

2022/23 ENG

# Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Certification cycle 2022-2023

## Regular evaluation: *ROMAN EMPERORS AND DANUBE WINE ROUTE*

Independent expert report

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





## Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Evaluation Cycle 2022-2023

### Independent expert report

## Roman Emperors And Danube Wine Route

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*\*The opinions expressed in this independent expert report are those of the author, and do not engage the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.*

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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (RERDWR) has been established in 2012 while it was certified as a European Cultural Route by the European Institute for Cultural Routes (EICR) in 2015 and externally evaluated in 2019. It originally consisted of the four countries while today it encompasses ten countries. Today RERDWR country members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The RERDWR is creating respective route and project on top of transposed Roman Empire's heritage in the observed area. RERDWR is divided into the two culture heritage trails: (i) Danube and (ii) Adriatic and common wine route.

The Route has been managed by DCC – Danube Competence Centre based in Belgrade, Serbia. According to the provided data RERDWR members are twenty-two institutions from ten countries involved. List of involved stakeholders is even larger and more comprehensive which is identified as quite beneficial for the further project development. According to DCC's point of view respective stakeholders are essential and completely involved in RERDWR development.

The RERDWR's cultural route theme represents quite distinctive impact and heritage transferred by the Roman Empire to the region around the Danube as one of its important borders. RERDWR is dominantly composed of the heritage sites, museums, cultural institutions, and national, regional and local tourism organizations. Theme and sub-theme represent important and tremendous basis for the creation of both culture and also creative tourism (observed as more active and customer centric and engaging forms) products/services.

The routes' core idea and notion of the culture and consequentially creative tourism products/services creation can play unifying and important cohesion role involving relevant stakeholders and channeling the existing knowledge and expertise. Within the previous period RERDWR has been active despite the overall global situation. The majority of the undertaken activities comprehend important aspect of heritage sites' digitalization.

The RERDWR is developing functional cultural tourism products/services including cross border ones. The products/services development has been achieved in spite of infrastructure issues in the region. In addition, respective development has also been designed for the specific tourism target groups. One of the significant challenges for currently developing cross border products/services is distance longevity as well as lack of the proper infrastructure existence.

The quite important topic which needs to be strengthen is existence of the viable university network in the RERDWR. The university network must be included institutionally rather than individually. Therefore, the proposed solution is to include at least one university/faculty/academic research institution from each of the ten member countries especially from the areas of economy, entrepreneurship, culture, tourism, architecture, art, food processing, biotechnology, archeology etc. in order to achieve multidisciplinary framework.

The RERDWR should precisely define and incorporate culture youth exchange activities into the Activity Plan 2022-2024 as well as to deliver the youth exchange as one of the most important aspects of the cultural routes.

In general, it is considered that RERDWR addresses the most certification and evaluation criteria in the proper manner. Consequentially, it is accountable to retain current certification as the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

Expert summary conclusions		
	Yes	No
The theme complies with criteria listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, <b>I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.</b>	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for actions listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, <b>II. List of priority fields of action.</b>	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for networks listed in Resolution CM/Res (2013)67, <b>III. List of criteria for networks.</b>	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the <b>Logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”</b>	<b>x</b>	
The certification Cultural Route of the Council of Europe should be renewed.		

## 2. Introduction

The Roman Empire has been one of the early forms of the globalization. Continuity of the Ancient Rome and formation of the Empire had created one of the most powerful imperial systems. The Roman Empire has expanded Roman as well as previously taken and adopted Greek culture to the numerous parts of the empire. Military power of the Empire has been the tool for transfer of the cultural heritage created and developed by the Ancient Rome and Roman Empire itself. The heritage transfer has been impressive, meaningful, and still impacts the European cultures today. Correlation between Roman Empire and Danube itself is tremendous. The Danube River used to be significantly large frontier of the Empire with strong and long-lasting administrative and military presence. Therefore, transfer of the cultural values has been easier. Among the elements of the transferred cultural values, we can emphasize grape and wine production as previously *almost necessary* and nowadays *voluntary form of entrepreneurship* as well as cultural, preservative and potentially creative form of tourism.

The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (RERDWR) is being precisely built on top of the previously described context. RERDWR is supposed to align distinct but also correlated forms of heritage with the notion that wine represents an integral part of the culture.

The RERDWR has been established in 2012 while certified as a European Cultural Route by the European Institute for Cultural Routes (EICR) in 2015 and externally evaluated in 2019. It originally consisted of four countries while today encompasses ten countries (which represents the 100% increase of country members compared to the first evaluation in 2019). Today the RERDWR country members are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia.

The RERDWR is divided into two culture heritage trails: (i) Danube and (ii) Adriatic and common wine route. Danube trail is consisted of 12 heritage sites out of which 4 are in Serbia, 3 in Romania, 2 in Croatia and 1 in each Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovenia. Adriatic trail is consisted of 10 heritage sites out of which 3 are in Albania, 2 in North Macedonia, 2 in Montenegro and 1 in each Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. The essentially important wine heritage element consists of 12 wine regions out of which 4 are in Serbia, 3 in Bulgaria, 3 in Romania and 2 in Croatia. The wine regions undoubtedly belong to the Danube trail. Currently, there are no listed wine regions within Adriatic trail even though one vineyard/wine production company is listed within Doclea (Duklja) heritage site. However, analysis of the documents provided by the RERDWR management indicates that there are more wine regions involved but not listed publicly. The shortcoming has to be solved soon and efficiently.

The RERDWR is managed by the DCC – Danube Competence Centre based in Belgrade, Serbia.<sup>1</sup> DCC represents tourism actors association with the aim to create sustainable and competitive destination Danube. It is worth noting that the RERDWR is not an independent legal entity rather DCC's Cultural Routes Product club.

It comprehends members from the ten Danube related countries which are entities from public, private and non-governmental sector. Important DCC members that are also financially contributing are the three national tourism organizations of Serbia, Germany and Hungary while the three regional tourism organizations are also involved with partial funding and those are of Serbia, Austria and (previously) Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DCC's offices are based at the premises of the Serbian National Tourism Organization which can also show the importance of both DCC (whose member is Serbian National Tourism Organization) and RERDWR.

<sup>2</sup> Annual membership fee for those national tourism organizations is 7000€ steered towards the DCC.

According to the provided data the RERDWR members are 22 institutions from 10 respective countries involved out of which 3 are from Albania, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 from Croatia, 1 from Hungary, 2 from Montenegro, 2 from North Macedonia, 3 from Romania, 1 from Slovenia and 5 from Serbia.<sup>3</sup> The members' profiles are as follows: (i) 10 cultural institutions, (ii) 6 tourism stakeholders (mainly local tourism organizations), (iii) 2 municipalities, (iv) 1 heritage site, (v) 1 national park, (vi) 1 museum and (vii) 1 non-governmental organization.

Furthermore, list of the involved stakeholders is tremendously large and important. According to the DCC's point of view the respective stakeholders are essential and completely involved in the RERDWR development. Current and updated list of stakeholders comprehends the 74 stakeholders from the Danube trail and 76 from the Adriatic trail. Observing Danube trail per country of origin it can be noted that 22 are from Serbia, 13 are from Romania, 9 are each from Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Hungary and 5 are from Croatia. It also should be noted that there are 5 transnational stakeholders mainly from Germany. Observing Adriatic trail per stakeholder's country of origin, it can be noted that 24 are from Albania, 20 are from North Macedonia, 18 from Montenegro and 9 from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It should be noted that Adriatic trail comprehends 3 Pan-European stakeholders.

Potentially, the future members should be involved from the current vast stakeholders' pool and mainly oriented towards the entrepreneurial entities mainly travel and tour companies as they have the knowledge, infrastructure, interest and ability to sell either the culture or the creative tourism package that is and even more will be created within the RERDWR. Especially as it is fully in line with the notion of Article 4 of the Statute of the RERDWR i.e., the DCC's decision to establish the Cultural Routes Product Club. Moreover, size of the stakeholders' pool provides belief that sharing and decrease of membership fees can be potential impact on generating relatively significant income for the RERDWR.

Respective evaluation will provide certain recommendations and suggestions in order to strengthen the RERDWR and its potential to impact creation of creative tourism packages along the Route.

**Photo 1:** The RERDWR member countries<sup>4</sup>



Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-roman-emperors-and-danube-wine-route>

<sup>3</sup> Out of respective full members 68-81% of them are directly financially contributing each year to RERDWR. However, it should be contextualised with the previous global issues. Their annual financial contribution is 500€.

<sup>4</sup> In alphabetical order: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.



### 3. Main Body Evaluation

The European cultural heritage has tremendous impact on developed and developing way of life, manners, (re)shaping every society as well as representing a key element of the European citizenship notion. In addition, it provides impeccable impact to establishment and further development of culture and in particular creative tourism products and services.

The Council of Europe (CoE) in particular has own significant credits for current but also future development of such impacts. Previously managed CoE's Cultural Routes Program which has been legally based on the Committee of Ministers Resolutions CM/Res(2010)52 and CM/Res(2010)53 had tremendous impact on advocacy and awareness raising regarding joint culture heritage. Moreover, respective program has also stressed heritage as instrument and potential source of overall well-being development in Europe.

Therefore, it has indeed been expected that consequential Committee's Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirmed the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) as an indeed adequate framework and mechanism for further development and support of current and even more important new cultural routes.

Respective Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 has provided several important definitions in the framework of understanding, assessment as well better promotion in the context of further development. Namely, CM/Res(2013)66 defined precisely important terms such are cultural route, cultural route operator as well as basis for cultural route certification whose criteria have been outlined in another resolution. According to CM/Res(2013)66, *cultural route represents a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.*<sup>5</sup> In addition, cultural route operator is *an organization or a grouping of organizations legally registered in one or several of the Council of Europe member States, or a public institution, which carries the legal, financial and moral responsibility for the management and functioning of a cultural route and represents the route vis-à-vis the Council of Europe.*<sup>6</sup> Finally, *Council of Europe cultural route certification relates to certification process of awarding cultural routes that satisfy the criteria outlined in CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification.*<sup>7</sup>

Committee of Ministers' Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 is dedicated to the revision of the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification.<sup>8</sup> According to it, certification "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" may be granted to projects which deal with a theme that complies with the eligibility criteria in part I below, involve priority actions as indicated in part II and are presented by a single network meeting the criteria in part III.<sup>9</sup> Aforementioned is described in the table 1.

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<sup>5</sup> Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 2

**Table 1: Rules for certification**

<b>I. List of eligibility criteria for themes</b>	
<p>1. the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;</p> <p>2. the theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus;</p> <p>3. the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;</p> <p>4. the theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields;</p> <p>5. the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;</p> <p>6. the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups.</p>	
<b>II List of priority fields of action</b>	
<p><b>1. Co-operation in research and development</b></p> <p>In this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together;</li> <li>- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European cultures;</li> <li>- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe;</li> <li>- lend themselves to research and interdisciplinary analysis on both a theoretical and a practical level</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage</b></p> <p>In this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- enhance physical and intangible heritages, explain their historical significance and highlight their similarities in the different regions of Europe;</li> <li>- take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning;</li> <li>- identify and enhance European heritage sites and areas other than the monuments and sites generally exploited by tourism, in particular in rural areas, but also in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring;</li> <li>- take account of the physical and intangible heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe;</li> <li>- contribute through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as a means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans</b></p> <p>In this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- include the organization of activities with groups of young people in order to promote in-depth exchanges aimed at developing the concept of European citizenship, enriched by its diversity;</li> <li>- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts;</li> <li>- encourage decompartmentalization by organizing exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe;</li> <li>- constitute pilot schemes with a limited number of participating countries and be provided with sufficient resources for meaningful assessment in order to generate prototypes that can serve as reference models;</li> <li>- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels.</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</b></p> <p>In this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- give rise to debate and exchange, in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective, between the various cultural and artistic expressions and sensibilities of the different countries of Europe;</li> <li>- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture;</li> <li>- highlight, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, and link them with the history of skills development, whether they belong to the field of the visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression;</li> <li>- give rise to networks and activities which break down the barriers between professionals and non-professionals, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development</b></p> <p>In this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- take account of local, regional, national and European identities;</li> <li>- actively involve print and broadcast media and make full use of the potential of electronic media in order to raise awareness of the cultural objectives of the projects;</li> <li>- promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions;</li> <li>- promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures;</li> <li>- open up possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents through the special affinities between certain regions;</li> <li>- concern themselves, in the field of cultural tourism, with raising public awareness, drawing decision makers'</li> </ul>	

attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory and seek to diversify both supply and demand, with a view to fostering the development of quality tourism with a European dimension;  
- seek partnerships with public and private organizations active in the field of tourism in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.

