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Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Certification cycle 2024-2025

Regular Evaluation: **CYRIL AND METHODIUS 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 2024-2025

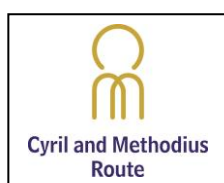
Independent expert report

CYRIL AND METHODIUS 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 Cyril and Methodius Route (CM Route) is currently in the process of renewing its certification as a "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" for the 2024–2025 cycle, reaffirming its role as a pathway that unites the cultural and historical heritage of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe through the enduring legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Their contributions to the Christianization of the Slavs and the development of the Glagolitic script laid the foundational groundwork for the Cyrillic alphabet, deeply shaping the cultural identity of Slavic communities and continuing to resonate across Europe today.

Since its establishment in 2013, the CM Route has expanded to include 37 members across 10 countries, with notable achievements in cultural preservation, research, and educational outreach. Supported by significant research efforts, such as the Scholarly Basis by dr. sc. Vida Vukoja and the Feasibility Study by Prof. Slavia Barlieva, the CM Route highlights key sites that reflect the legacy of Cyril and Methodius. This expansive route remains dynamic, with new memberships under consideration, including institutions like the Capital City of Prague, the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki, and several regional tourism bodies. The European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius 2030 Development Strategy, adopted in 2021, represents a key step in advancing an inclusive network-based model aligned with the objectives of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes program. Since the previous evaluation, the CM Route has made substantial progress in extending its thematic scope beyond a pilgrimage-centered model to incorporate a comprehensive framework that includes cultural, educational, and historical dimensions. This evolution is evident in initiatives such as the expanded digital database and the integration of interactive resources on the CM Route website, which enrich cultural tourism and provide valuable insights into the historical significance of the route.

The CM Route's current application for certification renewal complies with the eligibility criteria of CM_Res(2023)2, Parts I and II, embodying shared European values that resonate across a significant number of European nations. Under Part III, the CM Route demonstrates strong thematic cohesion, a structured activity framework, and an active membership base. However, opportunities for further enhancement remain. While the CM Route has strengthened its foundational research, cultural preservation, and youth engagement activities, the evaluation has identified several areas requiring targeted improvement to meet certification standards and extend the route's reach and impact.

While progress toward inclusivity has been achieved, expanding the geographic reach of activities—currently centered on the Czech-Slovak region—and involving a broader range of member countries in governance would enhance democratic participation and better reflect the pan-European ethos of the Cyril and Methodius Route. Additionally, while the financial model, relying on membership fees, regional and local support, and EU grants, remains stable, diversifying funding sources and forging partnerships with European and international entities would strengthen financial resilience. The Route's communication tools, though robust, require refinement. Investment in a professionally managed, multilingual online presence would significantly enhance visibility and broaden the Route's appeal to both European and global audiences. The current application of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" logo adheres to satisfactory standards; however, refinements are essential to ensure uniformity in usage, precise placement and proper proportionality, thereby fortifying brand integrity and achieving greater visual coherence.

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	Satisfactory	Poor	Unsatisfactory	Assessment
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for themes listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.	X					Excellent
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for actions listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, II. List of priority fields of action.		X				Very Good
Compliance with the eligibility criteria for networks listed in Resolution CM/Res(2023)2, III. List of criteria for networks.			X			Satisfactory
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”			X			Satisfactory

2. Introduction

The Cyril and Methodius Route (CM Route) is currently engaged in the renewal process for its certification as a 'Cultural Route of the Council of Europe' for the 2024–2025 cycle. This route serves as a unifying corridor that preserves and celebrates the shared historical and cultural heritage of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, underpinned by the profound legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Their 9th-century mission not only propelled the Christianization of the Slavs but also introduced the Glagolitic script, which laid the foundation for the Cyrillic alphabet and shaped Slavic cultural identity—a legacy that continues to resonate across Europe.

This report evaluates the CM Route's current developmental status and assesses its adherence to the certification criteria outlined in CM_Res(2023)2. It further reviews the route's response to challenges identified during the 2020/2021 certification cycle, offering recommendations for targeted improvements based on prior feedback.

Beyond the evaluation of application materials, interviews were conducted with the managing team, network members and scientific committee members. During a recent field visit, ten individuals from four countries — Bulgaria, Czech Republic, North Macedonia and Slovakia — including key representatives of the CM Route's governing bodies, provided insights. At the expert's initiative, the Permanent Secretariat issued a letter to all network members to elicit general feedback, receiving responses from eight members. This collective feedback, along with other insights, offered a comprehensive overview of the CM Route's current status. These engagements were essential in understanding the CM Route's development and the challenges it faces.

The re-certification of the CM Route as a Council of Europe Cultural Route represents a critical opportunity to advance shared European heritage through a coordinated network of partners across the continent.

The concept of a Cultural Route for Cyril and Methodius originated in 2013, inspired by the 1150th anniversary of their arrival in Great Moravia (modern-day Czech Republic and Slovakia). Since the last evaluation, significant strides have been made in the strategic vision and management of the CM Route. In 2021, the ECR C&M Association adopted 'The European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius 2030 Development Strategy,' establishing a comprehensive framework for partnership, communication, and sustainable growth in alignment with the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes program. Ratified by the General Assembly in 2022, this strategy, among other key elements, introduces a dual-route model: a linear route inspired by the journey of Saints Cyril and Methodius from Byzantium to Great Moravia, connecting key historical sites across Europe, and a reticular network linking focal points of Cyril and Methodius' heritage and veneration. The strategy, grounded in scholarly research, emphasizes the authenticity and shared legacy of Cyril and Methodius, uniting diverse European heritage sites under a cohesive and sustainable vision for cultural cooperation.

By fostering inclusive dialogue across its expansive network, the CM Route integrates 37 members across 10 countries, including Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. Under the administration of the Association for the European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius (ECR C&M Association), led by Mrs. Zuzana Vojtová and headquartered in Zlín, Czech Republic, the network plays a central role in coordinating activities and advancing collaborative cultural, research, and educational initiatives.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1. Cultural Route Theme

3.1.1. Definition of the theme of the route

The Cyril and Methodius Route is deeply embedded in the extensive cultural and historical legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius, whose mission among the Slavic peoples in the 9th century initiated essential advancements in Slavic literacy, religious traditions, and cultural identity. This theme encapsulates the diffusion of Christianity and the development of a unique Slavic cultural and literary identity, notably through the creation of the Glagolitic script and the establishment of Old Church Slavonic. The heritage reflects timeless values such as human dignity, linguistic equality, and cultural identity, serving as a platform for ecumenical and intercultural dialogue.

The scientific foundation of the theme is supported by the historical and linguistic significance of the Slavic alphabet and the preservation of key texts in Old Church Slavonic. Over the years, a series of strategic documents have progressively refined the thematic and structural development of the Cyril and Methodius Route, notably including the Scholarly Basis of the Cyril and Methodius Route (2021) by Dr. Vida Vukoja, which meticulously outlines both the tangible and intangible dimensions of the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage. Supported by a consortium of experts from 11 countries, this document establishes a cultural foundation for a shared European identity through the legacy of Cyril and Methodius, upholding values like human dignity, freedom of expression, and intercultural dialogue.

Early strategies, such as the 2014 Product Strategy, established a linear route that traced the journey of Saints Cyril and Methodius, connecting critical sites like Velehrad, Rome, and Thessaloniki. This design highlighted the geographical continuity of the saints' mission, following a straightforward path similar to that of other historical pilgrimage routes, such as Santiago de Compostela. However, as objectives broadened to capture the fuller scope of Cyrillo-Methodian heritage, the route transitioned to a more inclusive route model as outlined in the European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius 2030 Development Strategy, ratified by the General Assembly in 2022. This updated model preserves the original linear path but introduces a reticular (networked) route to encompass a wider array of sites connected to the saints' legacy. These additional locations, or "focal points," reflect where disciples of Cyril and Methodius disseminated Slavic literacy and Christian culture, thereby extending the route's footprint across a broader European landscape.

With the potential to encompass 24 European nations and a concentrated influence within the Danube macro-region, this thematic heritage network integrates sites central to the legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius. This extensive network includes historic monuments, sites of worship, and cultural landmarks that accentuate the profound impact of the saints' mission. The route's geographical trajectory commences in the Byzantine Empire (present-day Greece and Turkey), traverses Great Moravia (modern Czech Republic and Slovakia), and Lower Pannonia (Hungary, Croatia, Serbia), and extends to regions where the disciples of Cyril and Methodius continued their work after their expulsion from Moravia, notably including Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and parts of Russia and Ukraine. This broad geographical range underscores the substantial influence of the Cyrillo-Methodian mission on Slavic cultural identity across a diverse array of landscapes.

The Cyrillo-Methodian heritage integrates both tangible and intangible elements. The tangible heritage includes important manuscripts in Old Church Slavonic, preserved in both Glagolitic

and early Cyrillic scripts, along with numerous archaeological and historical sites directly tied to the saints' mission. Notable sites include Nitra in Slovakia, Mikulčice in the Czech Republic, Uherské Hradiště, Pliska in Bulgaria, and the Preslav sites, each associated with the work of Cyril and Methodius and their disciples, who spread the Slavic script and Christian traditions. The intangible heritage includes Old Church Slavonic, a liturgical and cultural language developed by Cyril and Methodius, which remains celebrated in Slavic liturgies and cultural commemorations. The annual May 24th celebration, known as the Day of Slavic Literacy and Culture, honors the saints' contributions. Further intangible elements include educational initiatives, festivals, and traditional events, all promoting the values imparted by Cyril and Methodius, including dignity, tolerance, and cultural solidarity.

This dual heritage—both tangible and intangible—reflects the immediate and enduring influence of Cyril and Methodius mission on Slavic literacy, education, and identity. The preservation of these elements enables contemporary Slavic communities to stay connected to their cultural roots and uphold the foundational ideals of equality, autonomy, and intellectual resilience that Cyril and Methodius championed.

The route's narrative intricately weaves together multiple facets of the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy, emphasizing the spread of Christianity, the advancement of literacy, and the cultural and political self-determination of Slavic nations. This narrative encapsulates the pursuit of identity and equality, resonating with core European values of unity, dignity, and diversity.

The title, "Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius", aptly captures the route's dedication to the saints and their foundational contributions to Slavic heritage. Its clarity enables a direct recognition of the saints' lasting influence on European cultural and religious identity.

In comparison with other certified routes, the Cyrillo-Methodian Route is distinctive in its focus on the linguistic and religious dimensions of cultural identity, emphasizing cross-cultural influence between the Byzantine East and Latin West. While other routes may highlight historical pilgrimages or specific religious connections, this route uniquely integrates these dimensions, leveraging the innovative use of language and script as tools of cultural sovereignty, bridging diverse cultures and strengthening enduring Slavic cultural ties.

The Cyrillo-Methodian heritage provides a dynamic platform for youth cultural and educational exchanges, with rich opportunities for engagement through language workshops, historical reenactments, and studies in religious history. The route also serves as a basis for cultural tourism, with site visits, festivals, and educational programs celebrating Slavic literacy, religious tolerance, and human dignity.

