only one element of social and cultural life, whereas in pilgrim routes democratization and focus on the human dimension should be promoted.
7. There is a weak recognition of recreational walking tourism as a way of spending free time, due to lack of necessary infrastructure (accommodation) but also due to attachment to religious pilgrim tourism as the main form of walking tourism.
8. The management structure of most of the routes lacks clarity and transparency which results in weak coordination of the activities of the routes.
9. The charters and conventions are not known widely enough to be effectively implemented.

Opportunities

1. Make better use of the landscape and historical resources as the basis for cultural routes of the Council of Europe especially by integrating the following topics and themes: wooden

architecture, the heritage of communism, river and water tourism (especially The Hansa Route could be reorganized with the use of the river tourism infrastructure). Ecological initiatives and sources of funding that aim to promote renewable energy sources could be successfully integrated with the financial strategies of the routes.

2. Promote the idea of the Routes as a way of sustainable management of heritage infrastructure as well as heritage content without limiting it only to tourism. It needs to be accentuated that for the local leaders it is more important to invest in infrastructure than in intangible/cultural products so it needs to be clear that the cultural routes are most of all effective tools for managing heritage resources.
3. Framing Poland's heritage in the European context is a chance for promoting less popular topics and sites without the necessity for nation centred interpretation.
4. Encourage the use of e-learning and other tools/materials prepared by and shared within the Route4u initiative because they make a comprehensive base for route management. The materials and e-learning programs should be promoted by local and regional tourist agencies, central administration including the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sport.
5. Promote the knowledge gathered in databases of good practices developed by the EPA team instead of looking for funds for – for instance – experimental better accessibility implementation.
6. Support further involvement in cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region by activating sailing and underwater tourism as well as sea-related heritage sites and museums (lighthouses, harbours, fishing towns and villages).
7. There is a big potential in connecting with university networks (such as Una Europa, Coimbra Group etc) in order to produce and supervise transnational research projects which would investigate heritage-related issues.
8. Poland boasts of maintaining a number of very good museums, which should be incorporated into the routes as meaningful social actors and experts in heritage. In this way, the routes would benefit from their knowledge, skills know-how and promotional impact.
9. Connecting with existing institutions of culture on different levels in order to create partnerships allowing to strengthen research and outreach policies would enrich the creative and institutional

potential of the routes.

10. Strengthening collaboration with organisations involved in Jewish heritage which promote the idea of interpretive and inclusive cultures of memory, where the Holocaust is not the only framework of reference could be an empowering way of overcoming much of Poland's collective trauma.
11. Promotion of capacity building and social/civic awareness by promoting training, supporting local initiatives leading to establishing local archives of oral history as well as collections consisting of private and personal objects of memory which would support the content of the routes with testimonies and records of the past.
12. Encourage museums of all levels to participate in the program of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe so that the content of the routes can be presented and interpreted with the use of museum collections and infrastructure.
13. Decreasing numbers of international flights may attract more visitors to national monuments and heritage sites which will be seen as easier accessible than the ones that require longer (and more exhaustive) travelling.
14. Contextualizing Polish heritage in the European framework of interpretation provides Poles with pride and a sense of significance, which may effectively be used in promotion and marketing
15. The Internet remains to be seen as the main competitor of cultural tourism within the domain of free time. By all means, it should be included in the schemes of sightseeing.

Threats

1. Route tourism and specifically Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are not commonly seen as tools for the management of infrastructure and heritage in general, instead of being reduced to tourism and place marketing. As a result, the potential of – among others - good practices and learning resources accumulated in the Program is not used.
2. Conscious implementation of the Landscape Convention and the Faro Convention as well as other guidelines for protection and valorization of intangible heritage needs to be promoted as a good way of managing social and cultural capital. It is especially important to reconstruct the discourses of local and regional heritage with

the use of concepts such as «cultural landscape» and «social memory» as ideas that may enrich the management of recent heritage including the dissonant one. It is a real threat that these documents may remain unused and irrelevant.

