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Regular Evaluation: **HUGUENOT AND WALDENSIAIN TRAIL** 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

Huguenot and Waldensian Trail

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HUGUENOT AND
WALDENSIAN TRAIL
SUR LES PAS
DES HUGUENOTS
ET DES VAUDOIS

Cultural 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 Cultural Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail", certified in 2013 by the Council of Europe, is a transnational initiative that highlights the exile of persecuted Protestant communities in the 17th century. By tracing the forced displacement of the Huguenots after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and of the Waldensians from Piedmont, this project is part of a remembrance approach that also addresses contemporary issues such as migration and intercultural dialogue. Following an itinerary linking France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, the Route highlights historic sites, emblematic landscapes and places of remembrance.

The evaluation of this Route highlights significant progress. Research and European cooperation efforts have led to the production of multidisciplinary works bringing together historians, naturalists and artists, while developing travelling exhibitions, educational projects and interactive digital tools. These initiatives reflect the network's commitment to promoting the values of the Council of Europe, in particular tolerance and European citizenship.

Educational and intercultural activities aimed at young people, such as itinerant camps and participatory workshops, play a key role in raising awareness of historical and cultural heritage among new generations. The Route is also part of a sustainable tourism approach, working with nature parks and local stakeholders to offer experiences that respect the environment and local culture.

Despite these successes, a number of challenges remain. Scientific governance requires more rigorous formalisation of roles and responsibilities within the committee, as well as the introduction of annual meetings to ensure effective coordination of work. In addition, a unified multilingual platform is still lacking, which limits the dissemination of results. The increased integration of young researchers would bring new perspectives while ensuring the continuity of the work. In addition, although progress has been made in making the themes accessible, further efforts are needed to better adapt the content to the expectations of the general public. The introduction of surveys at the end of events would allow for gathering feedback from participants.

As part of the cultural and educational exchanges aimed at young Europeans, it is recommended that collaboration with schools and associations in the member countries be stepped up, in order to reach a wider audience of young Europeans. Encouraging participants in activities to share their experiences and stories on social networks would increase the visibility and impact of the events. With regard to contemporary practice in culture and the arts, although artistic and cultural initiatives have incorporated contemporary practices, it would be beneficial to diversify them in order to attract a wider audience.

Improvements are still needed to maximise the Route's impact on cultural tourism. This includes regularly updating the brochures, including information on accommodation providers, and improving the digital navigation system. It is also essential to continue to ensure the implementation of homogeneous solutions between member countries, to strengthen the transfer of knowledge between partners and to analyse existing data to better adapt products to tourist expectations.

The network benefits from a solid transnational structure, steered by the International Union "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois" (Huguenot and Waldensian Trail). However, its decentralised operation requires better harmonisation of actions and more regular sharing of knowledge between members. Geographic expansion, particularly with the addition of new countries, remains a priority. It would be wise to define a detailed timetable to plan the implementation of this extension.

In the network's communication tools, it would be appropriate to allow scientific articles to be downloaded directly from the European site. The balance between digital tools and printed materials also needs to be strengthened to better meet the varied needs of users. Offering

multilingual versions for all key media would improve accessibility and attract a more diverse audience. In addition, media coverage and the use of social networks, although still developing, need to be stepped up to reach a wider audience. Finally, it is essential to continue to respect the Council of Europe's guidelines for the use of the logo, thus ensuring a consistent image.

In conclusion, the Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" is a remarkable example of European cooperation, combining historical memory with current issues. If the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification is renewed, the next five years should be devoted to strengthening the coordination of actions, extending the network and stepping up communication initiatives.

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				Very good
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"		X				Very good

2. Introduction

The Cultural Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" was certified for the first time in 2013 by the Council of Europe. It illustrates a key episode in European history: the 17th-century exile of the Huguenots and Waldensians, persecuted in France and the Italian Piedmont, who took refuge in Switzerland and Germany. This theme highlights universal issues such as exile, tolerance and the defence of fundamental rights. This Route goes beyond a simple historical reconstruction, inviting contemporary reflection on the issues linked to exile and religious intolerance, while promoting a better understanding of European and global citizenship.

Covering some 2,500 kilometres, the Route crosses four countries: France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. It links places of remembrance, cultural sites and emblematic natural areas, encouraging slow, sustainable tourism. Discussions are currently underway to include new countries, such as the Netherlands, which testifies to the ongoing development of the project.

The Route is managed by the International Union "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail", founded in 2015 and based in Dieulefit, France. This association coordinates the activities of the members of the network, and is structured around four national entities representing the participating countries. This transnational governance ensures that actions are coordinated and common objectives are met. Each member plays a key role in managing the trails, promoting the Route and publicising its activities.

The Association has no budget of its own, and membership is free. Operating expenses are covered individually by members, while collective actions are financed by sharing costs between participating members, according to a pre-defined financing plan.

The chairmanship is currently held by Davide Rosso, representing Italy, and is renewed at each certification cycle. Laure Alvarez coordinates the project in France and with the International Union. The network has no direct salaried staff, but relies on collaborators seconded by its members. These staff members, who have various statuses (self-employed or part-time employees), work from their respective countries: France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany.

The association's mission is to promote the historical and cultural heritage of the Huguenots and Waldensians, while supporting the local economy through quality tourism. It also promotes awareness of European cooperation and citizenship through human exchanges, in accordance with Resolution CM/Res(2007)12 of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Over the years, the Route has strengthened its visual identity, developed interactive digital tools and set up educational programmes. It regularly takes part in national and international events. Its strengths include structured transnational governance and an active commitment to raising awareness of cultural heritage. However, more needs to be done to raise its profile and extend the network to other European countries.

The Route is an example of European cooperation around a shared heritage. It preserves the historical memory of persecuted communities while promoting values of tolerance and diversity that are still relevant today.

3. Main Body Evaluation

3.1 Cultural Route Theme

3.1.1 Definition of the theme of the Route

The "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" Route is part of a cultural and memorial initiative that traces the forced exile of these communities after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 and the religious persecutions that followed. The Huguenots, persecuted in France, fled clandestinely from regions such as the Dauphiné, the Cévennes and the Luberon to Geneva and then to Germany, where they were able to settle. For their part, the Waldensians, persecuted in the valleys of Piedmont, were deported to Switzerland in 1686 before returning to their homeland in 1689 after a historic 350km march across the Alps, supported by the Duke of Orange. This project highlights this shared European historical memory and underlines the importance of the historical and cultural heritage associated with these migrations.