3.1.2. Historical and cultural context

The Cyril and Methodius Route traces its origins to the 9th century within the Great Moravian Empire, covering present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia. This route honors the pioneering work of Saints Cyril and Methodius, whose mission, at the invitation of Duke Rastislav, laid the foundation for Slavic literacy, culture, and identity. Arriving from Thessaloniki in 863, the brothers introduced the Glagolitic alphabet—an early precursor to Cyrillic—designed specifically to translate liturgical texts and sacred scriptures into the Slavic vernacular. This linguistic innovation empowered the Slavs to engage with cultural practices in their native language, fostering a unified Slavic literary and cultural tradition. Beyond translation, Cyril and Methodius promoted Old Slavic as a liturgical language, selected and educated local disciples in both Slavonic and Latin, and established religious and educational sites across Great Moravia.

Following Cyril's death in 869, Methodius continued their mission, expanding their influence into Lower Pannonia and training a new generation of Slavic clergy who carried their teachings across Central and Eastern Europe. This mission, rooted in linguistic and cultural empowerment, reflected early European diplomacy and cultural autonomy, as endorsed by both Byzantine Emperor Michael III and later Pope Hadrian II, who sanctified the Slavonic liturgical books and consecrated Methodius as Archbishop of Pannonia.

This enduring heritage, known as *Slavia cyrillicomethodiana*, established Old Church Slavonic as a unifying literary language, connecting Slavic communities and preserving cultural identity through traditions such as the Croatian Glagolitic script and other Old Slavic manuscripts. The legacy of Cyril and Methodius transcended the boundaries of Great Moravia, shaping Slavic cultural development across Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia, and Eastern Europe. Recognized as spiritual leaders of the Slavs, they were proclaimed patrons of all Slavic peoples in 1863 and named co-patrons of Europe by Pope John Paul II in 1980.

The Cyril and Methodius Route is robustly supported by rigorous scholarly research, including the aforementioned Scholarly Basis of the Cyril and Methodius Route by Dr. Vida Vukoja.

3.1.3. Council of Europe values represented by the theme

The Cyril and Methodius Route represents a pivotal chapter in European history, embodying the emergence of Slavic literacy and cultural autonomy in the 9th century. Through their development of the Glagolitic script and the promotion of Old Church Slavonic, Cyril and Methodius catalyzed a cultural transformation that significantly enriched Europe's heritage and collective memory.

This route epitomizes core European principles, including inclusivity, linguistic diversity, and the preservation of cultural identity, while adeptly bridging Byzantine and Latin traditions to exemplify a sophisticated model of intercultural dialogue. It signifies an enduring legacy of collaboration and mutual respect, foundational to the cohesion of European unity. Moreover, it emphasizes cultural rights and inclusivity as integral pillars of a unified European identity.

By offering profound insights into Europe's cultural plurality, the route presents a historical paradigm of East-West collaboration, resonating with the Council of Europe's overarching objectives of conflict prevention and reconciliation.

The Cyril and Methodius Route actively supports the Council of Europe's principles on cultural heritage and minority rights, promoting linguistic diversity, cultural preservation, and cross-border unity, thereby strengthening Europe's commitment to intercultural cohesion and shared heritage.

3.2. Fields of Action

3.2.1. Co-operation in research and development

The Cyril and Methodius Route stands as a unifying framework for a major European theme, celebrating the enduring legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius from the 9th century. Their pivotal contributions to Slavic literacy, cultural autonomy, and intellectual development are fundamental to Europe's shared heritage. By consolidating dispersed historical and cultural knowledge from across Europe, the Route reinforces key European values—cultural inclusivity, linguistic diversity, and historical identity—through a range of collaborative and educational activities.

Numerous events underscore these values, including the International Scientific Conference “The Path of St. Cyril and St. Methodius: Spatial and Cultural-Historical Dimensions” in Sofia (2021) and the International Conference and Exhibition “Thessaloniki Saints and Their Contribution to the Development of European Civilization” in Thessaloniki (2022). These gatherings bring scholars and the public together to explore the Route’s historical themes, embodying European ideals of cultural cooperation and mutual respect.

The Route’s rigorous research framework is led by its Scientific Committee (SC), composed of 22 members from 9 countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia.. This Committee integrates expertise across diverse fields such as archaeology, Slavic studies, cultural heritage preservation, and regional development. Collaborating with 23 universities and research centers across 10 countries—Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain—the Committee ensures a robust interdisciplinary approach. Chaired by Prof. PhDr. Peter Ivanič, PhD. from the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia, the Committee organizes conferences, consults on membership applications, and provides ongoing expert guidance. A significant publication, the *Scholarly Basis of the CM Route* (2020-2021), exemplifies the Committee’s commitment to a cohesive scholarly approach, establishing the Route’s historical and cultural foundations.

The Route’s scholarly contributions are substantial, including 16 scientific papers, 6 conference proceedings, and 3 books as direct outputs, along with 8 additional academic papers, 5 conference proceedings, and 5 books as indirect contributions. The biannual magazine *Constantine’s Letters* further explores topics on Slavic history, Byzantine and medieval studies, and iconography, fostering a rich scholarly dialogue. Noteworthy publications include *The Life of Saint Constantine-Cyril and the Veneration of His Relics* by Prof. Ivanič, which examines Saint Cyril’s cultural impact and legacy, presented at the Pontifical Slovak Institute in Rome, 2024.

The Route collaborates with a distinguished network of universities and research institutions, reinforcing its pan-European commitment to interdisciplinary research. This geographic spread enhances the Route’s reputation and academic influence, highlighted by key events such as the International Conference on the 200th Anniversary of the Suprasl Codex in Poland (2023), hosted under the patronage of President Andrzej Duda. Such collaborations foster cross-border intellectual exchange, strengthening the Route’s impact and ensuring that research aligns with contemporary academic standards.

Projects organized or supported by the SC or institutional members of the Network:

- **Scholarly Basis of the Cyril and Methodius Route, Zagreb, Croatia, 2021**
This foundational activity established the thematic and geographical framework of the route, shaped by international consensus. Led by Dr. Vida Vukoja, Director of the Old Slavic Institute in Zagreb, the project received endorsement from 19 experts across 11 European countries, creating a unified scholarly approach to the route’s cultural and historical significance.
- **International Scientific Conference "The Path of St. Cyril and St. Methodius: Spatial and Cultural-Historical Dimensions", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2021**
Held in Sofia, this conference convened 47 scholars and eight guests from across Europe to explore the CM Route. The findings, published in *Cyrillo-Methodian Studies*, further solidified the route’s scholarly foundation and reinforced its significance within the European academic community.

- Seminar “The Late Cyril and Methodius Tradition in the background of the Religious and Cultural Mosaic of Belarus”, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2021
- International Scientific Conference “Cyrillo-Methodian Heritage in Scientific and Cultural Memory”, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023
- Traveling Scientific Seminar "Cyrillo-Methodian Heritage in the Lands of the Ohrid Archbishopric", North Macedonia and Albania, 2023
Conducted in North Macedonia and Albania, this seminar promoted the integration of these regions into the CM Route. The seminar facilitated in-depth discussions among prominent scholars on the unique aspects of the Cyrillo-Methodian heritage within the historical context of the Bulgarian state.
- Christian values and sustainable society conference, Nitra, Slovakia, 2024
- International conference Reflection of Saints Cyril and Methodius tradition in the 20th century held on the occasion of the 1160th anniversary of the arrival of the Byzantine mission of Sts. Constantine (Cyril) and Methodius to Great Moravia and the 1150th anniversary of creating St. Methodius the Archbishop of Moravia and Pannonia, Nitra, Slovakia, 2023
- Exhibition “The Path of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and Their Disciples” (Polish Version), Warsaw, Supraśl, Kraków, Poznań, Poland, 24 May 2021 - 28 June 2024
- International Conference "200th Anniversary of the Discovery of the Suprasl Codex", Suprasl Academy, Białystok, Poland, 2023
Organized in Poland under the patronage of President Andrzej Duda, this conference brought together international experts to discuss the historical relevance of the Suprasl Codex, a pivotal artifact within the Cyrillo-Methodian tradition. The event provided a global academic platform for discussing the codex's influence on Slavic studies and medieval European heritage.
- Memorandum for Cooperation and Promotion of the Common Cyrillo-Methodian Cultural-Historical Heritage, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023
Signed in Sofia by municipal representatives from Thessaloniki and Sofia, this memorandum underscored a strong commitment to jointly promoting the cultural-historical heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius throughout the Balkans, paving the way for coordinated initiatives at national, regional, and European levels.
- International Expert Meeting "Bulgarian Cultural, Historical, and Natural Heritage in the Perspective of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe", Sofia, Bulgaria (and online), 2022
- Book Presentation: The Life of Saint Constantine-Cyril and the Veneration of His Relics, Pontifical Slovak Institute, Rome, 2024

Regional initiatives and collaborations:

- Presentation of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Program in Burgas, Shumen, Provadia, Novi Pazar, Kaspichan, Burgas, Shumen, Provadia, Novi Pazar, Kaspichan, Bulgaria, 2023
- Meeting for Bulgarian Stakeholders, Sofia, Bulgaria, 2021
- Seminar for members of the consortium of the Center of Excellence "Heritage BG", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2022
- Conference on The European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Skopje and Greater Skopje Area, Skopje, 2024
Hosted by the Institute of Macedonian Literature at the University of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Skopje. Scholars from Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, and North Macedonia presented papers celebrating the heritage of the saints. The

conference emphasized the cultural significance of Cyril and Methodius across Europe, focusing on monuments, artifacts, and manuscripts tied to their legacy.

Cultural and promotional activities:

- International conference and exhibition "Thessaloniki Saints and their contribution to the development of European civilization", Thessaloniki, Greece, 2022
This academic and cultural event, hosted in Thessaloniki, highlighted the saints' enduring influence on European civilization, linking their origins to the preservation of Byzantine values. With over 50 conference participants and more than 2,000 exhibition visitors, the event achieved substantial cultural exchange and scholarly discourse on their legacy.
- Solemn Celebration of the Dormition of St. Cyril at the National Museum "Earth and People", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023
- The premiere of the collection "The Path of Cyril and Methodius - Spatial and Cultural-Historical Dimensions", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023
- Exhibition "The Path of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and Their Disciples" (English Version), Sofia, Bulgaria; Thessaloniki, Greece; Velehrad, Prague, Brno, Czechia, 2021-2024
- Exhibition "The Path of St. Cyril and St. Methodius and Their Disciples" (Czech version), Prague, Velehrad, Brno (Czechia), Nitra (Slovakia), 2022-2024

Archaeological projects:

- Excavations at Zalavár, Hungary, from August 2021 through 2025
These ongoing archaeological excavations in Hungary aim to uncover historical sites linked to the missionary activities of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Continuing through 2025, these digs represent a significant contribution to understanding the mission's impact on medieval Central Europe.

The role of the Scientific Committee (SC) and other stakeholders has been pivotal in establishing the solid foundations of the Cyril and Methodius Route, both academically and culturally. However, a key challenge in the coming years will be to expand interdisciplinary engagement, deepen the integration of local communities, and enhance impact through innovative formats and strategies. These steps are essential for the continued evolution of the Route as a European cultural project that bridges the academic, cultural, and public spheres.