3. Transnational “sun and sand” tourism may effectively compete with cultural tourism as it is seen as a source of instant gratitude.
4. The pandemics of COVID-19 remains to be an external threat that is very difficult to deal with, as it freezes most of tourism while alternative solutions to COVID related situation are not very successful. It is not very clear how the situation within tourism will evolve, especially in terms of SME active in the field before the pandemics.
5. Insufficient funding allowing to employ staff who would provide supervision over route activities, especially networking.
6. Seeing cultural tourism as an enemy to religious values in cases of – primarily - religious heritage.
7. Heritage remains to be vulnerable due to potential abuses by politics (and sometimes also from commerce and business actors)

To sum up, it is vital to promote the visibility of the Program, but it is even much more important to communicate what the benefits of participation in it really are. On the one hand, the program should gain much bigger recognition among tourists, but on the other hand, it should be promoted as a way of heritage (and social capital) management that can be successfully used on many levels.



Inventory of Cultural Routes related activities at national level

1. Good Practice: Museum//Tyniec Abbey// Cluniac Sites of Europe

The museum is managed by an NGO established by the abbey. The organization is also responsible for coordinating all the cultural activities run at the Benedictine abbey of Tyniec. Although the main theme of the museum is the history of the site as a monastery, its own vision is much more cultural than religious. The museum organizes temporary exhibitions which all originate with a complex conceptualization of monasticism and related topics. The exhibitions are always accompanied by educational activities with very well-received family weekend workshops. The educational program is competency-based and there is always a European dimension present in the exhibitions.

Among the titles of the exhibitions one can find: Saint Gregory: Why Was He Great? In search of the roots of European unity (2012), The Dream of Cluny (2013); Into the Paradise... History and symbolism of the monastic cloister garden (2014), The heartbeat of the desert. Symbolism and history (2015) By the cross, by quill and by plough: The Benedictine Order in the Christianization of Poland(2016), In the Monastic Scriptorium (2018) or in the monastic pharmacy (2020). The selection of the themes accentuates the interpretive character of the museum, but it may be also seen as proof that cultural program does not need to be seen as a threat to its religious significance.

2. Good Practice: Project combining research, local animation, tourism and social participation.

Shtetl Routes - Jewish heritage cultural tourism trail in the borderland of Poland, Ukraine and Belarus is a perfect example of a transborder cultural project where heritage acts as means for social integration. It may be seen as a way of strengthening human capital through swift collaborations with local communities which act as informers and memory keepers. It was a successful project linking places with memories and making both of them accessible. The balance between conservation and interpretation was perfectly sustained, while the leader, Teatr Brama Grodzka, acted "as a bridge" between the past and the present by revitalizing human stories. Membership in the European Route of Jewish Heritage gave the leaders and other participants opportunities for learning and exchanging skills and know-how, especially within the domain of heritage interpretation. A guidebook was one of the results of the project making it an excellent tourist companion available for everyone ready to discover a kind of Atlantis, the land which does not exist anywhere else but in the past of Jewish towns. The following passage describes the spirit in which tourists are encouraged to follow the Route.

We do not promise that everything will run smoothly and pleasantly. We promise you will learn an important part of European history and see the wonderful cultural heritage in places you might have never heard of before. We promise you will meet interesting people and hear interesting stories, but sometimes you can be tired or full of emotions. Such a journey can be an important experience. There are people for whom the trip to the old shtetls was the most important journey of a lifetime. Shtetl Routes is an expedition that asks the traveller different, sometimes difficult, questions. Find out what questions it will ask you.



3. Good Practice: Research-driven thematisation

"Citri et Aurea": Project coordinated by Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, a member of the European Route of Historic Gardens is a perfect example of cooperation which originated from research and evolved into a sustainable tourist product. Moreover, in the network, there is a clear consciousness regarding management and networking. Regular professional events are held and the meetings are devoted to specific topics. The exchange scheme between gardeners will also be launched, which will foster a further exchange of skills and know-how.

The strategic partner of the project is Gallerie degli Uffizi - Boboli Gardens. The cooperation of our institutions was initiated in 2017 thanks to the European Trail of Historical Gardens. Individually conducted research and queries on the past of our residences allowed us to reach historical threads that fit into the revalorization programs of both objects, i.e. the reconstruction and maintenance of historical citrus collections. The project has had wide coverage in Europe and is the first of its kind. He is also patronized by ERHG as an organization that made dialogue between Wilanów and Florence possible. The project, both in its first and second phase, also animated many other partners, including the Polish Institute in Rome, the Research Station of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Rome and the Italian Institute in Warsaw. Our partner was also the Polish Tourist Organization. Apart from our individual efforts, PAP and our partners from Italy also strove for media coverage.