Based on specific historical Routes, this European long-distance Cultural Route links France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, offering an immersion in history while addressing contemporary issues. It integrates economic and environmental aspects by promoting slow tourism, sustainable development and intercultural encounters. At the same time, it reflects the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, such as tolerance, solidarity and human dignity, while emphasising the transmission of local heritage, educational exchanges and international collaboration.

By linking remembrance, tourism and European values, this Route is not just about commemoration: it is also a tool for better understanding Europe's cultural and religious diversity, while contributing to the development of the areas it passes through and strengthening the links between past and present.

3.1.2 Historical and cultural context

The evaluation of the historical and cultural context of the Route is based on a precise delimitation of its temporal framework, centred on the period of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and the decades that followed. This period marked the forced departure of thousands of Huguenots and Waldensians, whose exile bears witness to the struggle for religious freedom and the challenges associated with migration and integration in host countries. This time frame fully justifies the theme of the Route, which takes place during a crucial period in European history, marked by religious tensions and political transformations.

The events covered by the Route include the clandestine exile of the Huguenots from France to Geneva and Germany, as well as the deportation of the Waldensians to Switzerland and their historic return to the Waldensian Valleys in 1689. Not only did these migrations redefine the cultural and religious landscape of the regions through which they passed, they also influenced society by laying the foundations for reflection on freedom, tolerance and integration. These themes resonate with contemporary migration issues, underlining the relevance of this Route to the current debate on European identity and solidarity.

The definition of the Route is based on rigorous scientific research and consensus between multidisciplinary experts. By integrating perspectives from different parts of Europe, the project goes beyond the local framework to offer a coherent and inclusive vision of this history. By drawing a parallel between the historical exile of the Huguenots and the Waldensians and today's migratory challenges, the Route encourages a positive awareness of our European citizenship and our relationship with others, while promoting a shared cultural heritage.

3.1.3 Council of Europe values represented by the theme

The Route embodies the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, such as freedom, tolerance, equality, solidarity, democracy and human dignity, by placing them in a European historical and heritage context. By tracing the exile and integration of these persecuted minorities, the project highlights the importance of collective memory in understanding the struggles for fundamental rights and peaceful coexistence. These historical events resonate with contemporary challenges linked to migration, integration and intercultural dialogue, offering an educational tool to raise awareness of European citizenship based on shared values.

The theme of the Route is relevant on a European scale, as it crosses several countries with common issues of history, migration and religious diversity. Based on principles derived from Council of Europe conventions and recommendations, it helps to strengthen understanding of the cultural diversity of contemporary Europe, while facilitating conflict prevention and reconciliation. Through conferences, exhibitions and educational activities, the International Union Huguenot and Waldensian Trail promotes dialogue between communities and highlights current issues such as environmental conservation, cultural identity and welcoming others.

By anchoring these values in concrete actions on the ground, the project translates into action the ideals expressed in instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It contributes to the networking of local, regional and international players, strengthening the links between past and present, and between the different identities that make up Europe. In this way, the Route becomes a platform for promoting intercultural dialogue and raising awareness of European heritage and citizenship.

3.2 Fields of Action

3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development

The Cultural Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" is a unique initiative that promotes the heritage of Protestant communities in Europe. As a unifying project, it mobilises a wide range of expertise to promote European values. One of the strengths of this Route is its interdisciplinary approach, bringing together historians, theologians, botanists and naturalists. Innovative projects such as *The Migration of Plants and Ideas*, launched in 2021, have mobilised experts from all over Europe, with particularly active collaboration in Italy, France, Germany and Switzerland.

In addition to this work, each country has produced other materials and reflections that have been put together. In France, publications such as *Le droit des exilés* (Naïma Ghermani, 2023), exhibitions such as *Prendre racine - Hommes et Plantes en exil* (2023) and literary works such as those by Philippe Rouen have enriched the intellectual panorama. Similarly, plays such as *Elise et la colère de Dieu* (Lionnel Astier, 2023) reflect a commitment to making these themes accessible to a wide audience. The "Rencontres Internationales Vaudoises" (International Waldensian Meetings) in Luberon (7-11 June 2022), organised by the Association d'Études Vaudoises et Historiques du Luberon (AEVHL), explored the theme of "The Waldensians, the memory of a people on the move" through lectures and discussions on the history of the Waldensians. These meetings also provided an opportunity to present key projects such as the Waldensian Museum of Luberon in Mérindol, the Mérindol - Chatillon en Diois section of the European Cultural Route, and the Freissinières - Cabrières d'Aigues trail "In the footsteps of the Waldensians from the Alps to Provence".

In Italy in 2021, at the Lubec fair in Lucca, a meeting organised by the Italian Ministry of Culture highlighted Cultural Routes as a model for sustainable development. Since 2022, cross-border initiatives between Italian and French churches have focused on the Col de la Croix, a symbolic

place of passage. This collaborative work has involved historians, theologians and mountain trail experts from several Italian and French institutions. In June 2023, these efforts culminated in the installation of a plaque on the pass, a travelling exhibition in Italian and French and a work and meeting camp at the Pra alpine refuge.

In Switzerland in September 2023, during the Jubilee of the French parish of Berne, Prof. Pierre-Olivier Lécho, a specialist in the history of Christianity in the modern era, gave a lecture entitled "L'image des Huguenots en Suisse - mythe et réalité" (The image of the Huguenots in Switzerland - myth and reality), followed by discussions with Swiss speakers on the history of the parish. In Geneva on 5 September, historian Davide Rosso presented a study on "Les Vaudois du Piémont et Genève: une voix protestante qui traverse les frontières" (The Waldensians of Piedmont and Geneva: a Protestant voice that crosses borders).

Between 2021 and 2023, the network's scientific committee has been significantly enriched, strengthening its ability to tackle complex issues in an interdisciplinary and transnational way. These additions reflect an ongoing commitment to diversifying perspectives and integrating complementary skills, which are essential for a comprehensive approach to European history and heritage.

New additions such as Dr Otto Schäfer, a specialist in theology and botany, and Emmanuela Durand, a naturalist, underline the importance of linking spiritual, environmental and cultural dimensions in the study of historical routes. These profiles are complemented by solid historiographical expertise, illustrated by figures such as Christian Muhling, an expert in Huguenot history, and Dr Margrit Wick-Werder, whose work on medieval and Swiss history enriches our understanding of regional and cross-border connections. This strategic renewal is not limited to a diversification of disciplines; it also reflects a desire to strengthen European collaborations, with members from Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland. This geographical diversity is essential in order to maintain the network's pan-European dimension, highlighting the historical interactions between Protestant communities and their environment.