3.2.2. Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

The Cyril and Methodius Route preserves and showcases both the tangible and intangible dimensions of European heritage. Regarding tangible heritage, it encompasses various inscriptions and texts preserved on materials such as stone, parchment, paper, plaster, and more. In addition to these written records, the tangible heritage includes numerous sites and artifacts connected to significant events and stages in the lives of Cyril, Methodius, and their direct disciples. These material traces offer invaluable insights into the development and spread of literacy, with key sites and artifacts located across historic regions of the Eastern Roman Empire (modern Greece and Turkey), Great Moravia (present-day Czech Republic and Slovakia), Lower Pannonia (now Hungary, as well as parts of Croatia and Serbia), the Papal States (notably Rome), and various locations across the Slavic world from periods following the mission of Cyril and Methodius.

In terms of intangible heritage, the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy endures through a rich array of cultural programs, events, celebrations, and festivals. These include spiritual choral music concerts, traditional Glagolitic singing, feast days honoring the saints, and other commemorative activities. Educational initiatives play a crucial role as well, including workshops, schools, seminars, and public lectures aimed at preserving and transmitting knowledge of the Glagolitic and Cyrillic scripts, as well as the Church Slavonic language. These programs strive to pass down Cyrillo-Methodian knowledge and values to future generations, fostering principles such as human dignity, tolerance, democracy, freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and expression, along with the rule of law and the right to a fair trial.

The Cyril and Methodius Route embodies key international charters and conventions, aligning with the Council of Europe, UNESCO, and ICOMOS principles concerning heritage, culture, and human rights. It enhances landscapes as cultural journeys, connecting participants to Europe's historical evolution and, in accordance with the Faro Convention, fosters shared responsibility among communities and nations for preserving and interpreting Cyrillo-Methodian heritage. Exemplifying intercultural dialogue and mutual respect, the Route bridges Byzantine, Roman, and Slavic traditions, promoting education, literacy, and pluralism. It reinforces human dignity and diversity by linking cultural heritage across nations, fostering intellectual freedom, cooperation, and tolerance, and it supports unity, intercultural dialogue, and shared identity through the enduring educational legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius, echoing the cohesive values of European heritage.

The Route further underscores the cultural significance of lesser-known sites beyond traditional tourist circuits, particularly in rural and economically transitioning areas. As noted in the previous report, projects such as the CMR-Partnership (2018–2019) have created public databases that highlight significant cross-border regions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, including archaeological sites and sacred monuments.

The Cyril and Methodius Route also plays an essential role in raising awareness about the complex nature of European heritage, fostering understanding among decision-makers, practitioners, and the general public. Training and educational events, such as international conferences held in Zlín and Staré Město, enhance intercultural competence and highlight the relevance of this heritage for sustainable development. The Route's interdisciplinary approach and collaborations with universities and research institutions further reinforce its educational impact, contributing to a shared European identity and preparing society for future challenges in heritage preservation.

As noted in the previous report, at this stage of the CM Route's development, the candidate has not provided information on initiatives to promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures, nor has it examined the potential role of industrial areas undergoing economic restructuring within the Route. The only reference is that the Secretariat's Office is situated in an office building adjacent to the Zlín Region HQ, within a revitalized industrial area in the center of Zlín (Czech Republic).

Projects organized or supported by ECR CM:

Key conferences and presentations

- Celebration of the registration of the Cyril and Methodius Route as a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, Zlín, Czech Republic, 2021
- International conference "Cyril and Methodius Route - The Cultural Route of the Council of Europe", Zlín, Czech Republic, 2022

- Presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route at the BIG SEE Design Award and meeting in Brezje, Ljubljana and Brezje, Slovenia, 2022
- Presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route at the 11th Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes, Chania, Greece/online, 2022
- Presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route to Embassies at the Holy See, Rome, Italy, 2024
- Conference 'Cultural Routes in Slovakia', Bratislava, Slovakia, 2023

Exhibitions and promotional activities

- Exhibition and presentation of Cyril and Methodius Route, Strasbourg, France, 2022
- Exhibition "For Cyril and Methodius, Then and Now", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2024
- Outdoor traveling exhibitions of the Cyril and Methodius Route, Various cities in Czech Republic, 2022-2024

Regional collaboration and Cross-Border initiatives

- Presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route, establishing cooperation with basilicas in Rome, Rome, Italy, 2022
- Presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route, Viterbo, Italy, 2023
- Exhibition and presentation of the Cyril and Methodius Route, Aquileia, Italy, 2023

Educational and cultural engagement

- Days of People of Good Will - National Cyril and Methodius Celebration and pilgrimage, Velehrad, Czech Republic, 2021-2024
- Veligrad – The fight for the fortress - Historical festival re-enacting medieval battles, Modrá, Czech Republic, 2021, 2022
- Cyrillo-Methodian Festivities at Bojná - Slavic heritage festival, Bojná, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Nitra, dear Nitra - National celebrations for Cyril and Methodius, Nitra, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Pribina's Nitrawa Festival - Medieval life reenactment, Nitra, Slovakia, 2021-2024

Other projects related to memory, history, and heritage:

Local and regional initiatives

- Lecture and exhibition "Historical sources from Draganić", Draganić, Croatia, 2023
- Glagolitic in Karlovac Country - Online presentation and map, Karlovac, Croatia, 2022
- Lecture on Cyril and Methodius Route in Draganić, Draganić, Croatia, 2022
- International conference "Journey to the Script", Staré Město, Czech Republic, 2023

Cultural and religious events

- Annual Cyril and Methodius Days in Terchová. Terchová, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Exhibition "Cyril and Methodius Days - 30 Years", Velehrad, Czech Republic, and Nitra, Slovakia, 2021, 2022

Pilgrimages and solemn celebrations

- Cyril and Methodius pilgrimage to Zalavár - Annual Slovak pilgrimage, Zalavár, Hungary, 2021-2024

- Solemn Holy Mass at the 9th Century Church of St. George - Kostol'any pod Tribečom, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Cyrillo-Methodian Festivities at Branč - Annual outdoor celebrations, Branč, Slovakia, 2021-2024

Additional exhibitions and educational projects

- Documentary Exhibition "Cyril and Methodius Route in Pictures", Nitra, Slovakia, 2024
- Lecture "Glagolitic in Draganić" - Presentation of historical documents, Zagreb, Croatia, 2022
- Presentation of the book *The Life of St. Constantine-Cyril and the Veneration of His Relics*, Nitra, Slovakia, 2024

Despite its notable contributions to both tangible and intangible heritage, future endeavors should prioritize the inclusion of minority communities, the adoption of advanced digital tools, and the engagement of industrial regions undergoing economic transformation to enhance its influence and relevance in modern Europe.

3.2.3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

The Cyril and Methodius Route fosters European citizenship by engaging young people in activities that celebrate Europe's rich cultural diversity and shared heritage. Events like the International Student Conference "1160 years since the beginning of the Cyril-Methodian mission" and the Student Competition "Traces of Cyrillo-Methodian Deed Around the World" bring students from different European regions together, encouraging them to explore the cultural legacy of Cyril and Methodius while promoting a deeper understanding of their role as European citizens.

Experiential learning is central to the Cyril and Methodius Route's educational approach, emphasizing direct contact with historical sites and hands-on activities. Programs such as the Journey to the Script with Hlaholníček workshops and archaeological tours in Mikulčice offer immersive experiences that allow young participants to physically connect with the places, symbols, and narratives of the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy. Through these interactive activities, students gain an enriched understanding of their European heritage, making history accessible and tangible.

The Route actively promotes exchanges among young people from various social and regional backgrounds, encouraging inclusive participation across Europe. Workshops and competitions, such as Glagolitic Writing for Foreign Students and cultural events in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, are designed to welcome students from different cultures, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

The Cyril and Methodius Route serves as a model for innovative cultural education through its pilot programs. Initiatives such as Experiential Teaching of History in Slovakian cities and the Museum Kit "The Journey of Letters", Greece represent best practices that can inspire similar programs across Europe. These pilot activities demonstrate the potential of experiential and interactive learning, offering a sustainable framework that other regions and educational institutions can adopt to deepen young people's engagement with heritage.

Collaboration with educational institutions is a cornerstone of the Route's activities. The Route partners with universities, schools, and research centers across Europe, creating a robust network that supports interdisciplinary learning and research.

Despite progress, further engagement could be achieved by expanding intercultural programs beyond current cross-border activities (primarily among the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria) and by incorporating digital resources for greater accessibility.

Regular events focused also on young Europeans include:

- 1160 years since the beginning of the Cyril-Methodian mission - International Student Conference, Thessaloniki, Greece, 2023
- International Student Competition "Traces of Cyrillo-Methodian Deed Around the World", Sofia, Bulgaria, 2023
- Pilot Workshops on creative work with the Glagolitic alphabet in primary schools "Journey to the Script with Hlaholníček", Boršice, Czech Republic; Terchová, Slovakia, 2022-2023
- Glagolitic Workshop for Foreign Students at the Summer School of Slavonic Studies, Olomouc, Czech Republic, 2024
- Don't be afraid of Old Church Slavonic!, Rajhrad u Brna, Czech Republic, Ongoing
- Tours of archaeological findings and life on the Slavic fortress, Mikulčice, Czech Republic, Ongoing
- Experiential teaching of history – Svätý Jur, Svätý Jur, Slovakia, 2023-2024
- Experiential teaching of history – Modra, Modra, Slovakia, 2023-2024
- Experiential teaching of history – Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovakia, 2023

Multimedia focused on young people includes:

- Museum Kit "The Journey of Letters" for schools, Thessaloniki and public schools in Greece, Ongoing

3.2.4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

The Cyril and Methodius Route provides an influential platform for intercultural exchange and dialogue, utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to connect participants from varied cultural and artistic backgrounds across Europe. Notable events, such as the Exhibition about the European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius held in Rome, foster cross-cultural discourse, featuring trilingual displays that bridge Slovak and Italian heritage and link the historical legacy of Cyril and Methodius to contemporary European dialogue. Similarly, Gorazd's Močenok, a Slovak festival of Christian theatre, facilitates a rich exchange of ideas by blending historical narratives with modern theatrical interpretations that resonate across cultural borders.

The Route actively promotes artistic projects that bridge heritage and contemporary culture, revitalizing the legacy of Cyril and Methodius through innovative, experiential formats. Exhibits like The Earliest History of Agriculture and Treasures of Ancient Slovakia in Nitra connect past traditions with present-day cultural practices through archaeological artifacts, engaging audiences in a dialogue that celebrates both heritage and modern expression. The St. Methodius Cycle Trail, featuring installations inspired by early Slavic artifacts, merges cultural heritage with contemporary art, offering participants an immersive experience that connects historical roots to the modern landscape.

In showcasing creative practices, the Route celebrates both innovation and historical skill development. Events like the public launch of "William Schiffer - Monograph of Collector's Medals" highlight craftsmanship influenced by the Cyril-Methodian legacy, underscoring artistry that infuses historical narratives within a modern context. Through festivals and

exhibitions, the Route emphasizes the enduring significance of skill development, presenting work that reflects the legacy of Cyril and Methodius in ways that resonate with today's audiences.