### III. List of criteria for networks

#### **Project initiators shall form multidisciplinary networks located in several Council of Europe member States.**

Such networks must:

- present a conceptual framework based on research carried out into the theme chosen and accepted by the different network partners;
- involve several Council of Europe member States through all or part of their project(s), without excluding activities of a bilateral nature;
- plan to involve as large a number as possible of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18) as well as, where appropriate, other States;
- ensure that the projects proposed are financially and organizationally viable;
- have a legal status, either in the form of an association or a federation of associations;
- operate democratically.

#### **In support of the presentation of their projects, networks must:**

- offer a comprehensive program and specify its objectives, methods, partners, participating countries (current and envisaged) and the overall development of the program in the medium and long-term;
- demonstrate how their activities relate to the five priority fields of action in Part II of the Appendix to Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 (research and development, enhancement of memory, history and heritage, cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, contemporary cultural and artistic practice, cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development);
- identify, in the various member countries of the Council of Europe, the main initiators, participants and other potential partners likely to form a network; specify, where appropriate, at international level, other partner organizations;
- specify the regions concerned by the project;
- provide details of their financing and operational plan;
- append the basic text(s) relating to their legal status;
- define and implement indicators aimed to measure the impact of the activities of cultural routes.

Source: Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 p. 2-5

Fulfilment of the respective rules has route's certification as its natural consequence. Respective certification of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" is being awarded by the Governing Board of the EPA in consultation with the relevant intergovernmental committee.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, certified routes have obligation to be evaluated every three years by the external experts. Respective is due to assessment whether the route(s) still fulfill criteria and whether they are still in compliance with the prescribed rules.

RERDWR has been established in 2012/13 while certified in 2015. It has passed its first 3 years evaluation in December 2019, and which now has been followed by the new 3 years period evaluation. Respective evaluation will observe previously given recommendations and their application and fulfillment as well as will provide certain recommendations and suggestions from evaluators perspective based on practical and theoretical approach.

## 3.1 Cultural Route Theme

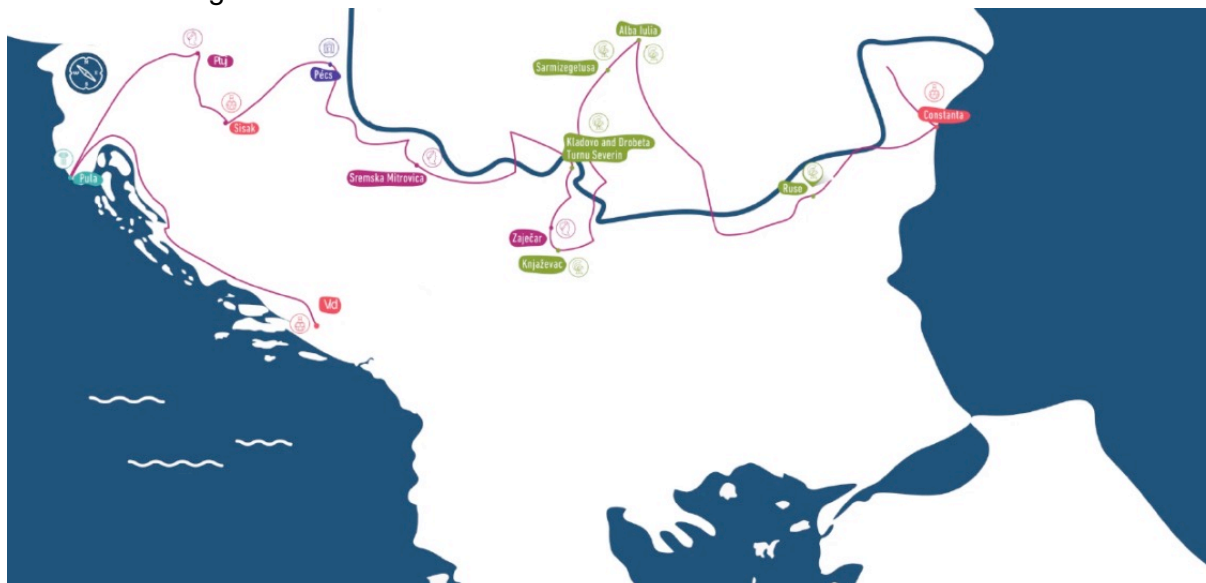
### 3.1.1 Definition of the Cultural Route Theme

RERDWR's cultural route theme represents quite distinctive and impactful role and heritage transferred by the Roman Empire to the region around Danube as one of its important borders. Aside from being a fortress of the mighty Empire, Danube has also been significant connectivity mechanism as well as fertile ground for entrepreneurial endeavors of the time. Consequentially, it is not a surprise that all together led to the tremendous heritage impact.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.5

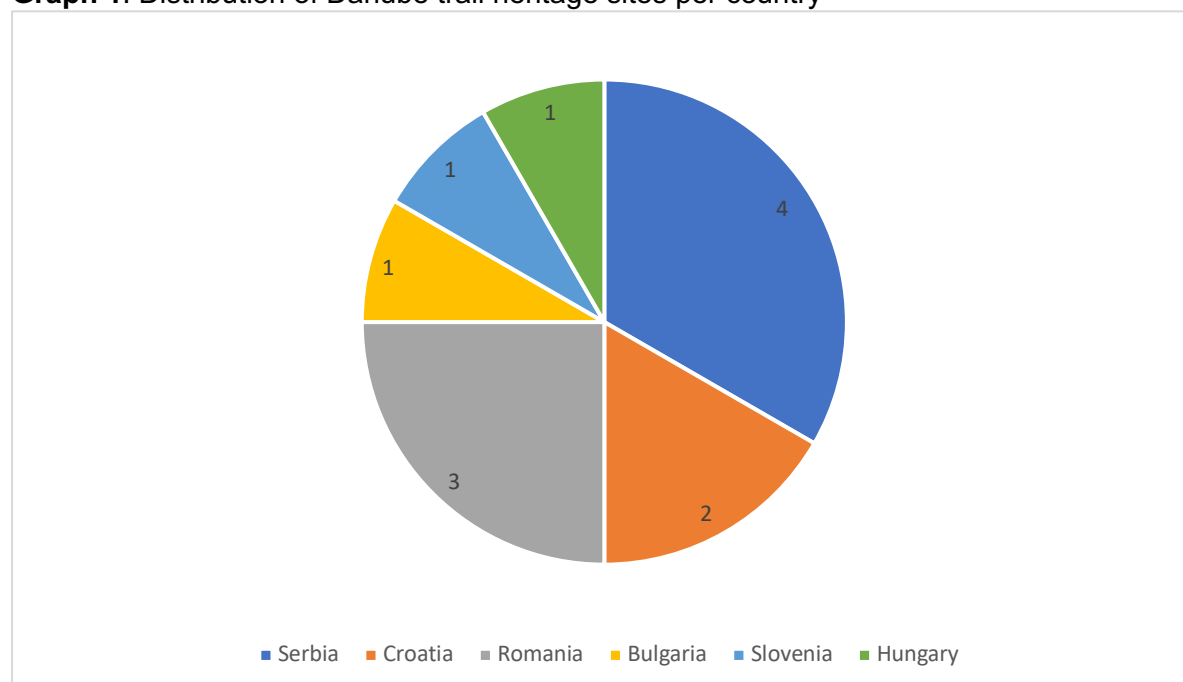
The RERDWR is dominantly composed of heritage sites, museums, cultural institutions, and national, regional and local tourism organizations. It has started as the route comprehending four countries while after almost ten years it comprehends ten countries, two trails combining two distinctive and important European regions with 22 heritage sites, defining separate but interlinked wine route with 12 defined and listed regions. Precisely, the RERDWR's key element is Danube trail consisting of 12 heritage sites in 6 different countries. Having in mind interlinkages between Danube and Adriatic as in Roman Empire period as in today's EU macro strategies and relevant framework, RERDWR has expanded into a second, Adriatic trail. Respective trail is consisted of 10 heritage sites in 5 countries.<sup>11</sup>

**Photo 2:** Heritage sites on the Danube trail



Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-roman-emperors-and-danube-wine-route>

**Graph 1:** Distribution of Danube trail heritage sites per country



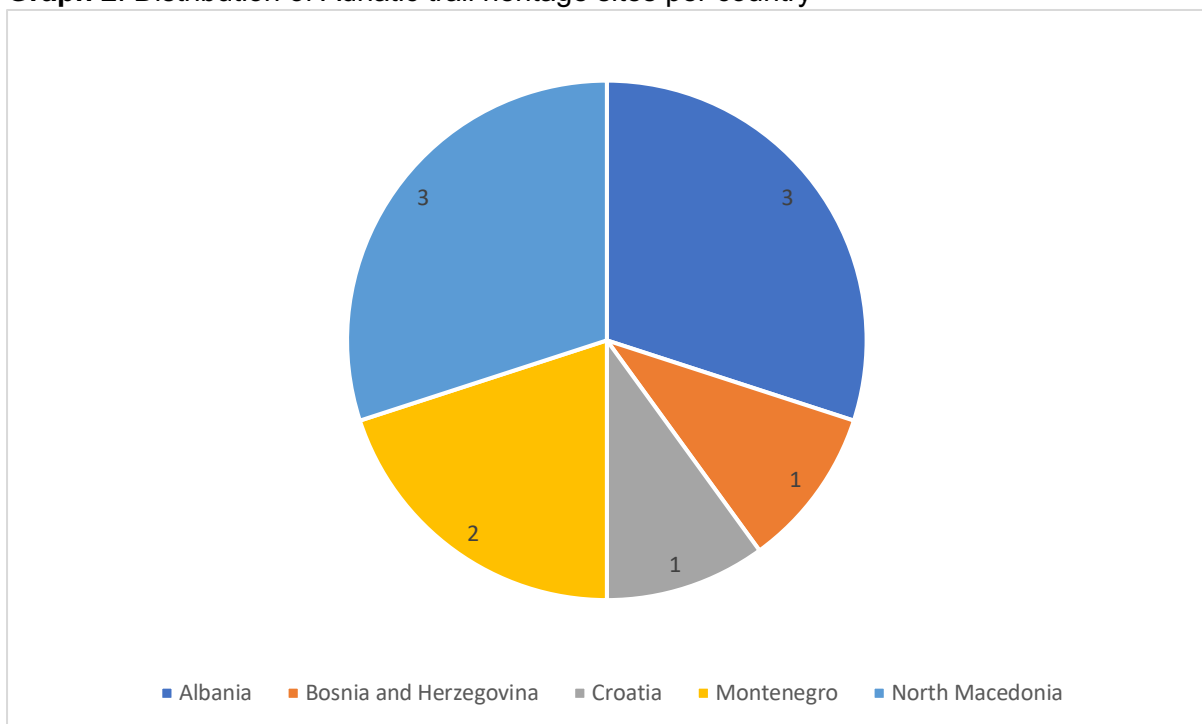
**Photo 3:** Heritage sites on the Adriatic trail

<sup>11</sup> Croatia has heritage sites in both trails.



Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-roman-emperors-and-danube-wine-route>

**Graph 2:** Distribution of Adriatic trail heritage sites per country



Respective theme and sub-theme represent important and tremendous basis for creation of both, culture but also creative tourism (observed as more active and customer centric and engaging forms) products/services. Richness of the theme as well as survival of the sub-theme dating to the Roman Empire era are fertile ground for products/services replications of Roman Empire's everyday life, inspiration as well as impact on culture, heritage, society, economy as well as agriculture products of today's era.