The previous evaluation highlighted several areas for improving the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee, and although significant progress has been made, particularly in recruiting new members, formalising tasks remains a major challenge. The recent addition of specialist profiles (2021-2023) bears witness to an active diversification strategy, but there is a lack of clear indications as to the specific expectations of these new members. Explicitly formalising roles and responsibilities would help to better structure contributions and align efforts with common objectives.

Furthermore, no mention of regular annual meetings was found after examining the available documentation or the interviews conducted in the field. However, the recent inclusion of experts in complementary fields such as theology, botany and contemporary history reflects a desire to promote interdisciplinary exchanges. These advances should be consolidated by the introduction of a schedule of regular meetings, accompanied by reports documenting the decisions taken.

On the other hand, the recommendation to publish scientific results in a multilingual format has only been partially implemented. The committee's work does not yet appear to have a unified platform for transnational dissemination, which limits its accessibility to different audiences.

In addition, although the arrival of new members brings diverse perspectives, some researchers have been on the committee for more than a decade. Encouraging the inclusion of younger researchers would not only help to renew ideas, but also ensure continuity and innovation in the committee's work.

In conclusion, the Scientific Committee is an essential pillar in the development of the Route. Strengthening its coordination mechanisms, diversifying its membership and improving the dissemination of results would help to maximise its impact and broaden its audience.

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

The activities carried out as part of the promotion of European memory, history and heritage demonstrate a commitment in line with the criteria defined by the Council of Europe. The promotion of tangible and intangible heritage is illustrated by exhibitions such as the one organised at the Théâtre du Temple in Saillans. For example, the travelling exhibition "*La Route des Huguenots, histoire d'un exode*" (The Route of the Huguenots, the story of an exodus), on display during the 2021 Heritage Days, traced the cultural and historical impact of the Huguenots across Europe. Events around the European fairy tales of Perrault, Basile and Grimm in Schalmstadt and Todenhausen in Germany are a reminder of the importance of oral traditions in building a collective memory. In addition, publications such as the research on Alexis Muston and Georg Büchner, two young revolutionaries, provide new perspectives on key figures of the 19th century.

One of the key activities during this evaluation period was the collaboration between the four countries to develop the travelling exhibition "Taking root - People and plants in exile". This project, run from 2021 to 2024, has involved in-depth research, studies and a variety of expert opinions, with the support of a number of specialists. It is a joint project by organisations from Switzerland, France, Italy and Germany, who have designed interpretation and mediation activities around the key themes of the Route. The exhibition explores the relationship and contribution of the Huguenots to the cultural history of the garden and the plant world. It combines historical, botanical, educational, theological and intercultural perspectives, encouraging a rich sharing of approaches. Comprising 15 roll-ups and 3 illustrated aprons, the exhibition is structured around a number of themes. The first three panels trace the exile of the Huguenots and Waldensians on an international scale. The following panels highlight major agricultural sectors such as viticulture, sericulture, arboriculture and beet sugar extraction. They also evoke the great figures who have marked the transmission of knowledge, such as Olivier de Serres, Philippe Suchard and Franz Karl Achard. Some panels are dedicated to specific themes, such as chocolate or textiles. Finally, the illustrated aprons complete the exhibition by presenting emblematic recipes such as cinnamon waffles or *grüne Sauce*.

The activities are also in line with the principles of the UNESCO and ICOMOS charters, in particular by raising public awareness of the importance of protecting cultural heritage. For example, collaboration with museums such as the Museo Burghalde in Lenzburg and the Valle d'Aosta Museum in Torre Pellice demonstrates a constant commitment to incorporating these recommendations into educational and cultural projects. In addition, events have been organised in rural areas, particularly in the Italian and Swiss Alps. These initiatives, such as guided walks or the installation of panels at Thaynen, aim to make historical sites that are often little-known accessible, while promoting cultural and sustainable tourism.

Educational and participatory initiatives, such as "Exiles, migrations, comic strips", conferences comparing the historical migration of the Waldensians with contemporary migration from Africa, and meetings with local people, aim to raise awareness of the welcome they receive, provide information about activities linked to the Route and promote an exchange of information. These activities, organised by the *Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese*, the *Comune di Pinerolo* and the *Alpi Cozie Regional Nature Park*, reach out to a diverse audience.

In the previous evaluation, a number of recommendations were made to enhance the impact of activities linked to the promotion of European memory, history and heritage. These included the need to communicate the common theme in simple, accessible language in order to raise awareness among the general public. This theme, which focuses in particular on past and present migrations, is essential for understanding the history of Europe and its current and future development.

Recent activities bear witness to efforts to identify these cross-cutting themes, such as exile and migration. Initiatives such as "Exiles, migrations, comic strips" or the travelling exhibitions on the Huguenots and the Waldensians, as well as "Taking root - People and plants in exile", are significant examples. However, certain themes could be presented in a more concise way to better attract the attention of the general public.

Another recommendation was to monitor the number of participants in activities and adjust efforts according to the impact achieved. In recent years, some activities have attracted large audiences, such as the major festival in Thayngen in 2023, which brought together 200 participants, including representatives from France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland, to celebrate the completion of the signposting of the Swiss Route. Similarly, the travelling exhibition on exile reached around 500 visitors at several sites, while the exhibition dedicated to Henri Arnaud attracted almost 600 visitors. However, other events had a more limited impact. In addition, there is no explicit mention of any mechanism for gathering feedback from participants. Participants seem to have been involved mainly as spectators or visitors, with no formal mechanism for collecting their opinions or suggestions.

Although significant progress has been made in implementing previous recommendations, there is still room for improvement. In particular, making communication more accessible, optimising the impact of activities and monitoring feedback from participants would help to increase the overall effectiveness of the initiatives.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans

The activities carried out show a strong commitment to raising young people's awareness of their heritage, while encouraging intercultural exchanges. The implementation of joint actions aimed at young people is designed to encourage encounters with others and foster the creation of bonds of friendship along the cultural walking trail. For example, the "In the footsteps of the Huguenots" travelling camp organised in 2023 for young Protestants from Piedmont, Italy, enabled 20 participants to discover history through hikes to the Col la Croix. In 2024, Franco-German meetings also brought together 24 young people in the Queyras region to take part in sporting, musical and cultural activities, strengthening the links between Wurmberg (Germany) and Queyras (France).

The initiatives also promote the transmission of history and heritage through innovative actions. In 2022, two young people travelled the Cultural Route between Mérindol and Grenoble, sharing their discoveries at each stage via the *Polarsteps* platform. This travel application made their adventure accessible to a wide audience. In addition, the "Voix d'exils" (Voices of exile) festival in 2023 combined conferences, walks and concerts in Dieulefit and Le Poët-Laval, attracting around 100 participants.