The Route's activities foster inclusive participation across diverse skill levels and backgrounds.

Major cultural events include:

- Exhibition about European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius in Rome, Rome, Italy, 2024
- Proglas as an original gift for the Holy Father, Vatican, 2024
- Gorazd's Močenok, Močenok, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- The People under the Mount Marhát in the Ancient Past, Nitrianska Blatnica, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- The Earliest History of Agriculture, Nitra, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Treasures of Ancient Slovakia, Nitra, Slovakia, 2021-2024
- Meeting Great Moravia, Nitra, Slovakia, 2021-2024

Several regular multi-genre events inspire creativity related to the Cyril and Methodius legacy:

- Opening of the St. Methodius Cycle Trail, Boršice, Czech Republic, 2021
- Public launch of a representative publication about medals, Trnava, Slovakia, 2024

3.2.5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

The Cyril and Methodius Route has significantly advanced cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development, positioning itself as a comprehensive framework capable of gradually integrating diverse European identities across 24 countries. Initially centered predominantly on pilgrimage trails, the Route has recently expanded its cultural scope to encompass a wide array of historical, archaeological, and cultural sites that highlight Europe's shared heritage. Its dedicated website now functions as a robust platform, providing travelers with detailed tourist information, interactive maps, and photographs.

Spanning a total of 5,000 km from Turkey to Poland, the Route's trails are organized into one-day stages, complete with site recommendations and accommodation options. While 1,500 km of trails are marked and signposted in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, further partnerships—such as those with the Via Francigena network in Italy and along the Via Egnatia in Turkey and the Balkans—are extending this signposting to other regions, with guidance available online or offline through the mapy.cz app.

By embracing both urban and rural sites, the Route promotes cultural dialogue across economically diverse areas, fostering understanding of Europe's rich historical narratives. Events like the Old Slavic Feast in Nitra, the St. Methodius Cycle Trail, and Christian theater festivals like Gorazd's Močenok in Slovakia celebrate regional heritage while promoting intercultural dialogue. By including universally relevant sites like the Basilica of St. Clement in Rome, where Saint Cyril is honored, the Route draws visitors from beyond Europe, encouraging global dialogue on shared cultural values. Expansions into the Balkans and Adriatic regions, including locations such as Pliska, Sofia, Skopje, Ohrid, Ardenitsa, Berat, Aquileia, Gorizia, Nova Gorica, and Sveta Gora., will further broaden its reach, offering an inclusive portrayal of the Cyril and Methodius legacy.

The Route also emphasizes sustainable development by engaging the public and policymakers, raising awareness of the need to preserve cultural sites as part of regional and territorial growth. Through its online platform, the Route provides historical context, multimedia

resources, and detailed visitor guides that encourage responsible tourism and environmental stewardship.

To diversify tourism supply and demand, the Route offers unique thematic experiences that combine historical depth with immersive engagement. Events like the Old Slavic Feast in Nitra allow visitors to experience historical cuisine and cultural practices inspired by the era of Great Moravia, providing an engaging cultural experience that celebrates regional history. Additionally, the “Nitra, Dear Nitra” and Cyril and Methodius celebrations bring visitors to Bojná Fortress, where they can participate in medieval-style re-enactments, guided tours of historical sites, and traditional feasts. This approach to tourism emphasizes experiential learning and engages visitors more deeply with European heritage.

Finally, the Route collaborates extensively with public and private tourism organizations to broaden accessibility and enhance visitor experiences. In 2024, the Route established a partnership with Clio Travel Group Ltd. from Sofia, Bulgaria, which organized a pilot coach tour along the Cyril and Methodius Route in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Partnerships with sports organizations, such as Orel Uherský Brod, facilitate unique experiences, such as the cycling tour from Uherský Brod to Aquileia and Rome, planned for 2024-2025. Local collaborations, including partnerships with the Czech and Slovak Tourist Clubs, help ensure that Route paths are well-marked and mapped for hiking and cycling. Additionally, the Route’s digital resources—including downloadable guides, maps, and thematic itineraries—support both guided and self-guided exploration.

There is significant potential to promote a comprehensive cultural product that balances pilgrimage with broader thematic elements, alongside substantial improvements to the official website’s content. Collaborating with the Scientific Committee to develop a multilingual brochure would further enhance the delivery of a cohesive and unified message across all countries along the route.

3.3. Cultural Route Network

3.3.1. Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network

By fostering inclusive dialogue across its expansive network, the CM Route integrates 37 members across 10 countries: Bulgaria (2), Croatia (1), the Czech Republic (9), Greece (1), Hungary (1), Italy (3), North Macedonia (2), Poland (1), Slovakia (16), and Slovenia (1).

The CM Cultural Route Network operates as an international association legally registered within a Council of Europe member State. Its by-laws define a clear mission focused on the promotion and preservation of European heritage. The Association comprises various categories of membership, regular General Assembly sessions, and a diverse governing body structure, including the Managing Committee, Director, Permanent Secretariat, and National Coordinators, all aligned to ensure efficient governance and adherence to Council of Europe standards.

The network’s governance, grounded in its Articles of Association, is democratic and participatory, with the General Assembly as the highest decision-making authority. Members approve decisions on strategic goals, budgets, membership applications, and by-law amendments, promoting transparency. The Managing Committee and Permanent Secretariat oversee daily operations and coordinate activities between meetings, ensuring continuity and alignment with the network’s mission. The CM Cultural Route Network demonstrates management capacities through its Permanent Secretariat and National Coordinators. The

Secretariat manages administrative tasks and oversees project execution, while National Coordinators facilitate local implementations of Association activities. This structure enhances cohesion, enables efficient communication across borders, and allows the Association to effectively engage with partners, secure funding, and coordinate activities within the broader European Cultural Routes program.

Currently, leadership is concentrated within the Czech Republic and Slovakia, particularly within the Steering Committee (SC), which limits broader European representation and may reduce engagement from other member countries. The inclusion of a National Coordinator for Bulgaria in the SC, effective from 2024, is a commendable step toward enhancing representation and fostering a more balanced pan-European governance structure.

The Association's financial viability is upheld by a structured budget, membership fees.

3.3.1.1. Overview of the financial situation of the network

The financial performance of the Cyril and Methodius Route Association over the period from 2021 to 2024 reflects a consistent pattern of revenue sources and expenditure allocations, with a balanced budget achieved each year. Revenue has primarily been generated through membership fees and subsidies from the Zlín Region, supplemented by project-based grants that support specific activities aligned with the Association's cultural heritage mission. This funding structure has enabled the Association to balance administrative costs, personnel expenses, and targeted project initiatives.

In 2021, the Association reported total expenditures of EUR 111,186, with the largest costs attributed to personnel expenses (EUR 66,294) and administrative/operational activities, such as office operations and travel, totaling EUR 13,053. Implementation of the cross-border "Cyril and Methodius Route – Living Cultural Heritage" project required an additional EUR 24,070. Revenue for 2021 matched expenditures, with major contributions from membership fees (EUR 47,194), a subsidy from the Zlín Region (EUR 41,560), and project grants (EUR 20,460). Together, these covered all costs, with membership fees accounting for 42.5% of revenues, followed by the regional subsidy at 37.4%, and project grants providing the remaining 18.4%.

In 2022, expenditures increased to EUR 126,180, driven primarily by personnel costs, which rose to EUR 70,988, and administrative expenses totaling EUR 19,609. Marketing efforts also saw greater investment, with EUR 14,712 allocated for promotional and awareness-building activities. Revenues again met expenditures, with membership fees providing EUR 52,002 and the Zlín Region subsidy covering EUR 67,054. A smaller project grant of EUR 7,481 supplemented these primary income streams, with the Zlín Region subsidy covering 53% of total costs, membership fees 41%, and project funding 6%.

In 2023, the Association's expenditure reached EUR 138,962. Personnel costs remained the largest category at EUR 70,476, with administrative expenses totaling EUR 24,377. Implementation of subsidized projects accounted for EUR 25,605, alongside EUR 11,130 allocated to marketing and promotional materials. Revenues matched expenses, with a Zlín Region subsidy (EUR 64,419), membership fees (EUR 49,519), and project grants (EUR 23,784) forming the core income sources. The Zlín Region subsidy covered 46% of expenditures, membership fees 36%, and project grants 17%.

For 2024, the projected budget estimates a slight increase in both revenues and expenditures, totaling EUR 143,890. Key costs include personnel expenses (EUR 71,288), administrative expenses (EUR 24,950), and marketing activities (EUR 34,860). Strategic allocations also

designate funds for research (EUR 3,168) and support for national coordinators (EUR 7,644). Revenue sources are expected to be led by membership fees (EUR 82,500) and the Zlín Region's operating subsidy (EUR 61,390), covering 57% and 43% of expenses, respectively.

The financial overview based on the grant projects from 2021 to 2024 highlights several key initiatives that underscore the Association's commitment to cultural tourism, education, and international collaboration. One significant project, Cyril and Methodius Route – Living Cultural Heritage, aimed to strengthen cultural identity and enhance the attractiveness of historical sites along the Moravian-Slovak border. The project created a cultural tourism product titled "Wandering without Borders – in the Footsteps of the Slavic Cultural Heritage," linking well-known sites with lesser-known locations to present the shared heritage of Czech and Slovak cultures. This project was funded 85% by the European Union through the Interreg V-A SK-CZ program, with the remaining 15% from the Association's budget, amounting to a total budget of EUR 23,500. Partners included the Trenčín Regional Tourist Authority (non-financial participant) and the Zlín Region, which provided pre-financing. The implementation period was from August 2019 to December 2021.

Another initiative, Cyril and Methodius Route – Culture and Education without Borders, sought to engage younger generations in the legacy of Great Moravia through creative activities centered on the Glagolitic alphabet. The project involved study tours, workshops in primary schools, and culminated in the "Journey to the Script" conference, which presented collaborative efforts between artists and students. Funded similarly with 85% from the European Union's Interreg V-A SK-CZ program and 15% from the Association, the project had a total budget of EUR 21,491. Key partners were the Terchová Municipal Cultural Centre (non-financial participant) and the Zlín Region, which again provided pre-financing, with an implementation period from April 2022 to March 2023.

The International Cooperation in Sustainable Development of Cultural Routes project involved a study trip to Trondheim, Norway, for Association representatives to exchange knowledge and establish a bilateral partnership with the St. Olav Ways. During the visit, participants met with cultural leaders and explored sustainable cultural route management, culminating in a Memorandum of Cooperation. Fully funded by Norway Grants, this project had a total budget of EUR 13,466 and took place in May 2023. The Association for the Cultural Route of St. Olav Ways in Trondheim served as the primary partner.

It is advisable for the Cyril and Methodius Route to diversify its funding sources. Establishing partnerships with additional local and regional bodies, international organizations, and exploring philanthropic contributions, corporate sponsorships, and additional EU grants could provide a more stable financial foundation.