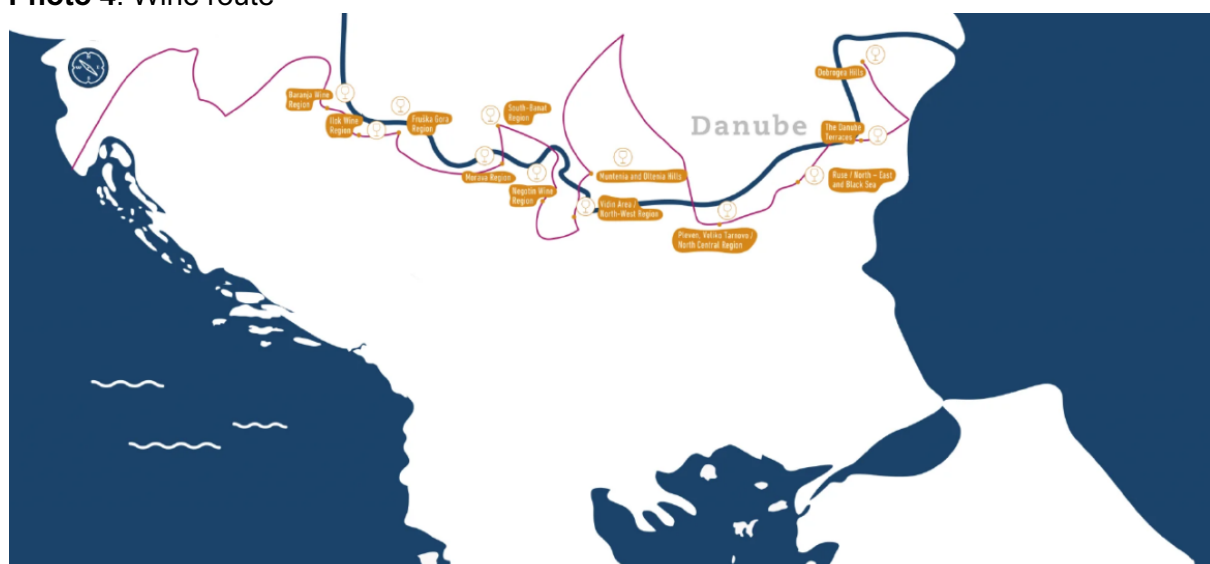
### 3.1.2 Historical and Cultural Context

As described previously, the Roman empire has expanded Roman as well as consequentially absorbed Greek culture to the numerous parts of the empire. Military power of the Empire has been tool for transfer of cultural heritage faced and developed by the Ancient Rome and Roman Empire itself. Transfer of heritage has been impressive and meaningful and still impacts European cultures today. Correlation between the Roman Empire and Danube itself is tremendous. Danube river used to be significantly large frontier of the Empire with strong and long-lasting administrative and military presence. Therefore, transfer of the cultural values has been easier. Among many elements of the transferred cultural values, we can emphasize grape and wine production as former almost necessary and nowadays voluntary form of entrepreneurship as well as cultural, preservative and potentially creative form of tourism.

Moreover, according to the ideas of Tom Standage there have been six beverages that significantly impacted and (re)shaped the world and societies: (i) beer, (ii) wine, (iii) spirits, (iv) tea, (v) coffee and (vi) coca cola.<sup>12</sup> Standage also adds seventh potential transforming and impactful beverage of the future – water.

Wine had been an essential part of the Roman culture. And it has been used as an impact and element of transferring but also transacting culture and heritage. Probably, no one had such impact on wine culture as Romans did and even their writers, philosophers and poets had written about the wine. According to some common beliefs at the time, wine has been an essential commodity and it was supposed to be used in wide spread manner meaning being available to all parts of the society. Moreover, for the Roman Empire's military it was highly important to have secure and stable supply of wine. Due to the turmoil times, probably the most secure way to achieve this has been development of wine making culture in every conquered region. Viticulture spreading impacted the culture but also entrepreneurial endeavors of the local population(s). Therefore, it can definitely be noted that having wine routes as the RERDWR sub-theme is fully justified. Sub-theme is an essential part of the RERDWR mainly because the key goal of the RERDWR is to represent the way how Romans lived. And wine is the essential *evidence*.

**Photo 4:** Wine route



Source: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-roman-emperors-and-danube-wine-route>

<sup>12</sup> Of course, they might be significant disputes over this especially for coca cola. However, its global phenomenon and commercial impact did overspread American culture as well as partially impacted consumerism and consuming society.

The RERDWR unlike presented on the graph above has expanded its wine route to the Adriatic trail. In that regard, suggestion would be to present the so-called Adriatic wine route in the same manner as so-called Danube wine route and even identify their potential overlapping (Suggestion 1).

### 3.1.3 Council of Europe values represented by the theme

As well-known Council of Europe has been imagined, designed, and steered to provide greater unity, protecting, and achieving the ideas, ideals and principles in line with members' common heritage and simultaneously stimulating overall social and economic progress. It has been oriented since the establishment to protect and develop individual and human rights and freedoms, establish good governance while promoting and executing the rule of law and practicing democracy.

If observed in the context of the RERDWR, it can be identified that it is in compliance with the core values and majority of the areas of interest and work of the Council: (i) the RERDWR is in line with the idea of achieving greater unity especially as part of it is the region unfortunately lately known by dissolution and conflicts; (ii) it precisely tackles the core common heritage or one of its parts related to the selected theme and sub-theme; (iii) the RERDWR as one of its intentional consequences has creation of the creative tourism product/service and therefore it is fully in line with stimulating social and economic progress as only entrepreneurship can impact; (iv) it also stimulates different forms of freedom and by that it additionally stimulates execution of individual rights; (v) from the evaluation it can also be seen that RERDWR is in line with good governance model within the Route which has been confirmed by the members' interviews and in that regard is in line with example of practicing rule of law, legally binding decision as well as democracy; (vi) having in mind that the Council is involved in different forms of sport promotion it can also be found correlation in that regard – namely, RERDWR as one of components especially the one intending to further develop biking which is good form of sport promotion and (vii) specific Council's interest is in cultural development, co-operation, diversity and networking which has been proven by numerous undertakings from the 1954 Cultural Convention via Committee's previously mentioned resolutions towards, for example, EICR's certification process – therefore any certified and well managed route such as RERDWR is fully in line with cultural co-operation promotion and cultural heritage protection. In addition, RERDWR should undertake efforts to comply with one of the most important values and tasks – youth exchange in order to start and/or support co-operation, more understanding and diversity acceptance as well as social and economic progress. Finally, the objectives of the RERDWR defined in its Decision of Establishing (29.09.2014.) by Article 2 are also fully in compliance with some of the Council's core values.

First evaluation in 2015 identified lack of some significant involvement of the academic community in the definition and formation of the general cultural theme of the RERDWR. Furthermore, second evaluation has identified improvements in that regard especially in the context of formation of the RERDWR's Scientific Committee (SC). This is, of course, still valid.

However, it is highly important to address the evolutionary context of RERDWR. The respective route has been formed based on the impact of some forms of the academic community (involved academicians and researchers from three different institutions) according to current evaluations' research, interviews, field visit and analysis. Formal evidence of the SC's activities as well as their stronger formal commitment and visibility are advisable even though SC has been significantly involved in drafting the Route as well as its future strategic orientation (Suggestion 2). Currently, SC's crucial role comprehends evaluation of the potential RERDWR members applications, assessment of the RERDWR's Action Plan alongside drafting some of the activities and actions with very same Action Plan.



SC members have also been impactful on their own as well as their institutions research and publications. Respected has been mostly directed to the prof. Michael Werner, prof. Goran Petkovic, Nikolay Nenov and Inel Constantin.<sup>13</sup> The RERDWR is part of respective research and publications, and some of them are visible online at the RERDWR website. At this point, suggestion would be to try to include academic and research work in the areas compatible with art, history and heritage and related to the business-tourism and marketability of future creative products and services of the route (Suggestion 3).<sup>14</sup> Recommendation would be to include wider range of the academic i.e., university community not only individually in the SC but more institutionally both in the SC but also in the poll of active members and relevant stakeholders. In addition, it would be highly recommendable to involve at least one academic institution (university/faculty/research institution) from each of the ten involved countries (Recommendation 1). From the perspective of this evaluation, undertaken research as well as field visit proposed institutions should be in the areas of economy, culture, tourism, architecture, art, food processing, biotechnology, archeology in order to achieve multidisciplinary context essential for RERDWR. Respective recommendation is not based on research publication necessity and cooperation but rather to higher visibility, higher involvement of youth community, higher networking at the local and Route level as well as significant impact on the remaining forms of local stakeholders in the context of further elaboration of RERDWR as creative tourism product and long-term sustainability. It is concluded that particular importance is related to stimulation of the youth exchange in the routes' region in order to achieve and execute the core values of the Council of Europe and stimulate cooperation and potentially economic and social progress. In this regard aforementioned has been recommended and it is a task for both, SC and DCC as the RERDWR's manager.

Remarks from 2018 evaluation	Remarks of regular 2022 evaluation
Previous evaluation of the RERDWR has shown that historical and wine offer are both adequately balanced in the route culture offer.	Respective evaluation completely follows previous findings and reconfirms adequate balance of the heritage and wine theme and sub-theme. Suggestion in this regard would be to also streamline the Adriatic trail wine route as it is streamed without any intention for the Danube trail. Stakeholders and members exist already, and some are quite active in this wine route segment. It would just be more attractive to also underline and point them out (Suggestion 1). The idea is similar to what has been done in RERDWR pocket guide second edition.
During the first evaluation in 2015 it has been identified that general and sub-theme do not have strong academic research base. Respective point has been positively checked within 2019 assessment including research of prof. Werner and prof. Petkovic. During second evaluation it has been	Current evaluation also positively checks undertaken and relatively accessible (on the RERDWR communication channels) published works of prof. Werner, prof. Petkovic, Mr. Nenov and Mr. Constantine. However, suggestion in this regard would be to also undertake additional research (rather

<sup>13</sup> Prof. Michael Werner (professor, University at Albany-State University of New York, Department of Art and Art History); prof. Goran Petkovic (Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade); Nikolay Nenov (Ruse Regional Museum of History) and Inel Constantin (Alba Iulia History Museum).

<sup>14</sup> Alongside the work of prof. Petkovic of course.



pointed out that SC must be more formally active including satisfying the administrative forms regarding the meetings. It has also noted significant SC's contribution in different phases of RERDWR.

due to impact on the RERDWR than publishing per se) in the business-tourism and future creative products/services marketability (Suggestion 2).

Current evaluation positively sees the SC's role as well as progress in administrative part even though respective evaluation does not consider it that much relevant rather simply relevant. However, it is suggested to increase documentation of the SC activities evidence as well as their stronger formal commitment and visibility (Suggestion 3).

Recommendation in this regard would be to strengthen academic network in the RERDWR more institutionally rather than individually. Therefore, recommendation is to include at least one university/faculty/research institution from each of ten countries especially from the areas of economy, culture, tourism, architecture, art, food processing, biotechnology, archeology in order to achieve multidisciplinary framework (Recommendation 1).

Respective recommendation is based on importance of higher visibility, higher involvement of youth community, higher networking at the local and Route level as well as significant impact on the remaining forms of local stakeholders. Stimulation of youth exchange through academic members network is seen as one of the most important tasks and goals for the next period regarding RERDWR. Due to new normal standard of online communication as well as current tremendous experience in digitalization of heritage sites, initial forms of exchange can be done in forms of webinars while it must be followed by offline and onsite visits and communication. In that regard, co-operation, diversity understanding, and consequentially common creative tourism product and potentially economic and social progress are the most desirable achievements.

## 3.2 Fields of Action

Previous three years have been labelled by the unprecedented event of Covid 19 with tremendous impacts on tourism and particular cultural tourism. Therefore, all fields of action have been partially observed also through respective objective lenses.

### 3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development

In the respective field of action, the projects must:

- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together;
- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European cultures;
- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe;
- lend themselves to research and interdisciplinary analysis on both a theoretical and a practical level

The routes' core idea and notion of creation culture and consequentially creative tourism products/services can play unifying and important cohesion role involving relevant stakeholders and channeling the existing knowledge and know-how. Within the previous period RERDWR has been active despite the overall global situation. Majority of the carried activities comprehend important aspect of digitalization of heritage sites. Currently, there are 126 videos in 360° VR presenting heritage, culture but also providers' richness of the route. RERDWR in 2021 has initiated digital campaigns and continued digitalization of the route. In this regard they have undertaken "Meet the Romans" project which have included Virtual tour along the route with 58 HD 360VR videos presenting 14 sites including local providers from each. Second part has been execution of "Meet" the Romans" social media campaigns with direct targeting of certain users/clients' profiles in order to achieve higher results. Their campaigns included Facebook, Instagram and You Tube. Activities also included second edition of RERDWR pocket guide with 23 heritage destinations and 12 wine regions including some from the Adriatic trail. DCC has also been involved in the Transdanube travel stories funded by the INTERREG Danube Transnational Program in 2021. The main goal of the project has been the support to sustainable tourism development by applying innovative promotion concepts and existing mobility management tools. It can be estimated that it is beneficial to the overall route. They have also executed "Iron Gate-Pearl of Danube" and it was campaign and creation of a digital platform for the presentation of most significant cultural and historical sites of the Lower Danube in Serbia. Finally, they have undertaken service contract in "Triple P Tourism in CEE" project as well as kept advocating for the Destination Danube at several mainly online events including Cultural Routes Annual advisory forum 2021 and EUSDR ANNUAL FORUM 2021.