In the second phase of the program implemented last year, other residential buildings from Poland were also invited to participate: Łazienki Królewskie in Warsaw, and Nieborów, also with «citrus» traditions. As far as we know, the project also had an impact on the academic community in Poland, which started research programs in the field of citrus cultivation.

4. Small event //European Cemetery Route//Podgórze.pl

In Podgórze, which is nowadays a district of Krakow, there is a historical cemetery that has significantly changed due to the involvement of local volunteers associated with Podgórze.pl, NGO gathering activists and inhabitants of the district. The association joined the European Association of Significant Cemeteries and organizes a yearly event with guiding tours on the site of the Cemetery. Their work is not, however, limited to running this very popular event but they also actively renovate the tombs and most of all communicate various facts and stories from Podgórze with the use of their website. As far as Europeanization of heritage is concerned, Podgórze.pl proves to be applying successfully qualities of storytelling, which are the means for valorizing local, urban, non-official heritage. Membership in the European network of Significant Cemeteries allowed the place to gain recognition among the European historical towns, but the association's research-based projects and engaging volunteers should be seen as a model for local groups gathering activists and experts.

5. Micro-case study: St James Pilgrim Routes in Poland

Good practice: start off with revitalization

The Pilgrim Routes of St James which cross Poland provide interesting examples of management and institutionalization of heritage, where infrastructure project became an initial step for further developments. As far as processes of Europeanization of heritage are concerned, this is also a very good example of embodying values such as social inclusion and dignity, while narrativity of the route remains the central axis to the construction of this tourist product.

In the years 2010 - 2014 the city of Łębork implemented the international project «Revitalization of the European cultural route in the South Baltic area - the Pomeranian Way of St. Jakub (RECRreate) "thanks to significant EU funding through the South Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Program. The Municipality of the City of Łębork was the lead beneficiary of the project, which was joined by 10 partners from 3 countries (Lithuania, Poland, Germany), with the cooperation/consultation of 5 associated organizations.

The value/status of the European cultural route was exposed from the very beginning of work on the reactivation of the pilgrimage route, which

functioned in our area already in the Middle Ages - it was not marked, but was frequented, and the main holy places visited by the medieval pilgrim on his way to Santiago de Compostela were known (eg the churches of St. Jacob in Gdańsk, Łębork, Szczecin and the sanctuary of Our Lady of the Three Times the Wonderful on Góra Chełmska). Places worth visiting have been supplemented with contemporary sacred sites and sanctuaries as well as tourist attractions located in the medieval «pilgrimage corridor». The detailed course at www.re-create.pl

(retrieved from the survey)

It is important to note that the example of St James Pilgrim Routes in Poland, similarly to some cases in other national networks, proves that cooperation between grassroots initiatives and governing bodies/ regional authorities can work really well. Starting off by taking care of the monuments in danger was a very logical decision, but European regulations connected with bigger social inclusion, civic participation and long term sustainability of the sites - carried out concerning social capital.

It needs to be added, however, that Catholic Church remains to be the main actor in terms of infrastructure management the cultural character of the route is not always fully sustained.

Still, it must be said that the Route operates with huge successes and has been constantly developed according to the highest standards. It should be noted that the following list, which includes only some examples of the Route's activities, demonstrates not only very good strategic thinking but can be treated as a model example for many smaller networks, too.

The inventory of good practices and activities at the Pomeranian Route of St James include:

- supplementing the signage, every year at most stages, with the help of volunteers and financial support (purchase of materials) from local governments;
- updating and making available GPS traces for download;
- co-organizing variously called St James Days around the name day of St. James the Apostle, Patron of the Way, on July 25 (Tolkmicko, Gdańsk, Łębork, Łeba, Szczecin);
- organizing cyclical meetings with pilgrims / camineros who have reached the cathedral of St.

James in Santiago de Compostela (Elbląg, Gdańsk, Łęborg);

e) organizing one-day / weekend group walks of 1-2 stages of the Route (Elbląg, Gdańsk, Łęborg);

f) distribution of pilgrim passports accepted on all European Camino routes;

g) awarding badges for completing a certain number of stages of the Way (PTTK in Słupsk) and the Certificate of completing the Pomeranian Way of St. James (Cathedral of St. James in Szczecin);

h) preparation for the celebration of the Holy Year of Compostela in 2021.