3.3.2. Current composition of the network by country and type of member¹

The Association's Articles stipulate a rigorous framework for eligibility, admitting only legal entities with adherence to specific legal and financial standards. Membership is categorized into Founding Members, Regular Members, and Associated Members, each serving distinct

¹ This section should also specify if the network has members in the Russian Federation and their nature (public, private, NGO, etc). It should also shade light on any decisions taken by the network following the cessation of membership of the Russian Federation from the Council of Europe and activities carried out by Russian network member. For more information, please refer to the Committee of Ministers Resolution [CM/Res\(2022\)3](#) on legal and financial consequences of the cessation of membership of the Russian Federation in the Council of Europe.

roles that contribute to the operational cohesion and thematic alignment of the network. Founding Members, for instance, embody foundational entities such as the Region of Zlín and the East-Moravian Tourist Authority, while Regular Members span public bodies, cultural institutions, and academic entities that reinforce the Association's mission. Associated Members, consisting of organizations formally collaborating with the Association, provide strategic support for the development and visibility of the cultural route. While organizations currently holding associate membership retain this status without a fee obligation, the approval of new associate members is no longer permitted.

The selection procedure for network members is methodical and centralized, managed by the General Assembly. Prospective members undergo a formal review process, ensuring their compliance with the Association's Articles and strategic objectives, including obligations around financial solvency and legal integrity. The application process also entails formal acknowledgment of the Association's mission, making the selection process not only procedural but mission-centric. Upon acceptance, new members commit to the Association's collective objectives and gain participatory rights within the Association's governance structures.

Geographic representation and thematic alignment serve as important guides for the network's targeted expansion.

The appointment of National Coordinators in member countries is envisioned to significantly enhance the strategic geographical distribution of the network, ensuring that member contributions are both contextually relevant and regionally cohesive. Currently, only two National Coordinators have been appointed, representing Slovakia and Bulgaria.

The Managing Committee's initiative to extend invitations to members outside the Czech Republic and Slovakia is highly commendable. This process entails the Secretariat reaching out to countries without a National Coordinator, encouraging them to nominate representatives to the Managing Committee. Furthermore, countries with more than two members are encouraged to designate a National Coordinator. While this initiative is commendable, its practical implementation warrants close monitoring to ensure its effectiveness.

The Managing Committee convened online on 30 October 2024 to deliberate on the proposal to establish a second International Expert Committee, complementing the existing Scientific Committee, as stipulated in the Articles of Association. The proposed body, named the Balkan Route Development Committee, aims to support the expansion and development of the Cyril and Methodius Route within the Balkan region. This initiative aligns with the recommendations of the evaluator and reflects a shared commitment to fostering the Route's growth in this strategically significant area. The Secretariat will invite Balkan countries to nominate representatives to attend an inaugural meeting, where members will elect a chairperson. The proposal was formalized through Resolution No. 7/06112024, dated 6 November 2024, with the General Assembly approving the establishment of the Committee for Developing the Route in the Balkans. These initiatives must adhere strictly to the Route's thematic and strategic objectives, focusing exclusively on improving management practices and disseminating best practices. In this context, the extensive experience of the Czech Republic and Slovakia can serve as a robust foundation, offering invaluable support for strengthening organizational capacity and connectivity across other regions and member countries.

3.3.3. Network extension since last evaluation

Since the last certification cycle in 2020-2021, the network has demonstrated steady growth in membership and strengthened its representation across existing member countries. By 2021, the network consisted of 19 members from 6 countries: Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Over time, the governance structure of the network has been significantly strengthened. Currently, the network encompasses 37 members across 10 countries: Bulgaria (2), Croatia (1), the Czech Republic (9), Greece (1), Hungary (1), Italy (3), North Macedonia (2), Poland (1), Slovakia (16), and Slovenia (1) demonstrating its expanding engagement with stakeholders across Europe. This growth in membership highlights the network's ability to attract diverse expertise and regional representation, fostering a governance framework that effectively supports its cultural mission.

Moreover, the Scientific Committee, which now includes 22 members from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, further strengthens the network's academic base and supports its research goals. The Steering Committee (Managing Committee) consists of 12 active members, primarily from the Czech Republic and Slovakia (11), with the recent addition of the National Coordinator for Bulgaria. Despite this progress, it remains essential to continue expanding the network to include countries that share the heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius but are not yet part of the network.

In addition, five entities from the Czech Republic, Greece, and Slovakia are currently in the accession process or have shown interest in joining the network.

3.3.4. Strategy for the network extension until the next regular evaluation

The primary objective of the Cyril and Methodius Route is to expand its network across Europe, particularly within regions that hold strong historical and cultural connections to the Cyril and Methodius legacy. By the 2024–2025 certification cycle, the network includes 37 members across 10 countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, North Macedonia, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This diverse and extensive geographic presence highlights the network's significant outreach and cultural impact across Europe.

In alignment with this expansion, foundational documents such as the *Scholarly Basis* by Dr. Vida Vukoja and the *Feasibility Study* by Prof. Slavia Barlieva have identified strategic sites and potential partners essential to the route. These studies present an indicative list of critical locations that is further complemented by entries in the route's The European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius 2030 Development Strategy. Ongoing growth in membership reflects sustained interest, with notable entities, such as the Capital City of Prague (Czech Republic), the Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessaloniki (Greece), the Regional Tourism Organization of Bratislava Region (Slovakia), and the municipalities of Jasenná (Czech Republic) and Súčany (Slovakia), either in the accession process or expressing interest.

To foster inclusive growth, the network has set forth several strategic initiatives planned for the upcoming three-year period. These initiatives focus on expanding databases, organizing high-profile events, developing tourism-oriented products, and supporting research and scholarly collaboration. Each member country will establish themes reflecting Cyril and Methodius' legacy, supplemented by scholarly contributions to *Constantine's Letters*, strengthening the academic foundation of the route. In a further effort to establish a cohesive network, the Association plans to conduct a survey across 24 countries to identify relevant universities,

research centers, and key stakeholders. Conferences will also facilitate the exchange of best practices with other cultural routes, reinforcing cross-cultural cooperation.

To promote the route's historical importance, key cultural and tourist sites will be cataloged online, with major events highlighted. Plans include exhibitions, such as "About Cyril and Methodius, Now and Then", and participation in notable festivals. Modern media, including VR installations and concerts, will enhance public engagement, while dedicated content will showcase local products, sacred sites, marked trails, and curated circuits, including a planned 14-kilometer hiking trail to the Slivnica Monastery. An upgraded website will feature GPS navigation, Points of Interest, and offline access, providing a digital experience that aligns with contemporary user expectations. Community workshops and educational programs are also planned to foster local engagement and cultivate a sense of pride among regional stakeholders. A marketing campaign using search engines, social media, and influencer outreach will drive awareness, supported by a comprehensive brand strategy and targeted funding sourced from government grants, donations, and EU programs.

According to Internal Standard No. 3/2015 on Membership Fees, regular members are required to pay an annual membership fee, which supports the Association's operational costs and project funding. The amount of this fee, categorized across eight membership tiers, also determines members' governance rights, specifically their voting power within the General Assembly.

- Category I: Regions, associations of regions, and cities with populations over 500,000 pay EUR 6,500 annually.
- Category II: Municipalities with populations between 100,000 and 500,000, as well as international institutions, pay EUR 3,000 annually.
- Category III: Municipalities with populations between 10,000 and 100,000 pay EUR 2,000 annually.
- Category IV: Municipalities with populations between 5,000 and 10,000, associations of municipalities, regional tourist authorities, commercial corporations, universities, institutes, charitable organizations, and related entities pay EUR 1,000 annually.
- Category V: Municipalities with populations between 3,000 and 5,000 and local tourist authorities pay EUR 500 annually.
- Category VI: Municipalities with populations between 1,000 and 3,000 pay EUR 300 annually.
- Category VII: Civic associations and other non-profit organizations not co-founded by regional or municipal authorities pay EUR 300 annually.
- Category VIII: Municipalities with populations below 1,000 pay EUR 200 annually.

Associate members of the Association are exempt from membership fees, a provision exclusive to regular members who bear the annual fee obligation.

Consideration of revising membership fee structures to better align with the needs of smaller organizations could further advance inclusivity and cultivate greater diversity within the network.

3.4. Communication tools

3.4.1. Current state of communication tools developed by the network

Overall, the "Communication Manual 2023" is a well-constructed and comprehensive document that addresses essential aspects of effective communication for the Cyril and Methodius Route. With some adjustments in digital strategy details, KPI inclusion, and crisis management, the manual could further strengthen the Route's ability to engage diverse audiences and maintain a consistent, influential presence across Europe. The "Guide to Good Reasoning" is a well-researched and organized resource that offers strong support for promoting the Cyril and Methodius Route. Addressing the areas for improvement, particularly in digital strategy and measurable outcomes, would further enhance its effectiveness as a communication tool.

Printed materials like brochures, leaflets, and map guides provide accessible overviews, detailing the programme's history, geographical routes, and cultural significance. Newsletters and annual reports serve as regular updates, summarizing developments, activities, and achievements over specific periods, thus maintaining transparency with members and the public. Exhibitions are visually impactful communication channels, utilizing banners and roll-ups to present curated narratives and imagery associated with the route. These displays, often showcased at conferences and cultural events, reinforce the programme's visual identity and broaden its reach. Additionally, presentations, conferences, and events foster direct interaction with participants, offering opportunities for in-depth exploration of topics related to the Cyril and Methodius Route. The materials are largely not linguistically accessible to the majority of route members.

The Managing Committee identified a gap in reaching target audiences effectively, prompting the formation of a Marketing group to highlight the Cyril and Methodius cultural heritage across Europe and the Balkans. The Secretariat's creation of a shared online page for members, enabling access to and sharing of key documents such as recertification materials, strategic and scientific resources, and meeting records, is welcomed.

The CM Route **website** transitioned from the domain www.cyril-methodius.cz to www.cyril-methodius.eu to emphasize a pan-European approach. It is structured to provide comprehensive information on the route's cultural and historical significance in three language versions: Czech, English, and Italian.

The Home page introduces the route and its importance. The Hiking Trails section details over 5,000 km of marked paths following the journeys of Saints Cyril and Methodius. Discover Places highlights locations connected to their legacy, including historical monuments and significant sites. The Association page offers information about the European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius, covering membership, objectives, and activities. For deeper insights, the Theme section explores the historical and cultural impact of their mission on Slavic culture. The News segment shares updates on recent events, conferences, exhibitions, and related activities. The Calendar keeps visitors informed about upcoming events associated with the route. Finally, the Contacts page provides avenues to reach out to the association for further information.

- Number of Monthly Visitors: 2,575 (between 19th May 2024 and 18th June 2024), according to information provided by the Secretariat.

The new website does not appear to be fully functional yet, with some concerns about the professionalism of its graphic design.

Social Media Profiles:

- Facebook profile of CM Route: facebook.com/cyril.methodius.route (since 2013), updated as @sv.cyrilmethodius with approximately 1,100 followers.
- Facebook Profile for “Wandering without Borders” Products: facebook.com/putujmebezhranic.
- Instagram Profile (since 2018): instagram.com/cyril.methodius.route with 195 followers.
- YouTube Channel (since, 2019): youtube.com/@cyrilometodejskastezka with 114 subscribers.