There has also been some academic cooperation forms even though majority of the undertaken academic research is being related to the individual research of academics involved in the Scientific Committee as described previously. It is also believed that route's strategic orientation will be achieved. Respective RERDWR can be assessed as the solid platform for research, development and dissemination of the result having in mind presence of active researchers.

Respective has been an issue in both previous evaluations. First assessed that RERDWR has to be strengthened with institutions and therefore academicians and researchers. Second one assessed that respective has slightly been achieved by inclusion of academicians and researchers into the Scientific Committee as well as into the drafting of its development strategy. However, respective has not been sufficient even though it can be up to certain extent justified regarding the global situation in the previous period. Transition of

the universities from onsite to offsite impacted the notion of online cooperation including lectures, round tables and discussions. Due to some financial constraints respective model can further be used for significant networking among academic community mainly for the usage of students.

It is important to highlight that there are academicians involved individually and through their current positions within universities/faculties/research units. However, it is highly recommended to create vast network of academic community from all participating countries from the several different areas in order to achieve multidisciplinary effect as described previously. It is strongly believed that each of the involved countries will be able to provide even several universities/faculties in this network. Also, it is recommended to start working on new additional research and even more networking and exchange of students, lecturers and researchers. In particular such research should be steered towards future economic sustainability of the culture and creative tourism products/services. Moreover, it would be highly beneficial to tackle more different joint activities in order to impact practical level. This is especially important as the RERDWR itself is basis for tremendous practical endeavors some of which have already been taken by DCC. Aforementioned must be integral part of to-be-created Development Strategy for 2023-2024 and beyond period as well as amended Activity Plan for 2022-2024.

RERDWR's manager DCC alongside the partners also has ideas to extend potential sub-themes including mapping and promoting gastronomic offer alongside current wine route as well as to create sub-theme and itinerary for cycling tourist as one of the important tourism groups. They also have ideas to establish tourism observatories alongside Danube and the RERDWR within an additional project. The core notion is to have big data inputs and quantify all possible aspects within the route in order to achieve better management.

Remarks from 2018 evaluation	Remarks of regular 2022 evaluation
According to the 2018 evaluation in field action, it has been partially overcome by the involvement of universities and research institutions as well as inclusion of web site section dedicated to the relevant theme-based research and documents. However, respective evaluation identified that strengthening of the RERDWR's commitment to higher universities/academicians' inclusion is important task in this regard. Respective is also in line with 2015 evaluation.	Current evaluation confirms present existence of the web site section dedicated to the research. It also must be noted that respective section can be broaden to the existing mapped documents (Suggestion 4). However, RERDWR did not manage to include academic/university community in proper and efficient manner. As noted, before inclusion is rather individual than institutional. It is highly recommended to establish direct cooperation with universities from the RERDWR area through direct involvement of universities as members of the RERDWR as well as Steering Committee (observe previous Recommendation 1). It is also advisable to include university community inclusion as an integral part of Development Strategy (that should be developed) as well as Activity Plan 2022-2024 (Suggestion 5). Finally, it is also recommended to set up comprehensive and precise Development Strategy for 2023-2024 and beyond period and amend current Activity Plan. Development Strategy must have clear but also measurable objectives

	(Recommendation 2). Current Strategic orientation has certain objectives identified while it lacks indicators relevant for monitoring and evaluation.
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### 3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

<p>Within the respective field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance physical and intangible heritages, explain their historical significance and highlight their similarities in the different regions of Europe;</li> <li>• take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning;</li> <li>• identify and enhance European heritage sites and areas other than the monuments and sites generally exploited by tourism, in particular in rural areas, but also in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring;</li> <li>• take account of the physical and intangible heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe;</li> <li>• contribute through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as the means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.</li> </ul>
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Cultural routes can also be amazing tools for implementation of different strategic documents. Moreover, according to the CM/Res(2013)67, routes are obliged to consider respective promotions and undertakings of CoE, UNESCO and ICOMOS. Respective can also be easily done by creating vast, comprehensive and multidisciplinary university network members within and beyond of Scientific Committee work.

It is believed that RERDWR has shown that it enhanced physical and intangible heritages, explained their historical significance, and highlighted their similarities in the different regions of Europe at least by mapping and especially digitalizing heritage sites and heritage culture of the route. It has been done in order to achieve joint and common interpretation of Roman Empire's impact as well as shared today's heritage. Despite the importance of valorization of ethnic and social minorities heritage, it is not integral part of the theme and route. It is possible that it can be somehow added in the future. RERDWR does only indirectly take in count and promote the charters, conventions like UNESCO and ICOMOS. However, there were not noted any specific incompliances during the analysis and the field visit. Moreover, it can be suggested to take into consideration whether respective charters can be related and incorporated in the route based on assessment of its needs and further development due to the future Development Strategy of the RERDWR for at least 2022-2024 (Suggestion 6).

### 3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

<p>Within the respective field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• include the organization of activities with groups of young people in order to promote in-depth exchanges aimed at developing the concept of European citizenship, enriched by its diversity;</li> <li>• place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts;</li> <li>• encourage decompartmentalization by organizing exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe;</li> </ul>
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- constitute pilot schemes with a limited number of participating countries and be provided with sufficient resources for meaningful assessment in order to generate prototypes that can serve as reference models;
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels.

Respective field of action is exceptionally significant as cultural routes are both cultural but also educational-pedagogical concept and project. Therefore, continuous and diverse framework of such activities can potentially have significant impact as a basis for intercultural dialogue of diverse youth from European countries.

The RERDWR members are consisted of current EU member states but also some prospective EU members states out of which some are already candidate countries. However, the common denominator for all respective countries has been dissolution of the previous systems and transition to the new, more open, and more inclusive societies and systems. Some of the member countries succeeded while others are in the transition processes with even some still struggling. The most significant impact has been on youth population. Therefore, every route including this one must address that issue. Youth exchanges can deliver significant impact to the notion and higher understanding of European diversity and common citizenship (Recommendation 3). Exactly respective route can deliver it as it is based on tremendous cultural shared heritage. Youth exchanges can be easily delivered with participating universities which is their crucial role. It is also important to include them as part of the RERDWR Development Strategy and Activity Plan. Firstly, they can start as a form of webinars in order to increase interest and awareness while they can continue as real on the spot experiences, exchanges, round tables, various schools etc. One of the activities in the foreseen period can be youth guides school, an educational and licensed program in member countries which can contribute to higher knowledge of the route but also potential higher marketability of it. Furthermore, all can lead to in depth cooperation in forms of study exchange programs as well as transnational projects execution between academic community members of the RERDWR.

In this regard, the RERDWR has indeed limited performance both in the previously evaluated period as well as in the current one. However, there were some students' activities such are Museum Danube which has included different faculty students from Serbia and can be used as the future pilot case for more countries. Respective project has been small scale pilot project of paintings exhibition but can represent one of the starting cooperation modes. However, it is exceptionally important for RERDWR to commit more significantly regarding: (i) involvement of the educational institutions and (ii) in particular youth exchanges. Respective must be a part of the new and aforementioned Strategy (Development Strategy) as well as amended Activity Plan 2022-2024.

Remarks from 2018 evaluation	Remarks of regular 2022 evaluation
According to the 2018 evaluation the RERDWR's initiatives and activities in this regard have been limited by one operational field visit. In addition, 2015 evaluation has been marked as negative in this regard.	Period of the current evaluation has been limited with the pandemic context. However, certain exchange programs could have been done. Only one activity has been carried out with several in development and co-creating. It is particularly important that RERDWR precisely define and incorporate respective culture youth exchange activities into the Activity Plan 2022-2024 as well as to deliver respective youth exchange (see Recommendation 3). Precondition for operationalization of such activities is establishment and operationalization of

	proper university network within the RERDWR. Universities do have the largest possible pool of young individuals already gathered around higher causes and individual progress. Therefore, it is to be expected that such polls can be source for impacting regarding common heritage and more progressive understanding of it and its potential.
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### 3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

<p>Within this field of action, the projects must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• give rise to debate and exchange, in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective, between the various cultural and artistic expressions and sensibilities of the different countries of Europe;</li> <li>• encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture;</li> <li>• highlight, in contemporary cultural and artistic practice, the most innovative practices in terms of creativity, and link them with the history of skills development, whether they belong to the field of the visual arts, performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other form of cultural expression;</li> <li>• give rise to networks and activities which break down the barriers between professionals and non-professionals, particularly as regards instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields.</li> </ul>
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Culture tourism and especially creative tourism are based on emotions. In parallel, culture works, artistic works including visual and performing arts, crafts and literature are usually expression of emotions. Therefore, their linkage is by nature strong and overwhelming. In respective regard it should be necessary. Respective models can also be instruments to make cultural heritage more appealing, more interesting, and more attractive for the general audience all in the context of more comprehensive promotion. As dynamic entity according to the CoE, heritage is evolving and artistic interpretations are indeed beneficial.

Previous evaluation period has indicated one action in this field. Respective action was the creation of mobile gaming app called Meet Emperor Galerius. In addition, it was also planned to set up new interactive tools as support to culture sites visits. From the field research it was indicated that respective application is not fully operational as well as that interactive tools have not been set up. There are some signalization and information setting but not interactive as planned. Up to certain extent processes of heritage sites digitalization are form of visual and graphic art interpretation and artistic expressions.

It is highly important to set up respective connection of theme and sub-theme with different forms of art. Several interesting activities can be planned and undertaken in this field of action including but not limited to craftworks, architecture workshops, music composing, literature contests for high schools, visual art works etc. Potentially interesting element can be creation of the route's heritage theme based as well as sub-theme related souvenir. Such an item can be both, certain financial contribution to the small stakeholders and RERDWR itself but even more an important marketing material for further promotion of the RERDWR. Respective activities can all be framed as a culture-art-program within Development Strategy and Activity Plan 2022-2024. It is potentially independent cultural product which can support overall tourism products co-creation within the RERDWR which should be one of the goals.

Remarks from 2018 evaluation	Remarks of regular 2022 evaluation
Within 2015 and 2018 evaluations it has been identified that there were no actions in this field. In addition, potential for linking respective areas has been identified as significant.	Current evaluation has indicated that still there were no improvements in this regard. However, it is partially understandable due to both, importance of current phase building as well as pandemic effects. However, it could have been done and it is advisable to find best mechanism for inclusion of this fields' actions. It is suggested creation of the route's heritage theme based as well as sub-theme related souvenir (Suggestion 7). In addition, drafting of the culture-art-program with precise indicators in Development Strategy and amended Action Plan is highly advisable (Suggestion 8). Finally, it is recommended to strengthen activities on posting signalization at the heritage sites and potentially at the premises of the local stakeholders (Recommendation 4).

### 3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

<p>Within this field of action, the projects must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take account of local, regional, national and European identities;</li> <li>• actively involve print and broadcast media and make full use of the potential of electronic media in order to raise awareness of the cultural objectives of the projects;</li> <li>• promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions;</li> <li>• promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures;</li> <li>• open up possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents through the special affinities between certain regions;</li> <li>• concern themselves, in the field of cultural tourism, with raising public awareness, drawing decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory and seek to diversify both supply and demand, with a view to fostering the development of quality tourism with a European dimension;</li> <li>• seek partnerships with public and private organizations active in the field of tourism in order to develop tourist products and tools targeting all potential publics.</li> </ul>
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Cultural products/services as well as overall cultural itineraries are of one the rising forms of: (i) tourism offerings, (ii) heritage protection and preservation and (iii) local economic development. They have arisen as the response to change perceived value of the new traveler which requires active involvement, different forms and even includes individual approach, interaction with the providers and sites and potentially co-creation, different branding as well as interesting storytelling. Respectively, it is highly important for all cultural routes managers to understand this and take actions in order to create routes more sustainable. Route managers must also include branding, marketing, identification of unique value proposition, option for co-created offers, local economy offer and potential as well as some trainings in that regard for the stakeholders. It is also important to rethink about centralization of tourism products marketing and sale.

