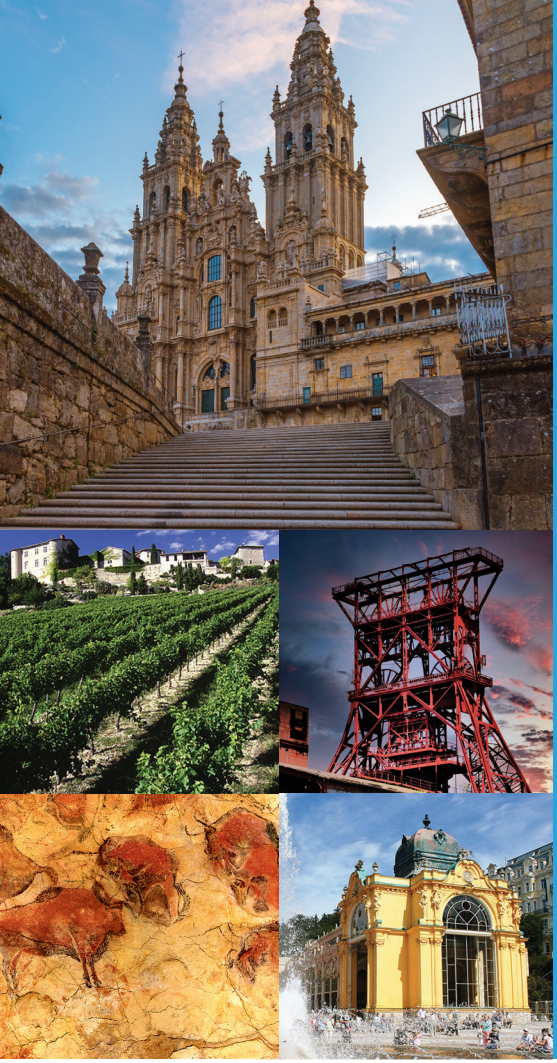

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Booklet for member states

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Overview

Council of Europe

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

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

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

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)

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

European Institute of Cultural Routes

The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), located in Luxembourg, is the technical agency of the EPA and Cultural Routes programme. Set up in 1998 under an agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the Institute organises training and seminar sessions for representatives of Cultural Routes and candidates for certification, assists the EPA with the evaluation and certification cycle and provides advice and assistance to candidate networks and certified routes.

Key highlights

30+ certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Over 60 countries are criss-crossed by Cultural Routes

2500+ network members , 1500+ towns incorporated in Cultural Routes

90% are in rural areas

12% of local employment linked to tourism

1987: the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes became the first Cultural Route of the Council of Europe

2019: Carlos V European Award

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

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Missions and benefits of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes

- Contributes to the promotion of European identity and citizenship.
- Fosters awareness-raising about heritage, education, networking, quality and sustainable cross-border tourism and other related activities.
- Strengthens the democratic dimension of cultural exchange and tourism through the involvement of grass-roots networks and associations, local and regional authorities, universities and professional organisations.
- Certifies new Cultural Routes and evaluates current routes.
- Provides advice and expert assistance for the development, implementation, evaluation and promotion of the Cultural Routes to member states (country mapping documents, thematic reports).
- Organises an Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes on a key theme or issue.
- Supports networking and exchanges between member states, international organisations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) European institutions, Cultural Routes operators and other key stakeholders.
- Provides political support to the Cultural Routes and candidates for certification.
- Contributes to the development of new methods and standards in relation to Cultural Routes and tourism in response to the challenges of modern societies.
- Organises training for member states, national and regional stakeholders and Cultural Routes operators.
- Centralises and maximises communication and visibility on the Cultural Routes programme, its activities and achievements.
- Increases funding and membership opportunities for Cultural Routes through a strong quality certification label.

Governing structure

EPA Governing Board

The member states of the EPA appoint one representative from the ministry of culture and/or tourism to the EPA Governing Board. The Governing Board is responsible for the certification of the candidate networks, the re-certification of Cultural Routes under regular or exceptional evaluation, and the overall orientation of the programme, as well as for adopting of its draft annual programme of activities and monitoring implementation of the activities. The Governing Board meets each year in April.

EPA Statutory Committee

The Statutory Committee is composed of the Permanent Representatives of the member states of the Council of Europe participating in the EPA. The EPA Statutory Committee adopts the budget of the EPA for the implementation of its programme of activities. The Statutory Committee meets each year in October.

Annual Advisory Forum

The Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes is organised each year on the initiative of one EPA member state. The forum brings together representatives of member states, Cultural Routes operators, candidate networks, international organisations, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, chambers of commerce, donor organisations, and heritage and tourism stakeholders. The forum is a unique platform on which to discuss trends and challenges, exchange experience, debate on new professional practices and launch new initiatives and partnerships. The forum also provides the opportunity to present best practice awards to Cultural Routes and programme stakeholders.