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

The logo of the Cyril and Methodius Route (CM Route) was originally designed in 2013 to commemorate the 1150th anniversary of the Thessaloniki mission. This logo features the initials "CM," representing Saints Cyril and Methodius, and integrates symbolic elements such as two simplified human figures, an inverted "C" symbolizing halos, and architectural details from the Basilica of Velehrad, including vaults, stained glass, and vaulted windows.

The use of the logo, to which Association members are entitled, is regulated by the 2017 Internal Standard on the Use of the Logo.

The "Internal Standard on the Use of Logo" and the "Logo and Design Manual" for the Cyril and Methodius Route establish a well-defined framework to ensure brand consistency and control. An assessment of the Cyril and Methodius Route's documentation in relation to the aforementioned documents reveals general alignment with these standards but also highlights areas where further detail is needed to achieve complete brand consistency. Currently, the positioning of the logo is under-defined, especially when displayed alongside other symbols. This lack of clarity may detract from a cohesive and visually balanced presentation. Adding precise guidance on spacing, proportions, and the relative placement of the logo in relation to other graphic elements would foster a more consistent and recognizable brand image.

Similarly, while basic guidelines are provided for promotional items and digital materials, the inclusion of specific instructions for logo application on various promotional products (such as apparel, badges) and digital platforms (social media, websites) would enhance uniformity and strengthen the brand's impact across modern communication channels.

The analysis reveals inconsistencies in the application of the Cyril and Methodius Route logo across multiple materials, including incorrect positioning, color variations, and missing design elements. These inconsistencies, particularly evident in invitations and promotional items, undermine the brand's visual coherence and overall impact.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

It is unequivocal that the of the Cyril and Methodius CULTURAL ROUTE THEME, merits consideration for recertification under the Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe. This theme embodies core European values and unites the cultural heritage of 24 countries across Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe. The Cyril and Methodius Route (CM Route) stands out for its well-defined thematic structure, highlighting the cultural and historical legacy of Saints Cyril and Methodius. While the CM Route has made substantial progress in

establishing a pan-European cultural identity, supported by research, cultural preservation, and educational outreach, certain key areas require further enhancement to ensure full compliance with the eligibility criteria outlined in CM_Res(2023)2.

The Cyril and Methodius Route has made positive strides in its strategic evolution. Initially developed as a linear pilgrimage-like route tracing the saints' journey through key locations such as Velehrad, Rome, and Thessaloniki, the route was modeled after the Camino de Santiago to highlight geographic continuity. However, the 2022 ratification of the European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius 2030 Development Strategy introduced a more inclusive network model. This strategy connects an array of culturally significant "focal points" across Europe, promoting an international scope that moves beyond the original Czech-centered design. Despite these promising developments, certain changes have yet to be fully integrated into the route's activities. Priority **FIELDS OF ACTION** have been addressed by the candidate, showing clear improvements. However, despite these advancements and increased inclusivity of other member states, there remains a dominant focus on cross-border activities, primarily between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, while the broader European dimension remains somewhat limited.

The Cyril and Methodius Route has substantially intensified its **CO-OPERATION IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**, broadening its geographic scope and enriching European dialogue on its core themes. Guided by a 22-member Scientific Committee from nine countries and collaborating with 23 universities and research centers, the Route's interdisciplinary approach integrates expertise from archaeology, Slavic studies, and heritage preservation. Key publications, such as *The Scholarly Basis of the CM Route (2020-2021)* and *Constantine's Letters*, highlight its scholarly impact. Partnerships with universities and research centers reinforce the Route's pan-European reach, enhancing its academic influence and fostering cross-border intellectual exchange through events. The Scientific Committee plays a pivotal role in evaluating prospective members of the Cyril and Methodius Route, ensuring their alignment with the Route's scholarly and cultural objectives before recommending them for approval to the General Assembly. A key challenge in the coming years will be to expand interdisciplinary engagement, deepen community integration, and adopt innovative strategies.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE MEMORY, HISTORY AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE of Cyril and Methodius have been enriched through festivals, exhibitions, lectures, and celebrations. Major conferences and presentations across Europe have promoted European cultural heritage and fostered scholarly exchange on their legacy, while annual events and educational programs support historical awareness and community engagement in countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia, with many cross-border activities. To further develop the Route, it is recommended to explore the cultural potential of industrial areas undergoing restructuring, increase visibility for intangible heritage, and expand these events for greater inclusivity. Strengthening educational initiatives through workshops and digital resources will enhance access to Glagolitic and Cyrillic heritage. Promoting lesser-known sites and incorporating minority narratives will further align the Route with European inclusivity principles. Further interdisciplinary collaborations and international conferences will enhance educational impact, address preservation challenges, and engage stakeholders in sustainable practices.

The Cyril and Methodius Route fosters **CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES FOR YOUNG EUROPEANS** through conferences, workshops, and experiential learning that connect students with the Cyrillo-Methodian legacy. Initiatives, such as "Journey to the Script" workshops and Glagolitic writing events, provide immersive experiences that deepen students' understanding of European heritage. While progress has been made, expanding intercultural

programs beyond the current cross-border activities—primarily involving the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Bulgaria—and incorporating digital resources would enhance accessibility and engagement. An emphasis on pilgrimage, however, appears to constrain the potential to support broader cultural and educational research related to the Cyril and Methodius legacy. While efforts to promote intangible heritage, youth engagement, and educational activities have shown significant progress, their constrained geographical reach and inadequate multilingual support impede the Route's capacity to function as a fully inclusive European cultural network.

In CONTEMPORARY CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE, the Route merges heritage with modern expression through festivals, exhibitions, and creative projects like the St. Methodius Cycle Trail. These events—from art exhibits to cultural heritage festivals—honor both historical and contemporary aspects of the Cyril and Methodius legacy, fostering intercultural dialogue. To strengthen the Route's contemporary impact, expanding inclusive participation across diverse cultural backgrounds and artistic fields is recommended.

The field of CULTURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT has demonstrated notable progress, transitioning from an earlier emphasis on pilgrimage to a broader and more inclusive framework. The Route now spans 5,000 km of trails, significantly exceeding the initial 700 km concentrated in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Equally important are the new partnerships established in Italy, Turkey, and the Balkans. The website has been improved. Furthermore, the Route's collaboration with local authorities on heritage preservation as a cornerstone of regional development highlights its renewed commitment to sustainable tourism. Additional experiential events, including historical reenactments, local festivals, and regional cuisine tastings, further enrich visitors' cultural immersion in the Cyril and Methodius heritage. To strengthen cohesive messaging across all participating countries, the development of a multilingual brochure representing the entire Route would be a valuable enhancement. The Scientific Committee could prepare the content, with translation support provided by the Secretariat and member organizations.

The CULTURAL ROUTE NETWORK has significantly expanded and undergone structural modifications since 2021, with membership increasing from 19 to 37 members across 10 countries. Despite this progress, it remains essential to continue expanding the network to include countries that share the heritage of Saints Cyril and Methodius but are not yet part of the network. To fully cultivate a pan-European identity, the Cyril and Methodius Route must strive for a governance structure that is both more inclusive and geographically balanced. Currently, leadership is concentrated within the Czech and Slovak territories, particularly within the Steering Committee (SC), which limits broader European representation and may reduce engagement from other member countries. The Managing Committee's initiative to invite members from beyond the Czech Republic and Slovakia is highly commendable. Additionally, the recommendation for countries with more than two members to nominate a National Coordinator has the potential to enhance coordination and representation; however, its practical implementation should be carefully monitored. The General Assembly's approval of the proposal to establish an additional International Expert Committee—the Balkan Route Development Committee—alongside the existing Scientific Committee, marks a significant step forward. These initiatives must adhere to the Route's thematic and strategic guidelines, concentrating exclusively on improving management and disseminating best practices. In this context, the experience of the Czech Republic and Slovakia offers a robust foundation and valuable insights for strengthening organization and connectivity across other regions and countries. The practical implementation of this initiative should be carefully monitored to ensure its success.

Where necessary, revising the Association's Articles, updating strategic documents, and formulating regional and national strategies should be prioritized to achieve tangible improvements for the Route. Additionally, revisiting membership fees to better support smaller organizations could enhance inclusivity and strengthen the network's diversity. The Director, Secretariat, and Steering Committee must remain fully committed to these efforts. To bolster these initiatives both financially and through expert input, the establishment of dedicated working groups should be considered.

To strengthen FINANCIAL sustainability, the Cyril and Methodius Route should actively pursue diversification of funding sources beyond EU grants, membership fees, and local support. Establishing partnerships with international organizations and exploring philanthropic contributions, corporate sponsorships, and additional EU grants could provide a more stable financial base. Forming a working group to develop a comprehensive funding strategy is recommended.

To address limitations in event coverage on the Cyril and Methodius Route website, it is proposed that each country create its own localized website, linked to the central platform, thus improving visibility and accessibility across national sections. Although the Route's COMMUNICATION TOOLS are extensive, further refinements are needed. Language inconsistencies currently reduce the Route's online effectiveness. Expanding language support to initially include Greek, Bulgarian, and Macedonian would significantly improve accessibility and engagement. Additionally, the website's design and user experience lack the professionalism expected of a certified cultural route, potentially affecting its appeal to an international audience.

The Managing Committee identified a gap in reaching target audiences effectively, prompting the formation of a Marketing group to highlight the Cyril and Methodius cultural heritage across Europe. The Secretariat's creation of a shared online page for members, enabling access to and sharing of key documents such as recertification materials, strategic and scientific resources, and meeting records, is welcomed. It is necessary to pay greater attention to the correct use of the logo.

The Cyril and Methodius Route has advanced in cultivating a transnational cultural identity firmly anchored in European heritage. However, specific aspects require strategic refinement to achieve full compliance with the eligibility criteria stipulated in CM_Res(2023)2. Key recommendations include fostering inclusivity in governance and enhancing regional and cross-border initiatives to better reflect the Route's pan-European scope. Strengthening financial sustainability through diverse funding sources, improving communication and multilingual accessibility, and professionalizing the online presence will further bolster the Route's appeal and longevity. Emphasizing both tangible and intangible heritage alongside pilgrimage aspects, and enhancing regional representation across thematic groups, will support the Route's role as a unifying cultural force. Expanding the network to include additional countries with a shared Cyril and Methodius heritage should remain a priority.