In the respective context, RERDWR can fit and has already done certain activities. RERDWR has developing functional cultural tourism products including cross border ones. Respective has been achieved in spite of infrastructure issues as they are also for the specific tourism target groups. One of the significant challenges for currently developing cross border products is distance longevity as well as not proper infrastructure. However, RERDWR is perceiving Danube as an infrastructure tool for some of the routes' products execution – creation of tours which include Danube sail as part of cultural and natural heritage promotion. It also seems that cultural tourism is the essence of the RERDWR. Moreover, it also has a tremendous development potential. RERDWR network currently has eight travel agencies from eight countries officially listed on the website that can provide tours. However, during the assessment only two have been responding quickly: (i) Robinzon Adventure Team and (ii) Zavod Tura Ptuj. Within client-provider assessment both offered options which have included heritage sites and wine routes. Precisely, they have offered exactly what RERDWR is intended to do. One of the suggestions is related to centralization of tours booking in order to secure smooth execution. For example, due to its vast experience in managing but also creation of tours, Robinzon Adventure Team can be centralized online provider for the network of joined travel agencies in all ten countries.<sup>15</sup> Other travel agencies can of course sell all products on their domestic markets as well as support execution of each tour through own local stakeholders' network (Suggestion 9). Reasoning here is to have one central products/services aggregator due to more efficient marketing, sale and post-sale operations. Currently RERDWR offered several different tours including Alba Iulia cross border tour, Danube History Cruise Tour, On the cruise of the Emperors, Danube Fortresses etc.

Two out of three respective major means of awareness raising (print and social media) have been used. Social media usage is excellent. Print media mainly refers to their publications and leaflets while there is no evidence of traditional print media usage. On the other side, there is tremendous lack of usage of broadcasting media both in countries (route) but also at the European level. One of the recommendations is related to the necessity of involvement of the national public broadcasting companies mainly through the network of local stakeholders. Moreover, it is suggested to make an effort and to use support of the EICR and CoE to arrange coverage of the important European broadcasting companies as it would give double visibility impact: (i) to the European market by offering culture and creative tourism offer and (ii) impacting national broadcasting companies by the example but also potential usage of previously produced material through EBU – European Broadcasting Union (Recommendation 5).

### 3.3 Cultural Route Network

Culture routes creation and execution is firstly, related to the creation of a European network which will be financially and operationally viable and sustainable. Suggested form is as an association or federation of associations which must comply with democratic practices, engagement, and equal participation of all partners from at least three CoE member states and with multidisciplinary aspect satisfied. Respective must be followed by precise administrative procedures, good governance, as well as keeping relevant document

#### 3.3.1 Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network

The RERDWR is certified and twice successfully evaluated cultural route network with slightly different but valid legal basis. Namely, DCC has applied with RERDWR for certification as its Culture Route Product Club managed and operated by the DCC.

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<sup>15</sup> In case it is not in line with Robinzon Adventure Team goals and plans, some other relevant agency can opt-in as the central products/services aggregator.



DCC has been established on February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, as an Association under the Law on Association of Republic of Serbia i.e., Article 12 of the Law. It has been founded as voluntary and non-profit organization for an indefinite period of time with the aim of achieving goals in tourism and economy. According to the Article 3 of the Statute of DCC, it has been founded to achieve the following objectives: (i) to contribute to the integration of interests, projects and activities in the field of responsible tourism along the Danube, (ii) to participate in the development of long-term transnational cooperation in the field of responsible tourism along the Danube and (iii) to support the development of the Destination Danube. DCC's objectives fit into the general context of RERDWR which is probably the core reason why it has been established as the product club. DCC foresees two members categories: (i) full members and (ii) associate members where full members are paying membership fee, can be Board members and have voting rights at the Assembly. Governance, membership, working principles, membership application, and other relevant issues have been defined by the DCC's Statute.

The RERDWR has been established in compliance with the Article 7 of respective Law on Associations and Article 12 of DCC's Statute as DCC's Cultural Routes Product Club and organizational part of DCC. Legal basis for establishment is Decision on Establishment of Cultural Routes Product Club from September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014. It should be clearly noted that RERDWR is not an independent legal entity rather organizational unit of DCC. Probably the reasoning for such approach was enabling route's financial and organizational viability. RERDWR objectives (Article 2) are in line with managing and organizing the route itself: (i) providing government framework for the route, (ii) developing and promoting cultural tourism in the region of Danube, (iii) promoting the standards of tourism along the route, (iv) identifying and supporting different forms of networking of tourism and heritage stakeholders and integrating local stakeholders/providers into the RERDWR's supply chain, (v) promoting the role of cultural tourism. Foreseen activities according to the article 4 comprehend: (i) legal and financial management of the route, (ii) marketing and promotion, (iii) educational and training courses and (iv) research and development. Respective Decision also covers working principles, governing bodies, funding, governance, Scientific Committee and other relevant issues. It does not prescribe application procedure and membership rights and duties other than one of the DCC prescribed in its Statute. If DCC's Statute applied, it means that RERDWR has two members type: (i) full members and (ii) associate members and therefore should use respective referencing rather than members and stakeholders as it is the case at the moment (Suggestion 10). Solution is either to amend decision or keep using current legal provided forms of membership. It also should be noted that becoming RERDWR member, legally means that first, the institution needs to become DCC member. Respective duality has to be avoided as it can create perceived double memberships for some potential members. Respective solution cannot be used as long as RERDWR is not independent legal entity. It is suggestion to explain future members legal provisions of the route and route's management (Suggestion 11).

Management of the RERDWR even as a Product Club, not just potential independent entity, must be additionally supported. Recommendation for such activity is creation of the Steering Committee (StC) which would be composed out of current Board (DCC's Board is currently managing body of RERDWR) and each full member's representative with the voting power. Proposed solution would amend Article 6 of the Decision and would define current functions of the Board into the functions of the StC identified as managing body of RERDWR. In addition, Article 7 would be amended as well and would define SC and Coordinator as executive rather than governing body. Role of the StC would be also strategical and strengthen with the reasoning of all full members having in mind RERDWR is supposed to be joint strategic and development project (Recommendation 6).

### 3.3.2 Overview of the financial situation of the network

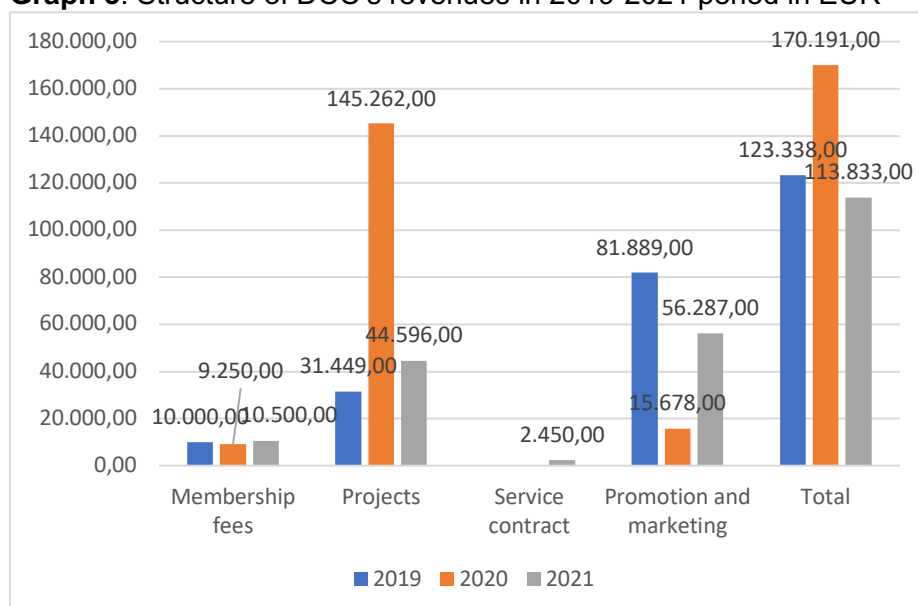
Funding of RERDWR is defined as allocation of percentage of DCC membership fees to the route functioning within sub-account. Article 5 of the Decision should be amended as it foresees sub-account which in case of RERDWR cannot be opened according to the Serbian law based on conducted interviews. In case there are solution based on current Serbian legal system to open sub-account, respective solution should remain in power. In addition, it also has to be amended in order to precisely prescribe amount/percentage of DCC's membership fees dedicated to the RERDWR (Suggestion 12).

Based on that it is rather difficult to assess financial situation of the network while financial situation of the DCC is easily assessable. According to the analysis and interviews, total revenues of DCC in 2019-2021 period have been 123,338.00 EUR, 170,191.00 EUR and 113,833.00 EUR, in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. Growth of almost 38% has been evident in 2020 comparing to 2019 mainly due to at that time's ongoing projects. In 2021 there has been a sharp decrease comparing to both 2020 and 2019 and it has been 33% and 7.7%, respectively. According to the conducted interview with DCC, RERDWR's share in DCC's revenues accounts 15%, 20% and 15% in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. In absolute amounts RERDWR revenues can be estimated at the level of 18,006.00 EUR, 34,038.00 EUR and 17,075.00 EUR. Aforementioned can be seen below at the graph 3.

It can be concluded that RERDWR revenues as part of DCC revenues are not based membership fees as they declined in 2020 while total revenue and RERDWR share have increased in the same year. It is also suggested to start recording revenues and expenditures of RERDWR in more precise even manner even if it cannot not be recorded by the accounting rules due to the lack of sub-account and legal entity status (Suggestion 13).

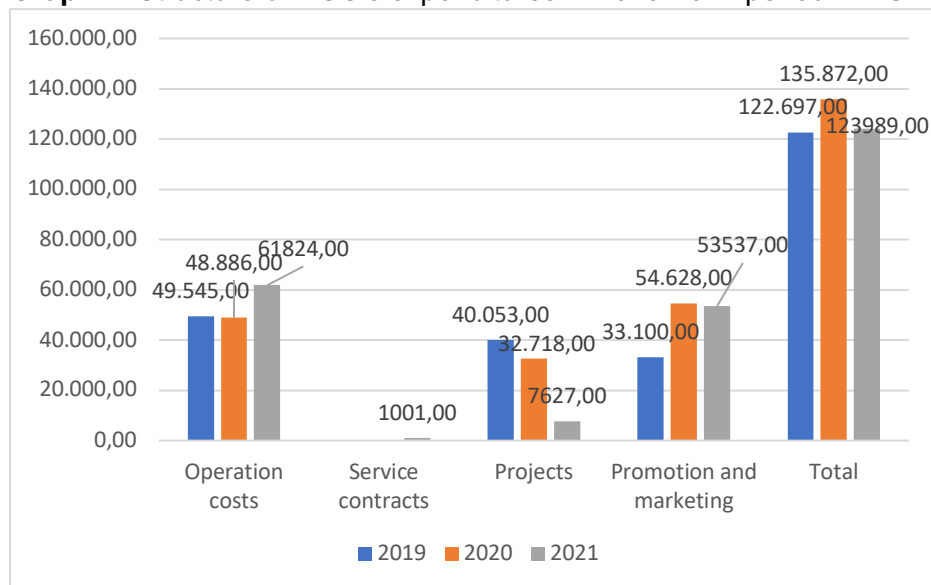
According to the analysis and interviews, total expenditures of DCC in 2019-2021 period have been 122,696.00 EUR, 135,872.00 EUR and 123,989.00 EUR, in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. In 2020 compared to 2019 expenditures grew for almost 11% while in 2021 they increased for 10.5% compared to 2020 and in 2021 the negative financial result has been recorded. Potentially it might be differentiation of 6-9 months between the EU project's expenditures and received co-fundings recorded as revenue. According to the conducted interview with DCC, RERDWR's share in DCC's expenditures accounts 13%, 20% and 16% in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. In absolute amounts expenditures can respectively be estimated at the level of 15,951.00, 20,174.40 and 19,838.00 EUR.