In the educational field, a number of events have been organised in schools, such as Henry Mouysset's lecture in 2023 in the Gard department, which raised awareness among elementary school pupils of the history of the Camisards in the region during the reign of Louis XIV. In 2021, a middle school pupil took part in an internship with the French Federation "Sur les Pas de Huguenots et des Vaudois", marking the start of a partnership with Dieulefit high school.

In addition, collaboration with the University of Turin as part of the UNITA programme enabled three students from Spain and Portugal to complete a one-month work placement at Torre Pellice. The project involved building an extension to the Route in Italy. The students worked alongside experts in history and communications, enabling them not only to deepen their knowledge of the persecutions of the 17th century, but also to confront the practical issues involved in preparing and promoting a Cultural Route.

Some initiatives stand out for their participative and creative dimension. At the Blacher educational vinegar factory in the Ardèche, young people aged under 25 took charge of organising events such as shows and workshops during the period 2022-2023, demonstrating their ability to design and run cultural projects. More interactive activities, such as the Geo-Cache offers and digital projects, target young people in particular, using modern tools and media adapted to their expectations.

The activities carried out in recent years show that significant progress has been made in encouraging intercultural exchanges and raising young people's awareness of the historical heritage of the Huguenots and Waldensians. However, these activities are still limited to small groups and could be expanded. The previous evaluation recommended strengthening partnerships with Huguenot and Waldensian schools and associations in order to increase exchanges between young Europeans. It would therefore be appropriate to intensify these collaborations between schools and associations in the member countries in order to reach a wider audience of young Europeans.

Finally, although modern tools such as Polarsteps have been used to make the adventures of the young participants accessible to the public, media coverage could still be improved. Encouraging participants to share their experiences and stories on social networks would increase the visibility and impact of the events.

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

The activities organised within the framework of "Contemporary cultural and artistic practice" reflect a dynamic of creativity and exchange around the heritage of the Huguenots and Waldensians, while promoting contemporary approaches. These initiatives, carried out in member countries, have brought together a diverse public around innovative events.

In 2023, a poetry walk led by poetess Émilie Brugière took place in the countryside of Poët Laval, Dieulefit, Rimon and Savel, as well as Mens. Organised by the French Federation, the initiative attracted 200 participants, offering an experience combining nature and poetry. In the same spirit, between 2021 and 2024, local associations organised guided walks in the south of France, punctuated by conferences, shows and visits, bringing together a total of around 300 participants.

In 2022 and 2023, Philippe Baran and Fanny Walter launched "Les chemins de la liberté" (The freedom paths), a three-day trail of mindful walking along the Waldensian Trail, in the heart of the Luberon Park. This initiative invited participants to get back to basics, to reconnect with their deepest nature and to experience being themselves. Philippe and Fanny co-hosted introspection seminars, where walking and nature played an essential role in the process. This activity brought together 150 people. In addition, conferences and readings were held in the Gard region, featuring accounts of historical figures such as the Chayla Abbot and the Camisards. These events, led by Henry Mouysset and Lionnel Astier, attracted around 200 participants.

As part of the Heritage Days, a storytelling walk was organised in September 2022 in the forest of Saoû (Drôme). Hosted by Marie-Claude Gresse and Bernard Foray-Roux, this walk and talk combined theatre and historical teaching, captivating around a hundred participants. In terms of new media, podcasts were created in 2023 to tell stories linked to the Huguenot exile, reaching around 50 listeners and broadening access to heritage through a digital approach.

In Switzerland, the exhibition "Taking root - People and plants in exile" highlighted the work of illustrator and market gardener Anne-Catherine Roth in 2023 and 2024. Her watercolours, exhibited in Bern, Biel, Sutz and Aarau, attracted around 1,000 visitors. At the same time, an interactive videoguide entitled "Shipwreck 05.09.1687" was launched in 2024. Produced by a

film-maker, this digital project enriches the transmission of heritage with videos, illustrations, music and augmented reality. It is available to the public at Aarberg-Lyss.

Cinema also played an important role with the film "plus.huguenots", shown in various locations in Switzerland since May 2022. This project, organised by the Zurich association, explores the Huguenot heritage and attracted 500 viewers.

In Italy, there have also been a number of initiatives organised by the *Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese*. In 2022 and 2023, walks with concerts in Prali and Fenestrelle combined hiking with performances by local artists. In 2023, a graphic design project led to the creation of a map highlighting the Routes in the canton of Vaud, an essential tool for visitors. This "passport" for hikers, which certifies their identity and distinguishes them from other travellers, contains a variety of information as well as space for stamps certifying that they have passed through key points on the Routes in Italy. In addition, since 2022, the "Salone del Libro" in Turin has been a showcase for these cultural Routes, raising their profile. These various activities bear witness to a constant desire to link heritage and contemporary cultural practices, combining creativity, innovation and historical exploration.

The artistic activities carried out within the Cultural Route in recent years show a significant diversification of practices, confirming an evolution compared to the previous evaluation. While music used to play a predominant role, recent initiatives have incorporated a varied range of artistic expressions. Artistic practices along the Route, which were considered to be underdeveloped in Italy at the time of the last evaluation, have progressed thanks to the activities carried out by the *Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese*. It would nevertheless be appropriate to continue and intensify this dynamic in Italy.

The theme "The Exile of Plants" provided an excellent opportunity to incorporate more artistic diversity and target a younger audience. Although significant progress has been made in diversifying artistic practices, it remains essential to continue broadening the artistic approach in order to reach an even wider audience.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

The European cooperation project "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" is based on a 2,500 km cultural trail, signposted and crossing the four participating European countries, to promote slow tourism. The Route highlights the specific historical, cultural and natural features of the regions it crosses, while encouraging intercultural dialogue. It is a response to the contemporary challenges of heritage preservation, sustainable development and inclusion.

This cultural trail links areas rich in heritage, with villages, monuments and emblematic sites linked to the history of the Huguenots and the Waldensians. It offers walkers a chance to immerse themselves in history and the environment. Several Regional Nature Parks are actively involved. In Italy, the *Parchi Alpi Cozie* offers guided tours in partnership with the *Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese*. These tours combine historical discovery with an awareness of local ecosystems.

In France, initiatives such as the development of environmentally-friendly bivouac areas and the creation of an educational booklet for accommodation providers illustrate the commitment to sustainable tourism. Hikers are encouraged to learn about the heritage of the trail, while at the same time learning to respect and understand the natural world around them. The hiking information sheets developed by the FFSPHV incorporate these essential aspects. In addition, the small travel agencies that are partners of the French Federation and Italian players ensure that the environment is respected by providing hikers with clear instructions on good practice.