All the above activities are strictly connected with the concept of route tourism (signage of the trails, badges, walks) but they also demonstrate high consciousness in terms of the network management (regular meetings) as well as connection to the European network (Holy Year celebrations).



6. Micro-case study: European Route of Industrial Heritage in Poland

Industry, social change connected with technological development and the price societies pay for it are all excellent themes which are successfully used within the domain of European cultural tourism. Poland offers a big number of stunning technological monuments, which include mines, breweries or electric plants to name just a few. It is especially the region of Upper Silesia that is very active in the promotion of their industrial heritage and many of the sites remain in close collaboration realizing that they all benefit from the cooperation. It needs to be said that the cooperation is very strongly supported by the regional authorities, which provides some funding for collaborative projects within the network in the region. Not only the region of Upper Silesia consciously promotes its identity as deriving from the mining but they emphasise the transformation they are going through despite numerous difficulties. The sites and organizations associated in the Route enjoy the success of their common yearly event which should be seen as a celebration of Silesian spirit and it deservingly gathers huge audiences every year. "Industriada" is a feast co-organized in collaboration with NGOs, regional authorities, municipalities and diverse sites, several of which are also present in the European Route of Industrial Heritage. It takes place in June and is thematised differently every year, with contemporary themes that seem to be very relevant for the regional identity.

It should be noted that the Upper Silesian Part of the route is very well networked internally (within the regional group) but it also has important links with international partners. If one adds to this support from the Marshall office, it is no surprise that the Polish part of the route may boast of being a major attraction for tourists and their audiences are quite diverse, with families being the largest group. The sites and monuments of the Route are in general very well presented, and – as far as it is possible – accessible. Their marketing strategies are very much identity-related and many of the sites invest in interpretive training dedicated to them.

In terms of Europeanization of heritage, it should be noted that the Route is a very good example of storytelling based on the significant European concepts of progress and sustainable development.

What makes the route an especially good case of Europeanized heritage is, however, a very visible shift from official history to private and personal histories. Both during the event ("Industriada") and in specific sightseeing concepts, the presence of people's heritage plays a major part and this is certainly one of the strongest points of the Route. It is also

probably the most important element of heritage democratization, as it stems from a general vision of the world with a human as a measure for the universe, the idea strongly rooted in the European program.

Finally, it needs to be said that all who responded to the questions of the survey highly value their participation and collaboration with the European Route of Industrial Heritage and accentuate their pride in involvement in WorkitOut. Day of Industrial Culture. The members of the Polish network meet regularly and are generally very satisfied by their participation in ERIH.

7. Impressionisms Routes/ Vistula Museum in Kazimierz Dolny

It is vital to recognize impressionism as one of those artistic trends that completely transformed European culture in a number of ways. Regarding tourism, impressionism should be seen as focusing on the direct act of seeing, valorising the outdoors and introducing the concept of an impression as a valid mode of recording reality. The dynamics between reality and its interpretation has always been an important part of esthetics, but since the dawn of impressionism, it has influenced much of everyday experiences.

Poland is represented in the Impressionisms Routes by Vistula Museum located in a spectacular town of Kazimierz Dolny, a legendary place of immense picturesque views, at the same time still being a quiet refuge to all who suffer fatigue by cosmopolitan life. The Museum has a very big potential of presenting the dynamics between the environment and different forms of adaptation to it, but most of all invites to celebrate great landscapes created by the river Vistula. The place has a big potential to inspire their visitors with promoting and problematizing "creative attitude to reality"⁹ as it has been exercised in the town of Kazimierz Dolny, a famous place for all artists and their fans. The idea of the museum is very accurate and it is quite active in many collaborative projects of big thematic scope. It should be said, however, that their participation in the European network should be more visible and would greatly enrich the collections with European contextualization allowing to discover diverse "impressionisms" and their impact on lives of Europeans. The museum attracts visitors who are interested in gaining knowledge about local history, but it is also a perfect site for promoting competence-based education.

9 <https://mnkd.pl/>



Potential for new Cultural Routes initiatives emerging at the national level

1. Heritage of communism

The past of the communist era is often described as dissonant. Due to its connection with some collective traumas and tragedies, it is not an easy theme to be interpreted and presented as tourist attractions. At the same time, this period of the past is still a very important element of Poland's identity discourse, also due to many traces and monuments it has left behind.