**Graph 3: Structure of DCC's revenues in 2019-2021 period in EUR**



Source: Financial Statements of DCC for 2019, 2020 and 2021

**Graph 4: Structure of DCC's expenditures in 2019-2021 period in EUR**

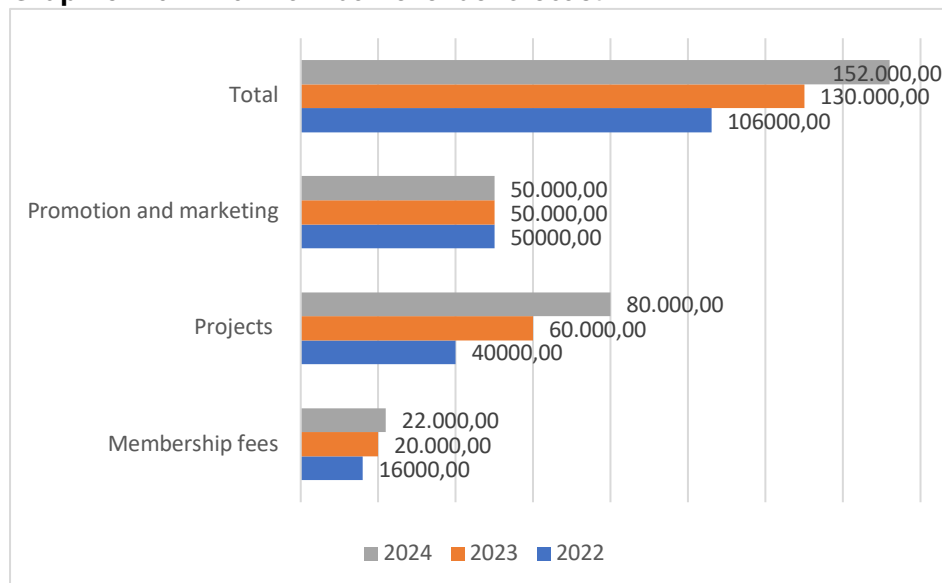


Source: Financial Statements of DCC for 2019, 2020 and 2021

Financial sustainability of the network depends on DCC and its activities, projects and services offered to the market. Own sustainability of the RERDWR is difficult to assess due to lack of sub-account and independent accounting. However, having in average 68% financially contributing members with an estimated annual budget of 7500 EUR (estimated annual membership fee is 500 EUR) is not enough for making the RERDWR financially independent and sustainable in the current phase. Due to the routes' management vision, such hybrid model of financing is more than acceptable aiming for higher financial independence due to members extension and enlargement as well as sale of the new culture and creative products/services along the route.

Within 2022-2024 revenues are forecasted at 106,000.00, 130,000.00 and 152,000.00 EUR for 2022, 2023 and 2024, respectively. Projections are mainly based on projections of projects and fees shares and volume increase. Foreseen expenditures for the given period are amounted at 60,000.00 EUR annually. Respective can be seen on the following graph.

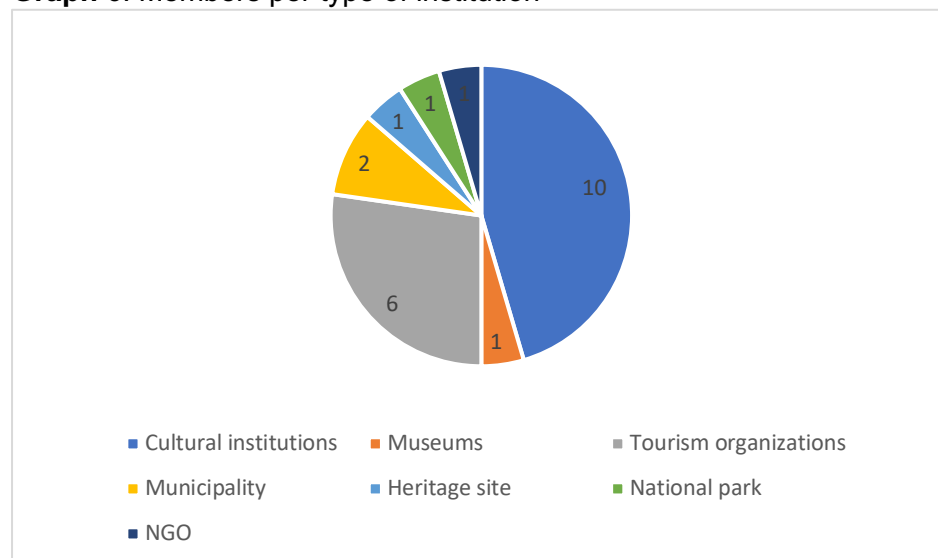
**Graph 5: 2022-2024 annual revenue forecast**



Source: Financial Statements of DCC for 2019, 2020 and 2021

### 3.3.3 Current composition of the network by country and type of member

**Graph 6: Members per type of institution**



According to the provided data RERDWR members are 22 institutions from 10 respective countries involved out of which 3 are from Albania, 1 from Bulgaria, 1 from Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 from Croatia, 1 from Hungary, 2 from Montenegro, 2 from North Macedonia, 3 from Romania, 1 from Slovenia and 5 from Serbia. Members profiles are as follows: (i) 10 cultural institutions, (ii) 6 tourism stakeholders (mainly local tourism organizations), (iii) 2 municipalities, (iv) 1 heritage site, (v) 1 national park, (vi) 1 museum and (vii) 1 non-governmental organization.

### 3.3.4 Network extension since last evaluation

There was no expansion and new members since the last evaluation. However, list of totally involved stakeholders is tremendously large and important.<sup>16</sup> According to DCC's point of view respective stakeholders are essential and completely involved in RERDWR development. Current and updated list of stakeholders comprehends 74 stakeholders from Danube trail and 76 from Adriatic trail. Observing Danube trail per country of origin it can be noted that 22 are from Serbia, 13 are from Romania, 9 are each from Slovenia, Bulgaria, and Hungary and 5 are from Croatia. It also should be noted that there are 5 transnational stakeholders, mainly from Germany. Observing Adriatic trail per stakeholder's country of origin, it can be noted that 24 are from Albania, 20 are from North Macedonia, 18 from Montenegro and 9 from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It should be noted that Adriatic trail comprehends 4 Pan-European stakeholders.

Stakeholder currently mainly comprehend business entities which is significantly important for the routes' success. Within the Adriatic trail current share of business entities in total number of entities is 63% while in the Danube trail the share is 42%.

<sup>16</sup> Some of the stakeholders existed in the network during the previous evaluation while majority have been added afterwards.

### 3.3.5 Strategy for the network extension in the three years to come

The RERDWR and its management have realized based on both from the evaluations but also from the field work that network has to be expanded evolutionary but also to be permanently changing until relatively final members setup is achieved. The key two stakeholders' segments to be expanded to are business and universities community. In the previous period they have partially succeeded in business community enlargement while they still lack universities community engagement. According to the RERDWR's strategic orientation they labelled new local tourism service providers as the strategic objective. However, they did not pose it precisely as it has not been followed with the indicator which would help in measurement context and evaluation of strategy's achievements. Unfortunately, respective document did not foresee universities community expansion as the objective as well as its correlated indicator. That is precisely where network must expand in the 2022-2024 period.

Moreover, perhaps labeled and explained vision and mission should be listed within newly created Development Strategy. Namely, DCC has clear vision of and for RERDWR. Respective vision based on capitalization of culture heritage, correlation with the industry and in particular private sector, expansion of the network with youth and university community, connection with other relevant and similar routes and securing routes' sustainability. Even not publicly available, strategy should be shared with each member. There are elements of defined strategic objectives within Strategic Orientation and Activity Plan 2022-2024. However, some of the listed strategic objectives cannot be assessed as such due to the lack of measurability. For example, in the strategic objectives 2 and 4 (bullets B2 and B4 in the document) should be focused also on precise but likely achievable numbers. Regarding strategic objective 2 related to Green Travel Products it is recommended to define the number of concrete green travel packages as well as number of members willing to create and further develop alongside with DCC. Regarding strategic objective 4 Network consolidation and growth i.e., inclusion of the new local tourism service providers, it is also recommended to define the number as well the type (including the number) of such new members/stakeholders. Respective will provide and additional assessment tool for the RERDWR itself in order to adapt to changes and create additional meaningful tasks.

### 3.4 Communication tools

#### 3.4.1 Current state of communication tools developed by the network (graphic charter, communication materials, logo, communication channels, signposting, maps, etc.)

RERDWR's key communication tool is its website [www.romansempersroute.org](http://www.romansempersroute.org) consisting of both trails, wine route, library section, 360° video section, about section as well as book now section (even though the latter is more connection option than book now option). In addition, [www.danube.travel](http://www.danube.travel) web site, also managed by DCC, has available route's content and information as well as the web site from the creators of the videos that also hosts them <https://creator.oculus.com/community/106597271770899>.

RERDWR uses Facebook with currently 1800 followers as well as Instagram with 1189 followers and 154 posts. It is highly suggested to keep working on both social networks as well as to include Twitter and LinkedIn. Currently, they can be used to reach youth population as one of the future requirements for the network's and routes' sustainability. LinkedIn is suggested due to awareness raising among academic, research and partially business community. However, their flagship social media project is YouTube with the vision to even more exploit and use it for promotion and especially for reaching community and customers attention. Their YouTube channel has 126 video (360° HD) and 809 subscribers.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The website itself has 10 such videos.

Respective videos are of amazing quality and represent route in an amazing manner. An average video duration is around 4 minutes which is perfectly directed to the level of youth attention (which are still the most important group for further development). All videos have significant views while some reaching up to 5, 27, 35 and 40 thousand views.

#### 3.4.2 Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”

RERDWR logo and CoE logo usage are mainly in compliance with the CoE’s rules and guidelines from November 2019 including size, position and shaping. On some of the channels required part “*The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route has been a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” since 2015*” is missing and it must be amended as well as the link to the official CoE’s Cultural Routes website [www.coe.int/routes](http://www.coe.int/routes). Both can create an additional visibility to the overall project.

Signposting exists while it has to be significantly amended with the support of the local stakeholders as the field visit has shown some sites without it. Both are also missing from the main communication channel, the RERDWR’s website.

It is also important to note that RERDWR members’ official sites do not show either RERDWR or CoE’s logo. DCC must request effective application of the logos on member’s website as well as full application of logo guidelines on each information material including route’s website (*Prescription 1*).

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

European cultural heritage has tremendous impact on developed and developing way of life, manners, (re)shaping every society as well as representing key element of European citizenship notion. In addition, it provides impeccable impact to establishment and further development of culture and in particular creative tourism products and services.

RERDWR's cultural route theme represents quite distinctive and impactful role and heritage transferred by the Roman Empire to the region around Danube as one of its important borders. Respective theme and sub-theme represent important and tremendous basis for creation of both, culture but also creative tourism (observed as more active and customer centric and engaging forms) products/service. It also should be noted that RERDWR is in compliance with some of the core CoE's values.

Respective section is going to provide set of suggestions, recommendations, and prescriptions as the result of analytical research, field visits, interviews as well as researchers academic, research and entrepreneurial background.

Set of remarks has intentionally been divided into three categories: (i) suggestions, (ii) recommendations and (iii) prescriptions. Division between first two is relatively modest and mild while inclining recommendations to be more urgent especially as some are repeated despite previous evaluations. Prescriptions are mandatory due to certain binding rules.