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2020-2021	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation?		Recommendations current evaluation 2024-2025
			YES	NO	
I. Cultural route theme		Very relevant, common to more than 10 European countries, shortcomings at the level of theme implementation, Czech-centred perspective, biased interpretations, lacking strategic vision based on a wide consensus within the network.	☒	☐	- Expand the Route's scope beyond predominantly Czech-Slovak influence and strengthen network integration to address implementation challenges, building on the 2021/2022 Development Strategy.
II. Priority fields of action	Cooperation in research and development	Considerably improved, activities intensified, the European dialogue enhanced, research results not yet linked with the CM Route conceptual framework and development strategy.	☒	☐	- Prioritize integrating research findings, expanding interdisciplinary collaboration, engaging local communities, and adopting innovative strategies to enhance the Route's impact and relevance.
	Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage	Some activities added, mostly cross-border level, tangible heritage emphasized, the intangible heritage should receive more attention.	☒	☐	- Increase the visibility of intangible heritage, broaden event inclusivity, and promote minority narratives through workshops, digital resources, and lesser-known site promotion.
	Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans	Some activities added, exchanges of young Europeans mostly on cross-border	☒	☐	- Broaden the scope of youth exchanges geographically, enhance

		level, new multimedia didactic projects developed (national level).			accessibility via digital resources, and balance pilgrimage themes with broader educational initiatives.
	Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	New cultural and artistic practices encouraged in the field of music, photography and creative visual arts, mostly cross-border level.	☒	☐	- Strengthen the Route's cultural relevance by incorporating diverse cultural backgrounds and artistic disciplines into festivals, exhibitions, and initiatives.
	Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development	Cultural tourism focused mainly on pilgrimage, new pilgrimage products developed, new trails signposted (only in 2 countries), InfoPoints marked, mostly cross-border level.	☒	☐	- Develop a comprehensive cultural product that balances pilgrimage with broader themes, leveraging partnerships and enhancing engagement through interactive maps, sustainable tourism initiatives, and a multilingual brochure. - Leverage the Route's 5,000 km network and partnerships in Italy, Turkey, and the Balkans.
III. Cultural Route Network		Complicated structure and rigid rules, recent changes in the management structure, more participative and democratic management expected (needs to	☒	☐	- Foster inclusivity by engaging additional countries connected to the Cyril and Methodius heritage and decentralizing governance structures beyond

	be implemented), existing potential of the network extension, several barriers identified.			the Czech Republic and Slovakia. - Place particular emphasis on ensuring a transparent and effective selection process for the National Coordinator and closely monitor the establishment of the Balkan Route Development Committee to ensure its successful implementation. - Diversify funding sources and form specialized working groups to support sustainability and expand the network's reach.
Communication Tools	Convenient, several language versions, parallel use of three web sites, the new Route website not fully functional yet, pilgrimage website added, SEO optimization and Ad Words recommended, standard social media use, excellent visual identity.	☒	☐	- Enhance the website's design and user experience, develop localized sites linked to a central platform, and address language inconsistencies by prioritizing Greek, Bulgarian, and North Macedonian support. - Ensure consistent and appropriate use of the Route's logo for cohesive branding across all platforms.

5. List of references

- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution CM Res(2023)2:
<https://search.coe.int/cm?i=0900001680aacea6>
- Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Resolution CM Res(2013)66:
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c69ac
- Vademecum “Cultural Routes management: from theory to practice”:
<https://rm.coe.int/gestion-des-itineraires-culturels-de-la-theorie-a-la-pratique/168098b061>
- Previous evaluation reports: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/evaluation-reports>
- Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe:
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme>
- Cultural Routes branding: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/cultural-routes-branding>
- Cultural Routes database: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/cultural-routes-database-main-page>
- Other resources: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/resources>
- Evaluation dossier of the candidate Cyril and Methodius Route provided by the Executive Secretary, Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes – Directorate of Democratic Participation (DGII) and Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes on September 6, 2024 via a link
<https://mycloud.coe.int/s/NY3s893kX77pq4C>
- Supplementary materials provided by the candidate Cyril and Methodius Route and the interviewed network members/partners directly to the evaluator by e-mail during the evaluation process (October – November 2024).
- Interviews and email communications were conducted with the network management and members – 16 individuals from 5 different countries (Slovakia, Bulgaria, North Macedonia, Italy, Czech Republic) were interviewed, in accordance with Annex 1.

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

Date and Programme of the Field Visit

The field visit took place from the evening of October 15 to the afternoon of October 17, 2024 in Nitra, Slovakia.

Programme Overview:

- October 16, 2024:
 - 9:30 AM: Visit to the Diocesan Library in Nitra, followed by a comprehensive tour of Nitra Castle. The tour included stops at the Diocesan Museum, the castle cathedral, and the statue of Saints Cyril and Methodius, where an outdoor exhibition dedicated to the Cyril and Methodius Route was observed.
 - 1:30 PM: Workshop with children held at the TICadlovo children's zone, featuring a video about Nitra, interactive activities, and Glagolitic name tag creation.
 - 2:30 PM: Transfer by car to Zobor Monastery.
 - 3:00 PM: Tour of Zobor Monastery, which included an augmented reality demonstration.
 - 5:00 PM: Conclusion of the day with a traditional Old Slavonic feast at Buganka Restaurant, the oldest restaurant in Nitra.
- October 17, 2024:
 - 9:00 AM: In-person meeting held at ArtIn Pension in Nitra, with accommodations for online participants. The meeting concluded at 1:00 PM.

List of Places Visited

- Diocesan Library, Nitra Castle, Diocesan Museum, Castle Cathedral, Statue of Saints Cyril and Methodius
- TICadlovo children's zone
- Zobor Monastery
- Buganka Restaurant
- ArtIn Pension, Nitra

Interviews (in present/online) with the network management and members

Interview on 16 October.

1. Zuzana VOJTOVÁ

Role within the network: Director of the CM Cultural Route

Email: zuzana.vojtova@vychodni-morava.cz

Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 16, 2024

2. Dana DAŇOVÁ - Mayor of Jasenná Municipality
 Role within the network: Chairwoman of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
 Email: dana.danova@gmail.com
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 16, 2024
3. Tatiana MIKUŠOVÁ - Director of the Slovak House Centrope
 Role within the network: Member of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
 Email: domcentropy@gmail.com; mikusova.tatiana@gmail.com
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 16, 2024
4. Terezia ZAUJECOVÁ - Expert Officer, Tourist Information Centre Nitra
 Role within the network: National Coordinator for Slovakia
 Email: narodny.koordinator@krizomkrajom.sk
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 16, 2024

Interview on 17 October.

1. Terezia ZAUJECOVÁ - Expert Officer, Tourist Information Centre Nitra
 Role within the network: National Coordinator for Slovakia
 Email: narodny.koordinator@krizomkrajom.sk
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024
2. Peter IVANIČ - Director of the Institute for Research on the Cultural Heritage of Cyril and Methodius, University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra
 Role within the network: Chairman of the Network's Scientific Committee
 Email: pivanic@ukf.sk
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024
3. Tatiana MIKUŠOVÁ - Director of the Slovak House Centrope
 Role within the network: Member of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
 Email: domcentropy@gmail.com; mikusova.tatiana@gmail.com
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024 (online)
4. Slavia BARLIEVA - Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
 Role within the network: Member of the Network's Scientific Committee
 Email: slavia.barlieva@gmail.com
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024 (online)
5. Elka ZLATEVA - Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
 Role within the network: National Coordinator for Bulgaria
 Email: zlatevaelka@gmail.com
 Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024 (online)

6. Maja JAKIMOVSKA TOSIC - Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Institute of Macedonian Literature
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Scientific Committee
Email: jakimovska.tosic@gmail.com; m.jakimovska-toshikj@iml.ukim.edu.mk
Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024 (online)
7. Martina JANOCHOVÁ - European Cultural Route of the Saints Cyril and Methodius
Role within the network: Project Manager of the Permanent Secretariat
Email: martina.janochova@cyril-methodius.eu
Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024
8. Martin PETERKA - European Cultural Route of the Saints Cyril and Methodius
Role within the network: Project Manager of the Permanent Secretariat
Email: martin.peterka@cyril-methodius.eu
Place and date of the interview: Nitra, Slovakia, October 17, 2024

Feedback from members of the network's governing bodies was gathered via email on 23 October.

1. Slavia BARLIEVA - Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Scientific Committee
Email: slavia.barlieva@gmail.com
Place and date of the interview: online, October 23, 2024
2. Elka ZLATEVA - Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Role within the network: National Coordinator for Bulgaria
Email: zlatevaelka@gmail.com
Place and date of the interview: online, October 23, 2024

Feedback from members of the network's governing bodies was gathered based on an email sent on 24 October.

1. Terezia ZAUJECOVÁ - Expert Officer, Tourist Information Centre Nitra
Role within the network: National Coordinator for Slovakia
Email: narodny.koordinator@krizomkrajom.sk
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
2. Elisa SIMIONATO - Area Promozione e Comunicazione, Aquileia Foundation, Italia
Role within the network: Network Member
Email: elisa.simionato@fondazioneaquileia.it
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
3. Maja JAKIMOVSKA TOSIC - Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, Institute of Macedonian Literature
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Scientific Committee
Email: jakimovska.tosic@gmail.com; m.jakimovska-toshikj@iml.ukim.edu.mk
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024

4. Miroslav KOVÁŘÍK - Municipality Modrá, Czech Republic
Role within the network: Network Member
Email: modra@uh.cz
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
5. Žaneta JANČAŘÍKOVÁ - Department of the Office of the Governor Section of Tourism and External Relations of Olomouc Regional Authority
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
Email: z.jancarikova@olkraj.cz
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
6. Mgr. Jan SMIGA - Tourism and Projects Officer, Section of Tourism Department of Regional Development and Tourism Moravian-Silesian Regional Authority, Ostrava
Role within the network: Network Member
Email: jan.smiga@msk.cz
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
7. Ing. Ivana LUKÁŠKOVÁ
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
Email: Lukaskova.iva_na@kr-jihomoravsky.cz
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024
8. Tatiana MIKUŠOVÁ - Director of the Slovak House Centrope
Role within the network: Member of the Network's Steering Committee (Managing Committee)
Email: domcentropy@gmail.com; mikusova.tatiana@gmail.com
Place and date of the interview: online, October 24, 2024

Interview on 19 November.