It is therefore recommended to consider joining the route of totalitarian architecture, ATRIUM, by interested parties, especially some new socialist towns (such as Nowa Huta in Krakow) and representative monuments such as Warsaw's Palace of Culture and Science. Academic centres in Poland are very advanced in mapping and researching dissonant tourism so it would be very beneficial to use their findings.

2. Heritage of democratic changes (Iron trail)

Poland's recent history is abundant in events that still remain relevant frameworks for debates in and outside the country. It would be recommended to join the Iron Trail Route or complement the interpretation of communist heritage by testimonies and sites representing the democratic opposition and grassroots reactions to the system of oppression.

3. Wooden Architecture

Poland's wooden architecture is a worldwide phenomenon and routes devoted to its conservation and promotion already exists proving to be major tourist attractions. Receiving European certification could present some problems, though, if one considers accessibility or transnational collaboration. There are, however, efforts to extend the Polish Route of Wooden Architecture to Ukraine and joining the European network would certainly help in further development of this – otherwise not very well developed - tourist product.

Among cultural routes of Poland, one may find many local and regional networks devoted to diverse specific themes. It would be recommended to conduct a survey among tourist professionals and heritage academics where new, promising themes could be found. Some already existing routes such as the Route of Fortresses might be ready to join the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, but their operators are usually not aware of this opportunity.

4. Feudal Europe (?)

Among many well established thematic routes functioning in Poland, several are connected with local dynasties and/or events that are not considered to have European significance and as such unable for getting a certification of the Council of Europe. A good example of such a case is the Gryfites route in Pomerania coordinated by Marshal Office. Although it would be hard to include it (and similar routes) into the existing network of the Program, it might be interesting to think of a wider umbrella theme that would connect minor European Routes narrating the past connected with the feudal era.

5. Shrines of Europe

Attempts have been made to establish a route connecting „Shrines of Europe” which would link places of worship such as Czestochowa or Loreto. The initiative is certainly interesting especially as it can be supported by schemes of collaboration of towns and cities, the problem is, however, that it is only designed to include catholic shrines (despite the fact that the name suggests universality).



Recommendations

Expert recommendations

The following recommendations are results of consultations carried out with cultural route operators and managers as well as tourist professionals, especially academics. Many ideas listed below were expressed as responses to the survey carried out for this report among the members of the program of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. Instrumental were also working meetings with the representative of the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sports.

General recommendations

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe should be seen as an effective tool of heritage management, by far extending the scope of their influence beyond the domain of tourism. Among several arguments for further implementation of the Program of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe which are listed below, it is essential to recognize their potential

regarding:

Sustainable development based on regional as well as transnational collaborations resulting in infrastructural investments, economic growth and strengthening civil societies centred around democratic cultures of memory;

integrated management of complex tourist products, where heritage becomes a platform integrating different actors of top-down as well as bottom-up initiatives and organizations;

valuable symbolic resources which can be used for promotion of Poland and as a reference framework for relevant, heritage centred, identity debates;

Europeanization of heritage in general, where the concepts of human dignity, the rule of law, equal opportunities and social inclusion should be seen as central values in the process of heritage interpretation and its conservation while the charters and conventions should find appropriate environments to be applied;

Further integration of academics and other researchers dealing with tourism with route coordinators, operators and other members of the networks in order to create synergies leading to better social cohesion where the shared European values remain guidelines for common projects.

Furthermore in terms of specific recommendation concerning the potential of the Program the following suggestions should be considered. **It is strongly advised that the Ministry of National Heritage, Culture and Sports establishes a separate unit devoted to Cultural Routes, if possible.** As it was frequently expressed by tourist operators there is a strong sense of underappreciation of their work and they often wish for recognition and better support from the national level.