Set of suggestions is as follows:

<b>Suggestion 1</b>	<i>List of eligibility criteria for themes</i>
RERDWR should also present so-called Adriatic wine route in the same manner as so-called Danube wine route is presented on the website and materials as well as even identify potential overlapping.	
<b>Suggestion 2</b>	
It is important to include academic and research work in the areas compatible with art, history and heritage and related to the marketability of future creative products and services of the route	
<b>Suggestion 3</b>	
Formal evidence of the SC activities as well as their stronger formal commitment and visibility are advisable even though SC has been significantly involved in drafting the Route as well as its future strategic orientation	
<b>Suggestion 4</b>	<i>List of priority fields of action – co-operation for research and development</i>
It is suggested that current website section dedicated to the research should be broadened to the existing mapped documents; respective is in spite of confirmation of such section's current website existence	
<b>Suggestion 5</b>	
It is advisable to include university community inclusion as an integral part of Development Strategy (which should be developed) as well as Activity Plan 2022-2024	
<b>Suggestion 6</b>	<i>Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage</i>
It is suggested to take into consideration whether UNESCO, ICOSOM and other relevant charters can be related and incorporated in the route based on assessment of its needs and further development	
<b>Suggestion 7</b>	<i>Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</i>
Creation of the route's heritage theme based as well as sub-theme related souvenir is also highly suggested	
<b>Suggestion 8</b>	
Drafting of the culture-art-program with precise indicators in Development Strategy and amended Action Plan is highly advisable	
<b>Suggestion 9</b>	<i>Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development</i>
Centralization of online tour provider for the network of joined travel agencies in all ten countries is also suggested; while other travel agencies remain products/services sellers on their domestic markets as well as support execution of each tour through own local stakeholders' network	
<b>Suggestion 10</b>	<i>Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network</i>
Due to the different referencing of the included entities and precise legal formulation of membership	

type i.e., distinction to full and associate members it is suggested to either use current legal formulation or amend Decision on Establishment	
<b>Suggestion 11</b>	
It is highly suggested to explain legal provisions of the route and route's management to future members	
<b>Suggestion 12</b>	<i>Overview of the financial situation of the network</i>
It is suggested to amend Article 5 of the Decision as interviewers stated impossibility of opening sub-account according to the current legal jurisdiction of the RERDWR; it is also suggested to be amended in order to precisely prescribe amount/percentage of DCC's membership fees dedicated to the RERDWR	
<b>Suggestion 13</b>	
It is suggested to start recording and keep data track on revenues and expenditures of RERDWR due to the lack of sub-account and legal entity status (currently there is tracking but it should be formalized)	

Set of recommendations is as follows:

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	<i>List of eligibility criteria for themes</i>
it is recommended to include wider range of the academic i.e., university community not only individually in the SC but more institutionally both in the SC but also in the poll of active members and relevant stakeholders; in addition, it would be highly recommendable to involve at least one academic institution (university/faculty/research institution) from each of the ten involved countries	
<b>Recommendation 2</b>	<i>List of priority fields of action – co-operation for research and development</i>
it is also recommended to set up comprehensive and precise Development Strategy for 2023-2024 and beyond period and amend current Activity Plan. Development Strategy must have clear but also measurable objectives; current Strategic orientation has certain objectives identified while it lacks indicators relevant for monitoring and evaluation	
<b>Recommendation 3</b>	
Youth exchanges can deliver significant impact to the notion and higher understanding of European diversity and common citizenship; youth exchanges can be easily delivered with participating universities which is their crucial role; it is particularly important that RERDWR precisely defines and incorporates respective culture youth exchange activities into the Activity Plan 2022-2024 as well as to deliver respective youth exchange	
<b>Recommendation 4</b>	<i>Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</i>
it is recommended to strengthen activities on posting signalization at the heritage sites and potentially at the premises of the local stakeholders	
<b>Recommendation 5</b>	<i>Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development</i>
recommendation is related to the necessity of involvement of the national public broadcasting companies mainly through the network of local stakeholders. Moreover, it is suggested to make an effort and to use support of the EICR and CoE to arrange coverage of the important European broadcasting companies as it would give double visibility impact: (i) to the European market by offering culture and creative tourism offer and (ii) impacting national broadcasting companies by the example but also potential usage of produced material through EBU	
<b>Recommendation 6</b>	<i>Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network</i>
Recommendation is to create the Steering Committee (StC) which would be composed out of current Board and each full member's representative with the voting power; proposed solution would amend Article 6 of the Decision and would define StC as managing body of RERDWR; in addition, Article 7 would be amended as well and would define SC and Coordinator as executive rather than governing body. Role of the StC would be also strategical and strengthen with the reasoning of all full members having in mind RERDWR is supposed to be joint strategic and development project	

Prescription is as follows

<b>Prescription 1</b>	<i>Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"</i>
It is important to note that RERDWR members' official sites do not show either RERDWR or CoE's logo. DCC must request effective application of the logos on members' website as well as full application of logo guidelines on each information material including route's website	



Comparison of 2018-19 and 2022-2023 recommendations fulfilment

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2018-2019	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation?		Recommendations current evaluation 2022-2023
			YES	NO	
<b>I. Cultural route theme</b>		Well balanced theme and sub-theme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Well balance and undertaken activities to strengthen it. <i>Suggestion 1</i> related to Adriatic trail
		Formal evidence of SC meetings	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Partially addressed. However, this remains open as inclusion of institutions within university community (at least 1 per country) is necessity <i>Recommendation 1</i> <i>Suggestion 2 and 3</i>
<b>II. Priority fields of action</b>	<b>Cooperation in research and development</b>	Respective evaluation identified that strengthening of the RERDWR's commitment to higher universities inclusion is important task in this regard. Respective is also in line with 2015 evaluation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	RERDWR did not manage to include academic/university community in proper and efficient manner. As noted, before inclusion is rather individual than institutional. It is highly recommended to establish direct cooperation with universities from the RERDWR area <i>Recommendation 1</i> <i>Recommendation 2</i> <i>Suggestion 4 and 5</i>
	<b>Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage</b>	SC was supposed to better clarify how to address to the respective charters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	It is suggested to take into consideration whether UNESCO, ICOSOM and other relevant charters can be related and incorporated in the route based on assessment of its needs and further development <i>Suggestion 6</i>
	<b>Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans</b>	According to the 2018 evaluation RERDWR's initiatives and activities in this regard have been limited by one operational field visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Period of the current evaluation has been limited with the pandemic context. However, certain exchange programs could have been done. Only one activity has been carried out with several in development and co-creating. It is particularly important that RERDWR precisely defines and incorporates respective culture youth exchange activities into the Activity Plan 2022-2024 as well as to deliver respective youth exchange <i>Recommendation 3</i>
	<b>Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</b>	Within 2018 evaluations it has been identified that there were no actions in this field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Current evaluation has indicated that still there were no improvements in this regard. However, it is partially understandable due to both, importance of current phase building as well as pandemic effects. <i>Recommendation 4</i> <i>Suggestion 7 and 8</i>

	<b>Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development</b>	Among DCC products RERDWR has been least commercially mature even had some offered tours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	New tours and products have been offered including cross border ones. Centralization of online tour provider is new suggestion for better commercialization. In addition, media support framework is recommended. <i>Suggestion 9</i> <i>Recommendation 5</i>
	<b>III. Cultural Route Network</b>	There were no specific recommendations about legal basis, network expansion or institutional basis and development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Currently, <i>suggestions 10, 11, 12 and 13</i> as well as <i>recommendation 6</i> have been given
	<b>Communication Tools</b>	In 2018 it has been prescribed to impact the members to pose both logos on their websites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Currently, situation is almost the same and the <i>prescription 1</i> has been given in that regard.

According to the conducted evaluation, assessed research materials as well as comparison with previous evaluations, it can be concluded that RERDWR did not fulfill certain recommendations from 2018-2019 assessment. However, global outlook since 2020 has not been in their favor and that must be taken into account.

On the other hand, the RERDWR did quite significant tasks in digitalization of heritage sites and tourism offer, internationalization within project consortiums including some transnational ones, promoting and marketing route and destination as well and by training to expand the network of stakeholders to name the few.

RERDWR in spite some of the suggestions and recommendations is in compliance with the certification criteria and acts as a solid network with significant practical and theoretical work done as well as with exceptional potential and good governance. Some of the suggestions/recommendations have been given in order to strengthen the network, governance and funding models rather than to confirm their inaccuracy or inefficiency. Firsthand experience with route's management and some stakeholders assured me that RERDWR has bright and successful future regarding creation of creative tourism products.

RERDWR's performance in the evaluated period has been in compliance with the certification criteria and RERDWR achieved 52 points out of 81 total in the evaluation grid. Respective indicates that RERDWR has positive score at 64.2% of evaluation questions which can be considered as a good result.

Performance per sections of the evaluation grid is as follows:

Theme	100% positive answers	5 out of 5 answers
Fields of action	69% positive answers	32 out of 46 answers
Network	75% positive answers	12 out of 16 answers
Communication tools	64% positive answers	9 out of 14 answers

Conclusion is that RERDWR, despite some shortcomings which have been taken into account, properly responded to the majority of the evaluation criteria. Respective conclusion is allowing to the RERDWR to retain certification as European Cultural Route.

## **5. List of references**

All documents required for the evaluation had been duly submitted by the Cultural Route. Documents comprehend:

- CMRes(2013)66E
- CMRes(2013)67E
- Cultural Routes Certification Cycle – presentation
- Cultural Routes Management: from theory to practice - Step-by-Step Guide CoE
- Document 1 Certification Cycle 2022-2023
- Guidelines for the use of the logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” 2019
- Guidelines for independent expert evaluations of certified “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe” and Applicants for Certification 2022
- Regular evaluation report form
- RERDWR Annual Activity Report 2021
- RERDWR Financial information
- RERDWR Legal statutes
- RERDWR Members list 2022
- RERDWR Stakeholders list 2022
- The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route Strategic orientation and Activity plan for the period 2022-2024
- The Seventh General Assembly of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route

## 6. Annex 1: Expert field visit and interviews with the network management and members

Assessment of the route also implied field visit and interviews with the network management and members of the route. Management of the route has been informed about the visit and we have schedule it accordingly. The meeting with the route management has been held in their premises in Belgrade. The route management had been represented by the DCC. In addition, Robinzon Adventure Team has also been present which enabled correlation with the business community. The field visit comprehended two different sets of visits, one in Montenegro and one in Serbia.

Aside from them, 11 meetings with 11 member representatives have been conducted. Representatives were from the 7 member countries. In addition, the meetings have also comprehended representatives of the SC from the three different countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia. All the data are given in the following table.

Field visit agenda
Tuesday, 6.12. 09:00 visit to the Doclea heritage site 10:15 individual visit to the Zenta winery 11:30-13:30 trip to Risan 13:30-15:00 visit to the Roman mosaics – Risinium heritage site 15:00-19:00 trip to Podgorica
Wednesday, 7.12. – series of interviews with the route members <sup>18</sup> 11:30 Dragana Samardzic, TO Kotor (Montenegro) 12:15 Ljubisa Sulaja, Institute for Protection Culture Monuments, Sremska Mitrovica (Serbia) 12:50 Dragan Bradvica, TO Capljina (Bosnia and Herzegovina) 13:20 Nikolay Nenov, Ruse Regional Museum of History (Bulgaria), member of the SC 14:00 Engin Nasuh, National Institute and Museum Bitola (North Macedonia) 14:40 Biserka Stamatovic, TO Podgorica (Montenegro) 15:15 Zvonimir Rajkovic, TO Sisak (Croatia) 15:40 Gica Bastean, Ulppia Traiania Sarmizegetusa, (Romania) 16:00 Inel Constantin, Alba Iulia History Museum, (Romania), member of the SC
Thursday, 8.12. 10:30 meeting with DCC Gordana Plamenac (President of the Board of DCC), Vladan Kreckovic (Secretary General of DCC), Ljubisa Negovanovic (Robinzon Adventure Team General Manager), Jelena Zrnica (DCC Finance department) 13:00 Jasmina Beljin Iskrin (director, TO of Sremski Karlovci) 14:00 Dusan Drca (director, TO of Sremska Mitrovica) Ljubisa Solaja (director, Institute for Protection Culture Monuments, Sremska Mitrovica) 15:00 prof. Goran Petkovic, Faculty of Economics Belgrade, Scientific Committee member 16:30 Lunch
Friday, 9.12. 12:00 individual visit to Sirmium and Imperial Palace, Sremska Mitrovica 14:00 individual visit to Sremski Karlovci and Frusk gora wine region 16:00 Lunch

<sup>18</sup> Interviews have been individually selected and conducted. Interviews have covered 7 member countries and 9 institution. It was planned to conduct interviews with Daniel Poulet (Zsolnay Cultura Quartier from Hungary) and Ornela Durmishaj (Apollonia heritage site from Albania). However, in first case contact telephone number has apparently been wrong in the database while in second case contacts has not be reachable through telephone provided in the database.