To enhance the visitor experience, the network has stepped up its initiatives. In Switzerland, the interactive videoguide mentioned above, "*Naufrage 05.09.1687*", was developed with the

support of the New Regional Policy of the Canton of Berne and implemented in collaboration with Tourisme Bienne-Seeland. Refugees act as guides, sharing their personal stories to establish a strong link between past and present. At the end of the tour, visitors can pick up a "little surprise" at the Lyss tourist office: cardoon seeds packaged as part of a social project.

In Germany, several tourist companies are offering travel packages that include visits to museums and sites linked to the history of the Huguenots and Waldensians. Cooperation already exists with tourist destinations in the Länder of Baden-Württemberg and Hesse, where the hiking trail is being promoted. The German association contributes to this dynamic by reprinting various tourist publications. It regularly organises cultural walks and guided tours in collaboration with its local partners. It also works with tour operators to design and organise group trips. The association also organises groups around themed events on site. Activities and offers are promoted mainly via the association's social networks and website, thereby enhancing its public profile.

In Italy, the Waldensian Museum in Torre Pellice plays a central role in welcoming hikers by offering guided tours of the museums located in the region's Waldensian historical sites. Numerous permanent exhibitions on Waldensian history and local life offer visitors a variety of experiences, including guided tours. In collaboration with a naturalist guide, walks are offered, combining a historical approach with an exploration of the natural wealth of the areas crossed. Besides, an agency specialising in slow tourism organises an annual hike along the "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail".

Several tourist products have been developed in France. A short discovery trail is available for the elderly and coach tourists. For schoolchildren, a one-day package includes a hike and a visit to the Poët-Laval museum. Short breaks (packages) are also organised to coincide with events in the discovery sectors, such as the *Voix d'Exils* (Voices of Exile) event. Travel agencies offer self-guided holidays for individuals, groups or families, as well as guided holidays for groups (individuals). To date, around ten agencies are already marketing the French Route. In addition, several local French associations are organising walking holidays on the trail for their members.

The network is adopting a multi-media communications strategy. An international brochure, published in 2023, showcases all the Route's activities in each of the countries it passes through. A website, renewed in 2021, is a key platform for informing and attracting an international audience. In Italy, specific brochures have been created to promote local routes. In Switzerland, publications such as the *Ieporello* on the Huguenots in Bern are raising the profile of the project.

The Route is also supported by a network of partnerships with public and private organisations. In France, partnerships with the Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre (French hiking federation) provide a framework for the Provençal and Cévennes branches. In Switzerland, partnerships with local tourist offices enable the Route to offer innovative products such as interactive routes.

Throughout the network, different methods are used to measure visitor numbers. In Italy, the number of visitors to museums along the Route can be accurately measured. This year, the introduction of the *credentiale* (a document used to collect stamps at various points along the Route) offers a new opportunity to better evaluate the number of visitors and walkers using the path. In Germany, members of the cultural network count visitors to museums, guided tours and archives. In 2023, these activities attracted more than 70,000 visitors, plus participants in tourist trips and groups of walkers exploring the Route. In France, eco-counters have been installed on several sections of the trail to monitor visitor numbers. Four counters are currently in place: two in Drôme, one in Isère and one on the GR91 (Provençal Route). These devices are used to check the increase in the number of walkers.

The project has made significant progress since the last evaluation, but there is still room for improvement to maximise its impact on sustainable cultural tourism. Exchanges between member countries remain limited, underlining the importance of harmonising practices, particularly in terms of tourist guidance and digital tools such as QR codes. In addition, brochures including information on accommodation providers have been developed, and Route traceability has been facilitated thanks to GPS tracks available online, offering a better experience for walkers. However, these need to be updated regularly. Yet, challenges remain, particularly in Switzerland, where differences between cantons make it difficult to manage the project uniformly. The member countries are actively working to resolve these issues, but the variations between countries make it difficult to implement uniform solutions.

The development of partnerships with travel agencies is a strong point in France, where these collaborations have been fruitful. The idea of replicating this model in Italy is a promising one, enabling French best practice to be exported to other countries.

The previous evaluation recommended further visitor research, building on national studies of walking. However, no major monitoring or research initiatives have been documented as part of the network. It is therefore necessary to analyse existing data from national studies in order to adapt products to the needs of local and international tourists.

The Cultural Route network benefits from a structured framework, with two annual meetings now supplemented by online exchanges. In addition, the creation of an international brochure and a travelling exhibition has enabled the four member countries to develop joint projects, enhancing the visibility and cohesion of the Route.

In conclusion, despite the challenges posed by national specificities, the collective efforts in terms of partnerships, digital tools and standardisation of tourism practices are evidence of a positive dynamic. Closer collaboration between countries could further enhance the visitor experience and strengthen the impact of the Route.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

3.3.1 Overview of institutional /legal structure of the network

The network covers four Council of Europe member States: France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. It is managed by the International Union "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail", an organisation founded in 2015 and based in Dieulefit, France. This association has a clear legal status. Its articles of association set out specific objectives, such as promoting European values, including tolerance and solidarity, through a shared heritage linked to the exile and integration of the Huguenots and Waldensians.

The association's purpose is severalfold: to promote the Huguenot and Waldensian historical and cultural heritage; to support the local economy through quality tourism; to raise awareness of European cooperation and citizenship through human exchanges in compliance with Resolution CM / Res (2007) 12 of the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The governance of the network is based on a well-defined and open structure, allowing interested legal entities from European countries located on the historical routes of exile or reception of the Huguenots and Waldensians to join the association. Founded by national members, it includes the following entities:

- France: "Sur les Pas des Huguenots" Association
- Germany: "Hugenotten- und Waldenserpfad e.V." Association
- Italy : "Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese" Foundation
- Switzerland: "Stiftung Via – Hugenot and Waldensian Trail of Piedmont" Foundation

The General Assembly, made up of all the members, meets once a year. The management of the association is entrusted to a leader, elected by a simple majority of the members for a period corresponding to the validity of the "European Cultural Routes" label, to be renewed at the time of each certification. This lead partner acts as the main coordinator, guaranteeing the transmission of information between members and managing relations with the European Institute of Cultural Routes. The leader is responsible for drafting the annual reports for the Council of Europe, as well as for renewing the label. The leader also organises two annual meetings, including a general meeting, to plan joint actions. This function, which is carried out on a voluntary basis, is supported by equipment made available free of charge by the member responsible for this activity. The Chairman of the Route changes depending on which country is in charge. Currently, Davide Rosso, representing Italy, holds this position.

The association favours multilingualism, using French, German and Italian as its working languages.