Specific recommendations for the Ministry and other government agencies

- ▶ Because strategic management of heritage resources is very demanding in terms of conceptualization, planning and financing – to name just a few elements – it is essential that all the relevant ministries create strategic alliances which would influence future policies. It is vital to consider closer collaboration between the Ministry of National Heritage, Culture and Sports with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other related ministries. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – in order to be certified and in swift-running condition- need to have researched their topics, themes etc. As such, the knowledge produced as a result of research activities, as well as many social results stemming from cultural-social animation with local communities, present priceless resources to be used in internal and international campaigns promoting Poland, also as alternatives to popular iconic landmarks.
- ▶ Following many suggestions made by tourist operators, it would be advisable to create a common platform (a website/ Internet forum) for cultural routes which would be based on real collaboration between various interested parties. There is a strong need for exchanges of good practices as well as curiosity and interest in meeting colleagues who face similar problems.
- ▶ It is essential to promote knowledge about financing tools that can be used for route management as well as training and other forms of capacity building among the staff involved in running objects and sites participating in the

program as well as aspiring to be members.

- ▶ It is advisable to initiate regular meetings of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Poland. Such events would be a chance for the routes to present themselves as well as initiate common projects and activities. This would also be an opportunity to highlight the involvement of the Ministry in the activities of the program.
- ▶ Regular meetings of the members of the program could be hosted by them in the sites associated with the routes, but the involvement of the Ministry would certainly be a key element in their success, as the routes already are highly dispersed so it is very challenging for them to create a common platform for exchange and cooperation.
- ▶ Websites promoting Poland's cultural route tourism should be translated and available in many languages, while those which are only available in main European languages should be translated into Polish. It is advisable that a micro-grant scheme for translations and text editing is established by the ministry. It is absolutely crucial to inform regional and local authorities about the potential and opportunities resulting from participation in the program, especially: the immediate benefit of using existing e-learning materials for training purposes; the added value of participating in European consortia; promotional benefits of presenting own heritage as a part of European symbolic resources as well as multiplying messages.
- ▶ It would be highly recommendable for the Polish networks connected with the Council of Europe Cultural Routes to get in touch with other (non-CoE) routes in order to create a common campaign promoting the concept of route tourism. It would be beneficial especially for the brand of the Routes of the Council of Europe to be visibly present in a wider context of cultural and route tourism affirming that there is a spirit and praxis of mutual cooperation among them, even though they are labelled differently.
- ▶ It is believed that the promotion of CoE routes should be executed within the wider framework of route tourism, but the label itself should be demonstrated as a strong one providing many benefits for the participants. Creating a common label of quality cultural routes could also be one of the ways in which different routes could cooperate strengthening not only their specific labels but also the concept of responsible, yet satisfying travelling. It would be highly appreciated if the tools developed by Routes4U could be promoted, even outside the program, as this would certainly enhance activism and management skills within

the program. Still, the label of the Council of Europe should be promoted as a very beneficial one and by gaining wider recognition it would certainly attract more participants, some of which are already associated in some other networks.

- ▶ Another opportunity from the cooperation with academia should be found in theoretical advancements that could be made in relation with the routes, which create an interesting topic for specific research but also allow to build more general reflection concerning identity-related processes, heritage or conservation, to name just a few. The effective way of introducing such collaboration and/or establishing the frameworks for activities related to academic work should be found in B.A. and/or M.A. thesis contests, where a regular call for candidates would be announced. Such initiative could be managed by specific routes or sites, but it would be much easier if the Ministry of Culture (preferably with the Ministry of Science and Education) would inaugurate a program of support. The framework can be launched when cooperation between the route managers and other partners is established. The yearly meeting would be a perfect occasion for choosing the topics for calls, but some seed financing should be provided, too.
- ▶ It is also essential to inform route managers about possibilities of conducting small research projects at the research universities, where funding schemes exist and with the encouragement from the routes could be used for the common development of the research.
- ▶ Further cooperation within the Baltic region countries should be encouraged, and it would be advisable to work on strategic documents concerning closer cooperation between Poland and other Baltic states supporting collaboration between SMEs and heritage sites.

Recommendations for regional authorities and regional tourist organizations

- ▶ Regional and local authorities should be strongly encouraged to include support for Cultural Routes in their strategies of tourism development
- ▶ Cooperate with universities and professional training centres. The mutual benefit is based on a simple presumption: universities conduct research as well as teaching so there is a constant need to be in contact with various institutions. It is especially important when these are elaborated and students find it very valuable to work on

topics that reflect the real needs. As the cultural routes offer a high level of interdisciplinarity of approaches, it would be recommended to initiate cooperation with university faculties of tourism, history, management of culture or social sciences, as the routes are genuine platforms where social dynamics can be observed and studied. What is also important, students with the help of their teachers could take part in the evaluation processes of the existing activities and frameworks, and also preparing specific thematic areas, needed for the development of the routes in sites. The program would certainly benefit from such input, also in terms of consumption of the knowledge that would be produced in response to specific needs.