1. Ljubomir TRAUB - Deputy governor of the Zlín Region, Czech Republic
Role within the network: President of the CM Cultural Route
Email: traub.lubomir@gmail.com
Place and date of the interview: online, November 19, 2024

7. Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST				
QUESTIONS			Yes	No
3.1 THEME	1	Does the theme of the Route represent a common value (historical, cultural, or heritage) to several European countries?	1	
	2	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges?	1	
	3	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for innovative activities?	1	
	4	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for cultural tourism products development?	1	
	5	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	1	
ION	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?	1
		7	Does the Route play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	0
		8	Does the Route show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1
		9	Does the Route illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1
		10	Does the Route have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1
		11	Does the Route have a multidisciplinary Scientific Committee?	1
		12	Does the Scientific Committee work on its theme at the European level?	1
		13	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the theoretical level?	1
		14	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the practical level?	1
	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 ?	1
		16	Do the Route activities promote the values of the Council of Europe?	1
		17	Do the Route activities promote the brand of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?	1
		18	Does the route work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	1
		19	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	1
		20	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	0
		21	Do the Route activities valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?	1
		22	Do the Route activities contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	1
		23	Do the Route activities enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in different regions of Europe?	1
		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, ...)?	1
	Educational Europeans	25	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	1
		26	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	1
		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?	1

3.2 FIELDS OF FACT	3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young people	28	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	1	
		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?	1	
		30	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	1	
		31	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	1	
	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?	1	
		33	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage artistic projects that establish links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	1	
		34	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	1	
		35	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?*	1	
		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?	1	
		37	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?	1	
		38	Do the Route's cultural activities highlight the most innovative and creative practices?	1	
		39	Do the Route's cultural activities link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***	1	
	3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development	40	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) assist in local, regional, national and/or European identity formation?	1	
		41	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?	1	
		42	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between urban and rural communities and cultures?	1	
		43	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between developed and disadvantaged regions?	1	
		44	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between different regions (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	1	
		45	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?		0
		46	Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?		0
		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?	1	
		48	Do the Route's activities aim to diversify cultural product, service and activities offers?	1	
		49	Do the Route's activities develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	1	
		50	Do the Route's activities develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	1	
		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?		0
		52	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	1	
		53	Was the theme of the route chosen and accepted by the network members?	1	
		54	Was the conceptual framework of the route founded on a scientific basis?	1	
		55	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its projects?	1	
		56	Is the network financially sustainable?	1	

3.3 NETWORK	57	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	1	
	58	Does the network operate democratically?	1	
	59	Does the network specify its objectives and working methods?	1	
	60	Does the network specify the regions concerned by the project?	1	
	61	Does the network specify its partners and participating countries?	1	
	62	Does the network specify the fields of action involved?	1	
	63	Does the network specify its overall strategy in the short and long term?	1	
	64	Does the network identify potential participants and partners in Council of Europe member states and/or other world countries?	1	
	65	Does the network provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	1	
	66	Does the network provide details of its operational plan?	1	
3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS	67	Does the network append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?	1	
	68	Does the Route have its own logo?	1	
	69	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?	1	
	70	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	1	
	71	Is it the website available in English and French?		0
	72	Is it the website available in other languages?	1	
	73	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	1	
	74	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	1	
	75	If yes, are the brochures available in English?	1	
	76	If yes, are the brochures available in French?		0
	77	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpage publications, etc.)?	0	
	78	Is the certification logo present on all communication materials?	0	
	79	Is the certification logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	0	
	80	Are the logos (Cultural Route + certification logo) provided to all the members of the Route?	1	
	81	Does the Council of Europe certification logo appear on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?	1	
SCORE			71	0

Note: Please insert 1 for every positive answer and 0 for a negative one. See your total score at the bottom of the column.

* E.g. visual arts, the performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature, poetry or any other form of cultural expression

**Particularly in terms of instruction for young Europeans in the relevant fields

***Whether these fields include visual arts, performing arts, creative crafts, architecture, music, literature or any other field

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

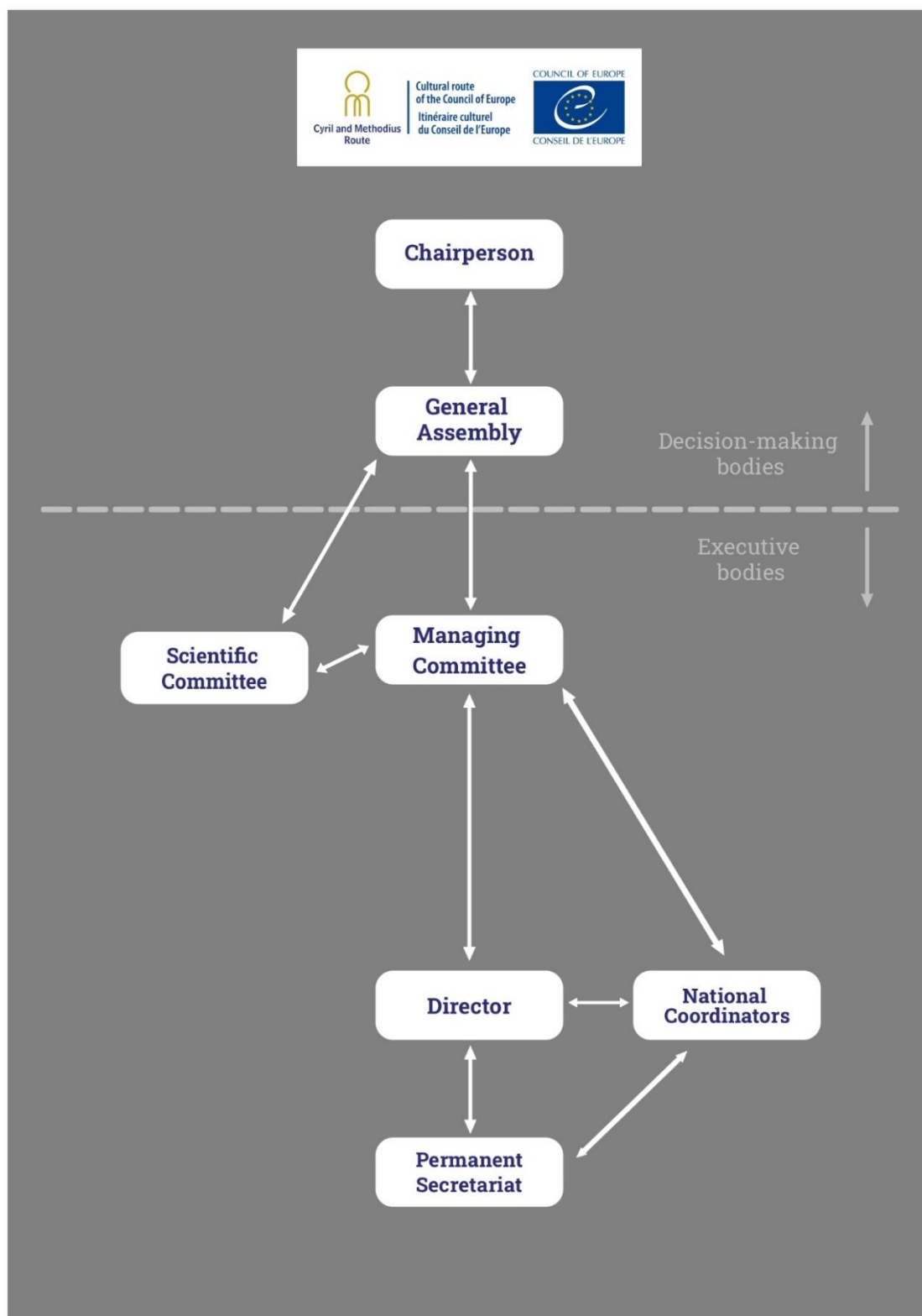


Fig. 1: Network's management structure from 2020/2021

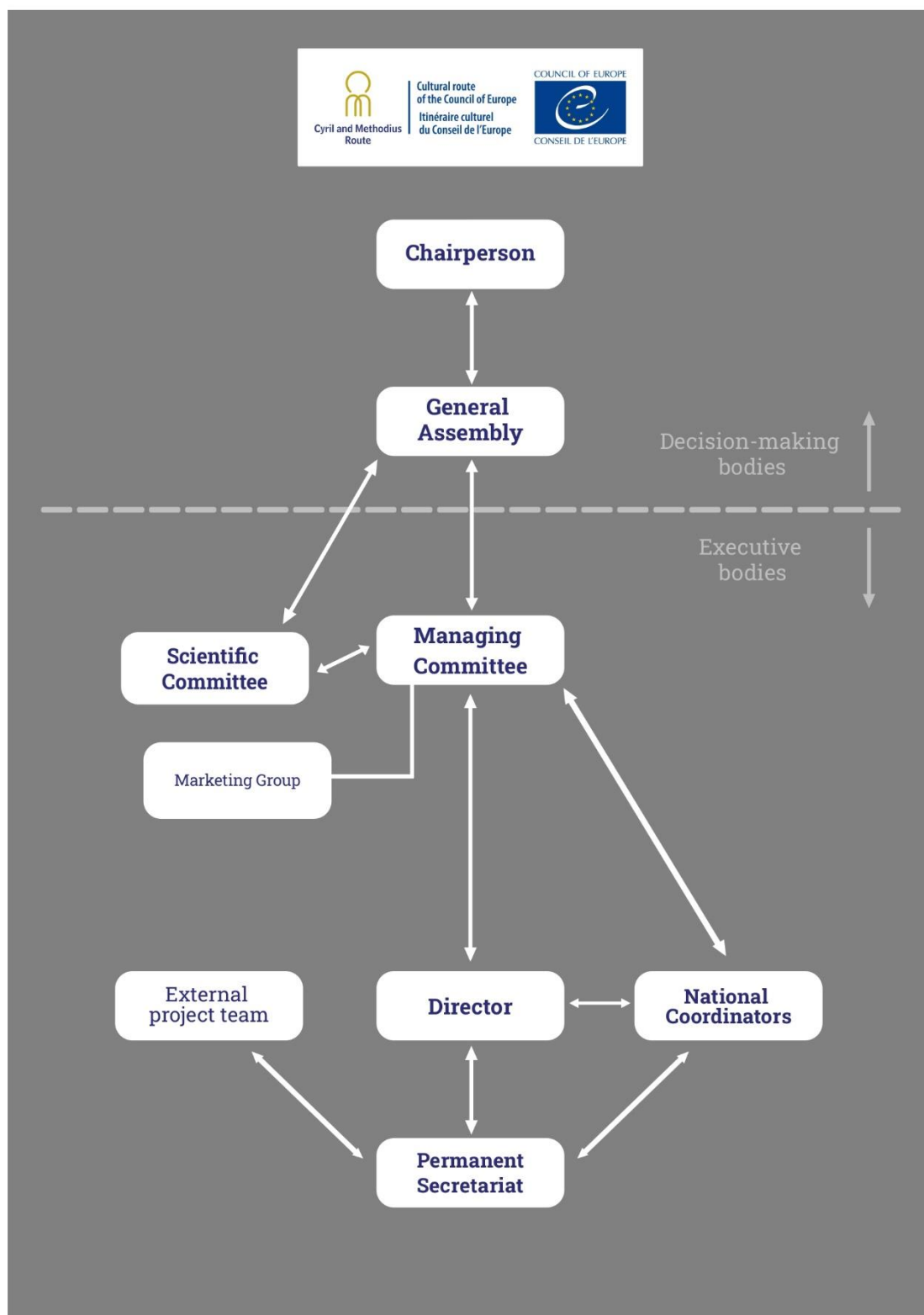


Fig. 2: Network's management structure from 2024



The diagram illustrates a bus stop shelter and its associated components. On the left, a yellow rectangular shelter is shown with the text: "PĚŠÍ TRASA KČT" (Pedestrian route KČT), "POD ONDŘEJOVSKEM" (Under Ondřejovskem), "RUSAVA - KINO (BUS)" (Rusava - Cinema (Bus)), "HOŠTÝN - POD VALY" (Hoštýn - Pod Váhy), "2013", and "ZL394a". To the right of the shelter, a blue square sign with a white pedestrian symbol is shown, with dimensions 20 cm wide and 40 cm high. Below the shelter, a red and yellow triangular sign is shown, with dimensions 15 cm wide and 9.5 cm high. To the right of the shelter, a yellow rectangular sign is shown, with dimensions 15 cm wide and 9.5 cm high. To the right of the shelter, a blue square sign with a white pedestrian symbol is shown, with dimensions 20 cm wide and 40 cm high. To the right of the shelter, a blue square sign with a white pedestrian symbol is shown, with dimensions 20 cm wide and 40 cm high.



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