3.3.2 Overview of the financial situation of the network

The Association has no budget of its own, and membership is free. The operating expenses of the International Union are covered individually by each member. The financing of collective actions is based on a sharing of costs between participating members, according to a pre-defined financing plan. This plan may be adjusted if the members agree.

Joint actions can only be undertaken once the necessary funding has been confirmed by all the participants. In the event of a member's withdrawal, the action may lose its collective character, be postponed or require a revision of the financing plan. Members who are not involved in an action are not obliged to contribute financially.

If the association receives funds, these are divided between the members concerned. The association is not financially liable, and each member remains legally responsible to third parties. Joint promotional activities are encouraged to raise the profile of the Route.

Over the last three years, a number of projects have been funded to develop the Cultural Route. These projects have been supported by national and European institutions and private donors. Among the key projects, the Franco-German Citizen Fund has financed a partnership and the development of an exhibition, while in Italy, initiatives such as Bando Inluce have contributed to the development of the Route and communication. In France, Route tourism and promotion projects have received funding from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region and the Ministry of Culture. In Switzerland, projects to create hiking guides and exhibitions have been supported by various foundations and cantons.

The network does not employ staff directly, but relies on staff seconded by its members in the various countries involved. This flexible structure relies on people with a variety of statuses: self-employed or part-time employees, working from their respective countries, notably France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany.

Among the key figures, Dr Renate Buchenauer coordinates activities in Germany on a freelance basis, while Laure Alvarez takes on project and coordination responsibilities in France, working part-time. In Switzerland, Florian Hitz is responsible for projects on a freelance basis, and in Italy, Davide Rosso divides his duties between coordination and projects, also working part-time. Finally, Daniele Vola looks after the secretariat and communications in Italy on a freelance basis. The geographical distribution of the staff is an asset in ensuring that the network has a local base and a vision adapted to the specific contexts of each country, while reflecting the network's European and collaborative vocation. However, this decentralisation requires rigorous coordination to guarantee the harmonisation of actions.

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

The current network of the International Union Huguenot and Waldensian Trail comprises four members in four countries: France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. Each country has a national structure responsible for implementing and developing the project. Since the last evaluation in 2021, no other country has joined the network.

In France, the Federation "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois" is the sole contact for the project. As such, it is responsible for the project at both national and international level. Initially, in April 2011, the project's French partners created a national structure to represent the project at both levels. This association, called "Sur les pas des Huguenots", brought together the public and private partners of the departments crossed. Following a decision taken at an Extraordinary General Meeting on 12 May 2022, this structure was transformed into the French Federation "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois". The contact person for this structure is Ms. Laure Alvarez.

In Germany, a national association called "Hugenotten- und Waldenserpfad e.V." was founded in 2009. It is the reference structure for German territories and international partners. The association currently has 120 members, from a wide range of municipalities, districts, nature parks, church communities, private associations, companies and individuals. The person in charge is Dr Renate Buchenauer.

In Italy, the Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese, based in Torre Pellice, represents the project in Italy. The contact person is Mr Davide Rosso. In Switzerland, the VIA Foundation, which was set up in 2009 and is based in Berne, is the national contact. The contact person is Florian Hitz.

Candidates wishing to join the "International Union Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" must submit a written application and accept the terms of the internal regulations. In their application, new national members must detail their objectives and the terms of their integration into the Association. The integration of a new member may be rejected if a member so proposes, followed by a simple majority vote by all the members of the Association.

Newly integrated national members may only use the title "European Cultural Route Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" associated with the Council of Europe logo after official validation of the Route by the Institute of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

3.3.4 Network extension since last evaluation

Since the last evaluation, although no new countries have joined the member network of European Cultural Route, the extension of the routes in France bears witness to significant development. Among the new features, a 120km route was inaugurated in 2022, linking Aigues-Mortes to Mialet, from the Mediterranean to the Cévennes. This route allows visitors to explore emblematic sites linked to Huguenot history, including the Musée du Désert in Mialet and the Tour de Constance in Aigues-Mortes, where Protestant women were imprisoned during the persecutions. This route is an integral part of preserving the memory and promoting the historical heritage linked to the exile of the Huguenots.

In recent years, the last two evaluations have mentioned the possibility of Poland joining the network. However, despite this interest, the Polish partners have not yet made any progress on this project.

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

The expansion of the network is based on ambitious international projects and local initiatives to strengthen its roots.

On an international scale, the major objective is to extend the trail to link the Mediterranean Sea with the Baltic Sea. This project includes collaboration with partners in Germany and Denmark, who are piloting the development of the Route northwards. Detailed planning will be required to establish a precise timetable for implementation. Expansion to other countries could also enrich the Route, including the Netherlands. Albert de Lange, a member of the Scientific Committee in Germany, is interested in these opportunities for expansion.

In various countries, several entities are in the process of joining or are expressing potential interest in joining the network:

Italy:

- Torre Pellice Town Hall
- Bobbio Pellice Town Hall
- GAL Escarton Valli Valdesi (local action group in Luserna San Giovanni)
- Le strade dei forti (association of municipalities in Pinerolo)

France :

- Queyras Regional Nature Park, based in Arvieux

Switzerland :

- Basel Association, based in Basel

3.4 Communication tools

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

The network has introduced a comprehensive graphic charter, the aim of which is to create a coherent and easily identifiable image of the European hiking trail. The charter is based on three principles: simplicity, clarity and modernity. It includes a distinctive logo that identifies the Route and makes it recognisable. This logo can be seen on the various media analysed, including brochures, signposting and digital publications. During the first phase of the project, the various partners chose a common visual identifier that could be used in a variety of ways in the four countries.

The logo incorporates several elements rich in meaning:

- The circle represents the *méreau*, a token formerly given to Huguenots to certify their attendance at assemblies in the desert. This *méreau* was issued by a Church elder to the faithful who attended services regularly, had not been admonished and contributed to the needs of the Church.
- The international nature of the organisation is illustrated by the inscription of the name in different languages around the circle.
- The blue colour echoes the typical blue of the Waldensians in Piedmont.
- The figure illustrated, inspired by a piece of earthenware on display at the Musée du Protestantisme Dauphinois, represents a 17th-century Huguenot.
- The green line symbolises the path across the European landscape.
- The use of an old seventeenth-century typeface illustrates the historical importance of the project.

The "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" network has its own website <https://www.surlespasdeshuguenots.eu>, accessible in French, English and German. This site is the main platform for sharing news, Routes and links to partners' regional sites. Although it centralises important information, its activity on social networks remains limited, with Facebook and Instagram accounts under development. To date, the network does not have a Twitter account, but is exploring the creation of additional accounts.

In France, the French Federation "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois" shares part of the main website in French and maintains an active presence on Facebook. It concentrates on promoting the French routes while respecting the common graphic charter.