How to join the EPA

1. Any member state of the Council of Europe or a Contracting Party to the European Cultural Convention may join the EPA by **notification** addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

- A **standard notification letter** may be provided upon request by the secretariat of the EPA.
- Accession to the EPA will be effective once the **annual contribution** to the EPA has been paid.
- States which are not members of the Council of Europe can join the EPA following an invitation by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in its composition restricted to the representatives of the EPA member states.

2. **The Observer** status with the EPA can be requested for a period of maximum one year, without any financial contribution. The decision to grant such status is made by the EPA Governing Board.

- **A standard request** letter may be provided upon request by the secretariat of the EPA.

Added value of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Cultural Routes are evaluated regularly by the EPA and are certified by the Council of Europe based on compliance with several criteria, including that they must:

(1) involve a theme that is representative of **European values** and common to **at least three countrie**s in Europe;
(2) be the subject of transnational, multidisciplinary **scientific research**;
(3) enhance **European memory, history and heritage** and contribute to interpretation of Europe's present-day diversity;
(4) support **cultural and educational exchanges** for young people;
(5) develop exemplary and innovative projects in the field of **cultural tourism** and **sustainable cultural development;**
(6) develop **tourist products and services** aimed at different groups.

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme is a tool to preserve and valorise cultural heritage across Europe. The programme can be seen as complementing other initiatives dedicated to promoting the values of cultural heritage, such as UNESCO's World Heritage List and the European Heritage Label. In particular, the uniqueness of the Cultural Routes programme includes the following principles:

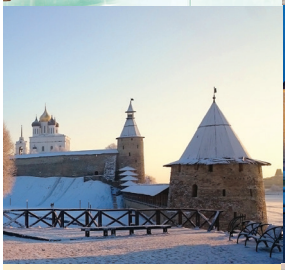
- a focus on **less well-known destinations**, which allows a more balanced local and regional development, as 90% of the Cultural Routes, which wind through the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, are rural areas.
- it includes **multiple sites**, which provides more opportunities for developing European cultural tourism clusters and engaging a large number of local stakeholders.
- it is truly **transnational nature**, each route having members in at least three countries, which highlights shared European values and underlines common histories of identity and heritage.
- it emphasises a **bottom-up approach** to cultural management, as the Cultural Routes are initiated and managed by networks composed of diverse public and private stakeholders, rather than governments.

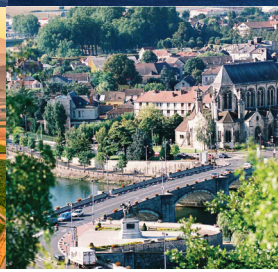
The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are **European networks with legal status** (in the form of an association or a federation) and therefore they operate as independently managed organisations and may apply for funding from a number of European and regional programmes (such as Creative Europe, Interreg, Erasmus+, Horizon 2020) and COSME).

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe for sustainable development

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe play a significant role for:

- **UN sustainable development**, such as creating better opportunities for education and learning, taking action to fight climate change, promoting responsible consumption and production and building more sustainable communities across Europe.
- **cluster development** at the local, regional, national and European level, including cultural operators, tourism service providers, research institutions, non-governmental organisations and public authorities.
- **community engagement** by creating strong local ecosystems in which partners can actively participate in providing and developing authentic cultural experiences.
- **capacity building and knowledge transfer**, thanks to training and European university networks.
- **diversification of the tourism offer** by implementing new tourist products, creating additional visibility for remote sites and prolonging the tourist season.
- **encouraging cultural creativity and entrepreneurship** and creating unique cultural offers to complement the attractiveness of heritage sites.
- **exploring the economic potential of cultural tourism.** Tourism is the third largest economic activity in Europe; tourism goods and services account for 10% of Europe's gross domestic product, while 12% of local employment is linked to tourism services.





Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (as of 1 January 2020)

Routes on history and civilisations

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

Routes on arts and architecture

European Mozart Ways (2004)
TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage (2007)
European Cemeteries Route (2010)
European Route of Historical Thermal Towns (2010)
ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory (2014)
Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014)
In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson (2015)
Fortified Towns of the Grande Region (2016)
Impressionism Routes (2018)
European Route of Industrial Heritage (2019)
Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades (2019)

Routes on religious heritage

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

Routes on landscape and handicrafts

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

Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe member states

Andorra (2012)
Armenia (2015)
Austria (2011)
Azerbaijan (2011)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016)
Bulgaria (2011)
Croatia (2016)
Cyprus (2011)
Finland (2018)
France (2011)
Georgia (2016)
Germany (2013)

Greece (2011)
Holy See (2018)
Hungary (2013)
Italy (2011)
Latvia (2019)
Lithuania (2012)
Luxembourg (2011)
Monaco (2013)
Montenegro (2011)
Norway (2011)
Poland (2017)
Portugal (2011)

Romania (2013)
Russian Federation (2011)
San Marino (2017)
Serbia (2012)
Slovak Republic (2014)
Slovenia (2011)
Spain (2011)
Sweden (2020)
Switzerland (2013)
Turkey (2018)

Council of Europe
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With the Support of

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL ROUTES

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

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