- ▶ Poland's heritage of the communist era should be included in a more general context of European history. It is recommended to consider joining ATRIUM, the route of totalitarian architecture, but diverse activities aiming at the documentation of both recent past and memory should be also carried out on local levels. Interpretation of recent heritage results in its recognition as relevant as well as allowing for social participation in its creation.
- ▶ Poland's sea heritage should receive special recognition and consequently, the existing routes such as the route of the lighthouses should be promoted with the Baltic Region.
- ▶ Oral history archives ought to be created in connection with Cultural routes, especially as their functioning is always connected with collaborations on many levels which makes it possible to organise training and other forms of support for such projects. Oral and private history also make an important part of dissonant heritage management. Information about training opportunities and sources of funding in terms of oral history archives should be available on the Polish website for cultural routes operators and managers. It is recommended to cooperate with cultural institutions which already have experience in the field (for instance KARTA).

Additional conclusions for all parties involved and interested

- **Encourage heritage interpretation**

Cultural tourism, especially in its European dimension, could be seen as fed by heritage interpretation. One could say that monuments remain mute if they are left on their own without attempts to make them meaningful: with the help of storytelling, creativity of the guides or including personal and non-official parts of

history in the content that is communicated. It is, therefore, crucial to building on the dynamics of heritage by encouraging the interpretive approach within the activities of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Poland. As it was presented in the earlier part of this report, Poland's general tendency to conserve the past without much critical reflection upon it could be seen as an obstacle in setting dialogic platforms for identity debates.

- **Spread the information**

One of the results of the survey which was conducted for the needs of this report shows that there is little knowledge about the Program among the route operators. What makes things even more difficult is the fact that even big cities formally involved in the Program are not fully aware of this fact. (This is an important finding to be considered especially by EPA and the Council of Europe).

It is therefore advisable for the route managers to be informing their partners about their participation in the Program, as this knowledge could be mutually beneficial. Many sites located outside most popular tourist destinations could use their presence in the Program when they seek financial support in their activities, especially in the renovation and conservation of monuments. The brand of the Council of Europe can definitely play a positive role in supporting their applications, but also should be always mentioned in diverse lobbying activities.

Network and exchange

The need to exchange information, knowledge, experiences and know-how between network partners needs to be awoken, affirmed and answered for. As it is proved by the survey, there is very little cooperation between the Routes but also within the programs. Because many of the Routes are financed by volunteers (European Cemetery Route) there are no funds to cover the expenses of trips to yearly gatherings of the Coordinating association. As a result, Polish members do not have a lot of knowledge about other activities of their network although they see how important professional meetings in person are.

This is why it is highly recommended to find stable ways of financing networking among the members of the Routes. As such costs are not

very high if covered by regional or municipal activities, it is recommended to discuss such option with official partners of the Routes such as municipalities.

All Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe operate as international, translocal and interpersonal networks. It is only when this aspect of the Program is fully exploited by the participating organizations, the dispersed management of the sites can be seen as being effective. This is why it is recommended for the Program participants and especially its European coordinators to re-evaluate forms of networking and make sure the information is distributed. The point is to go beyond formal schemes of exchange (which need to be formulated with every certified route anyway) but to discover the best ways of managing networks and apply them.

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Useful websites

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe official website of the Programme

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

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Poland

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

Routes4U

<https://routes4u.culture-routes.net/>

Ministry of Culture, National Heritage and Sports

<https://www.gov.pl/web/kulturasport/szlaki-kulturowe-rady-europy>

National Heritage Institute

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<https://nck.pl/en/badania/raporty/raport-szlaki-kulturowe-jako-medium-zmian-w-kul>

Annexes

1. Maps of places involved in Shtetl Routes



Council of Europe
Directorate General of Democracy

F-67075 Strasbourg
Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes
- Council of Europe

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28 Münster Street
L-2160 Luxembourg

Phone. : +352 24 12 50

www.coe.int/routes

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union.

All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.