In Germany, the "Hugenotten- und Waldenserpfad e.V." association offers the <https://hugenotten-waldenserpfad.eu> website, available in German only. The site is very comprehensive, including information on routes, guides and resources for hikers. The association is also active on Facebook and Instagram, actively helping to promote trails in Germany.

In Italy, the Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese runs the <https://www.lestradedeivaldesi.com> website, which is available in Italian and English. It is well represented on social networks, with active accounts on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The site provides information on Italian routes and the cultural heritage of the Waldensians.

In Switzerland, the Foundation "Stiftung Via - Huguenot and Waldensian Trail of Piedmont" has a website <https://www.via-huguenots.ch>, in French and German. Its Facebook account is particularly active, sharing events and news about the routes in Switzerland.

All the members' websites and their publications on social networks follow a common graphic charter that reflects the network's identity, reinforcing the visual unity of the projects across the different countries.

Visibility material for the European Cultural Route includes an international brochure, recently updated for 2023. This promotional document, available in French, English, Italian and German, aims to present the project to a wide audience, as well as to institutional and private partners. The brochure provides an overview of the Route's objectives, the values it promotes and its historical importance.

Communication materials, such as brochures and posters, are distributed at national and international trade fairs (for example, the Salon du Randonneur in Lyon or the Salone del Libro in Turin), via tourist offices, museums and other events. They also include references to the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, with a direct link to the Route's main website and to its partners in Italy and Germany. The latter contain a page dedicated to the European Cultural Routes, enhancing the visibility of the project at an international level.

The network has developed both printed and digital maps for the Cultural Route. The printed version, available in Germany at a scale of 1:50,000, offers precise details for hikers. The site also uses the Outdooractive platform, an interactive digital solution for exploring the routes. This application is renowned for planning and navigating hikes, incorporating dynamic maps, altitude profiles and GPS tracking tools.

France has an interactive map available online on the official website. A GR965 Topoguide is also available, providing detailed information for hikers wishing to complete the Route in France.

In Switzerland, PDF maps can be downloaded from the official website. The Route is also integrated into the SwitzerlandMobility platform, a national tool providing detailed information on walking and cycling routes.

In Italy, the official website offers detailed information on the Route, available in Italian and English. These resources include maps and descriptions of the stages of the trail in the regions of Piedmont and beyond.

The signage on the European Cultural Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" varies between the four member countries, but follows a common graphic charter to ensure uniform recognition.

In France, the Route is signposted and approved as the GR965 by the Fédération Française de Randonnée. Signage includes red and white "Chemins de Grande Randonnée" markers, supplemented by thematic information panels at key points. These panels provide historical and cultural details of the places crossed, in connection with the exile of the Huguenots and the Waldensians.

In Germany, the "Hugenotten- und Waldenserpfad e.V." association oversees signposting. The signposts include the Route's distinctive logo, and explanatory panels are placed in key areas, particularly near historic sites and important towns such as Bad Karlshafen.

In Italy, the Route is managed by the Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese. The Italian section starts at Col Clapier and ends at Bobbio Pellice in Piedmont. The signposting includes the distinctive logo of the Cultural Route, identified as "*Le Strade dei Valdesi*".

In Switzerland, the "Stiftung Via - Huguenot and Waldensian Trail of Piedmont" is responsible for signposting. The signposts and information boards are available in French and German. The Route passes through Geneva, a central location of the Huguenot exile, with signs recounting the historical events.

In comparison with the recommendations of the previous evaluation, the work carried out over the last three years shows that the network has put in place a coherent and easily identifiable graphic charter. This charter is respected on the websites of the partners (France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland) as well as on their social networks. However, the social networks could be developed further, particularly those of the European network, in order to reach a wider audience.

Although the main site is multilingual (French, English and German), some resources, such as brochures, are only available in certain languages. Offering multilingual versions of all key materials would improve accessibility and attract a more diverse audience. Furthermore, the reduction of printed material is a step forward for environmental sustainability, but a balance between digital and printed media would be desirable to meet the needs of different types of user.

It would also be appropriate to allow scientific articles to be downloaded directly from the European site. At present, the site is limited to a list of works on the subject of the Route, without offering direct access to this content.

Finally, particular attention has been paid to mapping and practical information for the routes. This includes detailed printed maps and digital resources. As for signage, although it varies from country to country, it is broadly in line with the common graphic charter and includes markers as well as explanatory panels highlighting the historical importance of the Route.

3.4.2 Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"

The Council of Europe Cultural Routes logo appears on a wide range of information media produced in accordance with the general conditions governing its use. This includes printed documents and information panels. It appears on the European website, which includes the French site, as well as on the websites of the German, Italian and Swiss partners, each of which has its own independent site where the logo is also visible.

As far as signage is concerned, the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification logo is only visible in special cases. This is because of the specific regulations in different countries

and the constraints imposed by the size of the signposting, which does not always allow several logos to be integrated. In France, for example, it is impossible to apply this logo to waymarking because of the agreements drawn up with the Fédération Française de Randonnée Pédestre, as well as with the Departments and Communes of municipalities, which in most cases are unable to add additional waymarking. However, cultural panels installed along the Route inform walkers that they are on a Council of Europe Cultural Route. In Italy, where possible, QR codes are integrated into the signage. These QR codes redirect visitors to the Route's website, which displays the Council of Europe logo and includes a link to the international site.

The previous evaluation highlighted the importance of complying with the Council of Europe's guidelines for the use of the logo. Although this priority seems to have been met, regular monitoring remains essential to ensure that the logo is applied in all participating countries.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation are organised around the three criteria (I. List of eligibility criteria for themes; II. List of priority fields of action; III. List of criteria for networks). They are based on an in-depth analysis of the evaluation file and its annexes, enriched by a review of additional information and data collected during the site visit.

I. List of eligibility criteria for themes

The theme of the Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" is rooted in European history, and is part of a remembrance and heritage initiative. Centred on the exile of persecuted Protestant communities at the end of the 17th century, it highlights major events such as the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) and the forced displacement of the Huguenots and Waldensians.

The approach of this Route, combining scientific research and international collaboration, offers a multidimensional perspective: historical, cultural and contemporary. It highlights current issues such as intercultural dialogue, sustainability and the memory of forced migration, while aligning itself with the principles of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

The historical setting, centred on the exoduses of the Huguenots and the Waldensians, gives the Route essential historical and cultural depth. It illustrates the struggle for religious freedom while highlighting the challenges of migration and integration, themes that still resonate today.