## 7. Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST						
QUESTIONS			Yes	No	Comments (if any)	
3.1 THEME	1	Does the theme of the Route represent a common value (historical, cultural, or heritage) to several European countries?	x			
	2	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges?	x			
	3	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for innovative activities?	x			
	4	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for cultural tourism products development?	x		Theme route as well as sub-theme route provides the tremendous basis for the creation of both, culture but also creative tourism (observed as more active and customer centric) product/services.	
	5	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	x		However, new additional research and even more networking and exchange of students, lecturers and researchers is essential. In particular such research should be steered towards the future economic sustainability of the culture and creative tourism products/services.	
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development	6	Does the Route offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	x	Yes, as the ground basis and the networking model	
		7	Does the Route play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	x		
		8	Does the Route show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	x		
		9	Does the Route illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	x		
		10	Does the Route have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?		x	There are academicians involved individually and through their current positions within the universities/faculties/research units. However, it is highly recommended to create the vast network of the academic community from all the participating countries from the several different areas in order to achieve multidisciplinary effect.
		11	Does the Route have a multidisciplinary Scientific Committee?	x		
		12	Does the Scientific Committee work on its theme at the European level?	x		
		13	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the theoretical level?	x		

		Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the practical level?			It is partial valid as already mentioned. It would be highly beneficial to tackle more different activities in order to impact practical level. This is especially important as the RERDWR itself is basis for tremendous practical endeavors out of which some have already been taken by DCC.
	14		x		
3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage	15	Do the Route activities take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	x		
	16	Do the Route activities promote the values of the Council of Europe?	x		
	17	Do the Route activities promote the brand of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?	x		
	18	Does the route work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	x		
	19	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	x		
	20	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?		x	
	21	Do the Route activities valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?		x	However, despite the importance the respective valorization is not part of the theme. It is true it can be somehow added in the future but it hasn't been seen as an integral part of the theme.
	22	Do the Route activities contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	x		
	23	Do the Route activities enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	x		
	24	Do the Route activities take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning (European Cultural Convention, Faro convention, European Landscape Convention, World Heritage Convention, ...)?		x	
3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans	25	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?		x	
	26	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	x		It has partially been achieved by involvement of the minor students groups and their cooperation in the respective fields.
	27	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to encourage social integration and exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe?		x	
	28	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?		x	It is strongly believed it is something important and necessary for the overall goals of the route and better region's
			x		

					understanding.
		29	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts?	x	They are planned but yet not executed. However, the routes management is indeed aware that cooperation with the universities is the precondition for further youth exchange is essential.
		30	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?		x
		31	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	x	
	3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	32	Do the Route's cultural activities promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?		x
		33	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage artistic projects that establish links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?		x
		34	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	x	
		35	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?**		x
		36	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage debate and exchange - in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective - between various cultural and artistic expressions in different countries of Europe?		x
		37	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?		x
		38	Do the Route's cultural activities highlight the most innovative and creative practices?		x
		39	Do the Route's cultural activities link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***		x
		40	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) assist in local, regional, national and/ or European identity formation?	x	
	3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development				

		Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) actively involve 3 major means to raise awareness of their cultural projects: print, broadcast and social media?			The two out of the three major means of awareness raising (print and social media) have been used. The social media usage is excellent. Print media refers to their publications and leaflets while there is no evidence of traditional print media usage. On the other side, there is tremendous lack of usage of the broadcasting media both, in countries (route) but also European level. One of the recommendations is related to the necessity of involvement of the national public broadcasting companies through the network of the local stakeholders. Moreover, it is suggested to make an effort and to use support of the EICR and CoE to arrange coverage of the important European broadcasting companies as it would give the double visibility impact: (i) to the European market by offering the culture and creative tourism offer and (ii) impacting the national broadcasting companies by the example but also potential usage of previously produced material through the EBU-European Broadcasting Union.
	41		x		
	42	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between urban and rural communities and cultures?		x	
	43	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between developed and disadvantaged regions?	x		
	44	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between different regions (south, north, east, west) of Europe?		x	
	45	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?		x	
	46	Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?		x	The theme and sub-theme indeed offer such possibility due to the span and impact of the Roman Empire. However, the RERDWR is not offering such opportunity nor it has been mentioned during meetings, interviews and field visit.
	47	Do the Route's activities draw decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of the sustainable development of the territory?		x	The RERDWR has included significant poll of the stakeholders from respective countries. However, almost none of the stakeholders can be related as the decision maker. It potentially can be achieved and required in the next phases.
	48	Do the Route's activities aim to diversify cultural product, service and activities offers?	x		The RERDWR is attempting to create the proper and genuine product/service due to the theme and sub-theme given. Moreover, the RERDWR is attempting to involve sport component in the overall route making it more accessible for biking and outdoor



					activity clients.
		49	Do the Route's activities develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	x	
		50	Do the Route's activities develop partnerships with public and private organizations active in the field of tourism?	x	
		51	Did the network prepare and use tools along the route to raise the number of visitors and the economic impacts of the route on the territories crossed?	x	
3.3 NETWORK		52	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	x	
		53	Was the theme of the route chosen and accepted by the network members?	x	
		54	Was the conceptual framework of the route founded on a scientific basis?	x	
		55	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its projects?	x	
		56	Is the network financially sustainable?	x	Financial sustainability of the network depends on DCC and its activities, projects and services offered to the market. Own sustainability of the RERDWR is difficult to assess due to lack of sub-account and independent accounting. However, having in average 68% financially contributing members with and estimated annual budget of 7500EUR is not enough for making the RERDWR financially independent and sustainable in the current phase. Due to the routes' management vision, such hybrid model of financing is more than acceptable aiming for higher financial independence due to members extension and enlargement as well as sale of the new culture and creative products/services along the route.
		57	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	x	The RERDWR itself is not an independent legal entity. It is the Culture Route Product Club of the DCC. The Decision on Establishment of Culture Route Product Club (29.09.2014.) is the legal basis for it. Legal entity behind the route is DCC which is also the route's manager as well the partial funder. The respective information have been equal during the certification process as well as both previous evaluations. Unlike the legal status of the network, legal basis for it which is in compliance with the DCC's Statute exist. Regarding legal provision, it

				would be advisable to amend Decision of Establishment and prescribe the precise modes and requirements of membership in the route.
58	Does the network operate democratically?	x		
59	Does the network specify its objectives and working methods?	x		Provided in the Decision on Establishment of the DCC's Product Club (articles 2, 3 and 4 are related to the objectives, activities and working principles, respectively)
60	Does the network specify the regions concerned by the project?	x		
61	Does the network specify its partners and participating countries?	x		The participating countries are clearly stated as well as heritage sites and some of the involved stakeholders. However, the members are not listed publicly. Reasonable explanation might relate to previous overall situation as well as members fluctuation. However, it is highly suggested to improve it in the next period and list all accepted members regardless of the type (based on Decision on Establishment) as well as to list the network of the stakeholders. One of the pre-requirements for listed members would be labeling belongings to the route on their own websites (if already active). In that regard overall visibility of the network but also each member would be significantly increased.
62	Does the network specify the fields of action involved?	x		

	63	Does the network specify its overall strategy in the short and long term?		Publicly, no while it is believed it also should not be the case. Perhaps labeled and explained vision and mission should be listed. However, the strategy should be shared with each member. There are elements of defined strategic objectives within the Strategic Orientation and the Activity Plan 2022-2024. However, some of the listed strategic objectives cannot be assessed as such due to the lack of the measurability. For example, in the strategic objectives 2 and 4 (bullets B2 and B4 in the document) the focus should be on the precise but also likely achievable numbers. Regarding strategic objective 2 related to Green Travel Products it is recommended to define the number of concrete green travel packages as well as number of members willing to create and further develop alongside with DCC. Regarding strategic objective 4 Network consolidation and growth i.e., inclusion of the new local tourism service providers it is also recommended to define the number as well the type (including the number) of such new members/stakeholders. Respective will provide an additional assessment tool for the RERDWR itself in order to adapt to changes and create additional meaningful tasks.
	64	Does the network identify potential participants and partners in Council of Europe member states and/or other world countries?	x	The answer relates only to the CoE countries as other countries have not been identified as part of the documents, analysis, ideas and interviews. However, it is identified that the RERDWR is constantly seeking to increase number of reputable and meaningful members and stakeholders.

3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS		65	Does the network provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?		x	the financial statements and reporting are only available at the DCC level which is also contributing financially to the RERDWR. This is in slight collision with the Decision on Establishment which prescribes sub-account. As interviewees pointed out it is not possible by the other Serbian law (in the Decision the jurisdiction is by the Serbian law). Therefore, one of the suggestions was to erase such provision from the Decision but also to start more detailed recording of the financial flows within the RERDWR. However, the financial department of the DCC has provided the data during the interview. Based on that the revenues and the expenditures of the RERDWR can be assessed as the part of DCC's revenues and expenditures as they are monitoring both sides. Based on that, revenues of the RERDWR accounts 15%, 20%, 15% in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. They also expect similar trend of 15% in the 2022 as the financial reporting for this year is still not over. Additionally, the expenditures of the RERDWR accounts for 13%, 20%, 16% in 2019, 2020 and 2021, respectively. The similar trend is also expected for 2022.
		66	Does the network provide details of its operational plan?	x		Publicly, no. However, it is disputable should it be. It has been disseminated among members and there is the document called Activity Plan 2022-2024. The more detailed operational plan with activities of each member would be highly suggested to the RERDWR.
		67	Does the network append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?		x	The situation has been described previously. Decision on Establishment is the legal basis for creation of the RERDWR as the DCC' Product Club. There were no changes since the previous evaluation.
		68	Does the Route have its own logo?	x		
		69	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?		x	None of the Routes members have logo labeled on the website. The DCC mentions the Route in the newsletter section. It is also important to note that some of the members do not even have a the website.
		70	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	x		<a href="http://www.romanemperorsroute.org">www.romanemperorsroute.org</a>
		71	Is it the website available in English and French?	x		It is only and fully in English
		72	Is it the website available in other languages?		x	

		73	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	x	They have been using social media extensively. The RERDWR uses the Facebook with currently 1800 followers as well as the Instagram with 1189 followers and 154 posts. It is highly suggested to keep working on both social networks as well as to include Twitter and LinkedIn. Currently, they can be used to reach youth population as one of the future requirements for the network's and routes' sustainability. The LinkedIn is suggested due to awareness raising among academic, research and partially business community. However, their flagship social media project is the YouTube with the vision to even more exploit and use it for promotion and especially for reaching community and customers attention. Their YouTube channel has 126 video (360° HD) and 809 subscribers. The videos are of amazing quality and represents route in an amazing manner. An average video duration is around 4 minutes which perfectly directs the level of youth attention (which are still the most important group for further development). All videos have significant views while some reaching 5, 27, 35, 40 thousand views.
		74	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	x	Some are available on the route's website.
		75	If yes, are the brochures available in English?	x	
		76	If yes, are the brochures available in French?		x
	For certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe only	77	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?	x	Yes, based on the evaluation of the DCC materials excluding their website but including the RERDWR's website.
		78	Is the certification logo present on all communication materials?	x	
		79	Is the certification logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position)?	x	
		80	Are the logos (Cultural Route + certification logo) provided to all the members of the Route?		x Logos have not been shown on the route's members websites.
		81	Does the Council of Europe certification logo appear on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?		x No. However, the signalization must be improved in the following period for many heritage sites in cooperation with the local members and stakeholders.
	SCORE			52	29

## **8. Annex 3: List of acronyms, figures and tables**

### **List of acronyms**

CM – Committee of Ministers  
CoE – Council of Europe  
DCC – Danube Competence Centre  
EBU – European Broadcasting Union.  
EPA – Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes  
EICR – European Institute for Cultural Routes  
REDWR – Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route  
SC – Scientific Committee  
StC – Steering Committee

**Graph 1:** Distribution of Danube trail heritage sites per country

**Graph 2:** Distribution of Adriatic trail heritage sites per country

**Graph 3:** Structure of DCC's revenues in 2019-2021 period in EUR

**Graph 4:** Structure of DCC's expenditures in 2019-2021 period in EUR

**Graph 5:** 2022-2024 annual revenue forecast

**Graph 6:** Members per type of institution

**Photo 1:** REDWR member countries

**Photo 2:** Heritage sites on the Danube trail

**Photo 3:** Heritage sites on the Adriatic trail

**Photo 4:** Wine route

**Table 1:** Rules for certification