Historical routes through France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany allow for the exploration of this history from a European perspective. The migrations of the Huguenots and the Waldensians highlight the fundamental role of intercultural exchanges in the construction of European societies. This context fully justifies the theme's eligibility, allowing it to address contemporary issues such as migration, cultural identity and European solidarity.

The project reflects the fundamental values of the Council of Europe, including tolerance, solidarity, freedom, human dignity and intercultural dialogue. By retracing key historical events, it raises awareness of the challenges of European citizenship and cultural diversity.

The actions carried out as part of the Route reinforce this awareness and help to promote the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental rights. By associating these values with contemporary challenges, the Route is an essential educational tool, fostering a collective awareness of European issues.

II. List of priority fields of action

The Cultural Route demonstrates strong cooperation in research and development, with interdisciplinary initiatives involving historians, theologians, naturalists and botanists. Projects such as *The Migration of Plants and Ideas* and international events have enriched the Route by highlighting Protestant heritage. However, despite these advances, improvements are still needed. The roles and responsibilities of the members of the scientific committee are still not sufficiently formalised, which hinders the alignment of efforts on common objectives. In addition, the lack of annual meetings limits the coordination and effectiveness of the work. Although progress has been made in disseminating results, a unified multilingual platform is still lacking to maximise this dissemination. Finally, although the partial renewal of the committee's membership is welcome, more young researchers would be beneficial in bringing fresh perspectives and guaranteeing the continuity of the work.

The network shows a significant commitment to promoting European memory, history and heritage, with activities that comply with Council of Europe criteria. Projects such as the

travelling exhibition "The Huguenot Route: History of an Exodus" and "Taking Root – People and Plants in Exile" illustrate the enhancement of tangible and intangible heritage, delving deeper into the historical and cultural impact of the Huguenots. Transnational collaboration has made it possible to reach a wide audience. However, there are still areas for improvement. The previous evaluation recommended making the themes more accessible to the general public, and although efforts have been made, some themes could still be presented more concisely. In addition, more structured monitoring of participants' feedback would enable activities to be adapted to the public's expectations.

The activities carried out to encourage cultural and educational exchanges between young Europeans as part of the Route feature a variety of initiatives such as itinerant camps, intercultural encounters, university internships and other participatory activities. These efforts demonstrate a strong commitment to raising young people's awareness of historical heritage and promoting intercultural exchanges. However, a number of areas for improvement have been identified. In particular, the activities, although diversified, are often limited to small groups and could be extended to a wider audience through stronger partnerships with educational institutions and associations. Media coverage of the initiatives could also be stepped up, in particular through greater use of social networks, in order to reach a greater number of young people and raise the profile of the projects.

Activities relating to the contemporary practice of culture and the arts within the network show significant progress in terms of creativity and cultural diversity, combining historical heritage and contemporary practices. Various initiatives, such as poetry walks, exhibitions, concerts, films and digital tools, illustrate an effort to reach out to a wider audience, particularly the younger generations. However, challenges remain, including the need to further diversify the artistic approach to reach an even wider audience.

The initiatives undertaken as part of the "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail" project demonstrate an integrated approach aimed at combining historical heritage with sustainable tourism practices. The Route highlights specific historical and natural features while promoting practices that respect the environment and local culture. These actions include collaboration with nature parks, local guides and museums, strengthening the link between cultural tourism and ecological awareness.

Since the last evaluation, significant progress has been made, notably with the development of new digital tools, the introduction of diversified tourism products and the establishment of local partnerships to enrich the visitor experience. Coordination between member countries has improved, with joint projects such as the creation of an international brochure and a travelling exhibition raising the profile of the Route. However, a number of challenges remain, notably the regular updating of the "stakeholder map". In addition, exchanges between member countries remain limited, underlining the importance of harmonising practices, particularly in terms of tourist guidance and digital tools such as QR codes. It is essential to find homogeneous solutions to the variations between member countries, to continue the transfer of knowledge between partners and to analyse the data from national studies in order to adapt products to the needs of local and international tourists.

III. List of criteria for networks

The Cultural Route network is based on a solid structure and well-defined governance, enabling effective coordination between the various member countries: France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The network is managed by a transnational organisation, the International Union of the Huguenot and Waldensian Trail, which has adopted statutes that facilitate the integration of new members. Although the network is mainly based on partnerships between national entities, cooperation remains flexible thanks to the decentralisation of project

management. However, this decentralisation requires rigorous coordination to ensure that actions are harmonised.

In terms of funding, although the Union does not have its own budget, it has been able to find ways of financing these projects through cooperation between members, supplemented by external funding from national and European institutions and private donors. In terms of extending the network, although no new countries have joined the Route since the last evaluation, the extension of the Route in France, with the addition of a new Route linking Aigues-Mortes to Mialet, represents a significant development. Discussions about the inclusion of new countries, such as the Netherlands, indicate a growing interest in extending the network. However, these projects require detailed planning in order to define a precise timetable for their implementation.

The network's evaluation of communication tools reveals that significant progress has been made in developing and standardising the graphic charter, as well as in adopting digital and printed tools to raise the profile of the Route. The extensive use of the graphic charter and logo has ensured a consistent visual identity across the four member countries, reinforcing recognition of the Cultural Route. In addition, communication media such as brochures, printed and digital maps, as well as websites, are now accessible and comply with the common graphic charter.

Efforts have been made to expand the presence on social networks, but this could be further developed to reach a wider audience. Offering multilingual versions for all key media would improve accessibility and attract a more diverse audience. Furthermore, although efforts have been made to reduce printed material and adopt digital media, a balance needs to be struck to meet the diverse needs of users. It would also be appropriate to allow scientific articles to be downloaded directly from the European site. Finally, it is essential to continue to respect the Council of Europe's guidelines on the use of the logo.

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		N/A	☐	☐	N/A
II. Priority fields of action	Cooperation in research and development	Formalise the tasks of the Scientific Committee	☐	☒	Draw up job descriptions for each member of the scientific committee
		Organise regular annual meetings between all committee members, including reports	☐	☒	Set up a schedule of regular meetings to encourage discussion on transdisciplinary research.
		Involving the Swiss member of the Scientific Committee in research activities	☒	☐	

		Publish scientific results/conference documentation in several languages as easy-to-read content on the website	☐	☒	Structuring the documentation of work to facilitate its online distribution in a multilingual and accessible form
			☐	☐	Encourage the participation of doctoral and post-doctoral students to provide innovative perspectives
	Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage	Communicate the common theme in simple language	☒	☐	Communicate the themes more concisely to better capture the attention of the general public
		Regularly evaluate the number of people taking part in activities, asking for feedback from participants	☒	☐	Set up surveys at the end of events to gather feedback from participants
	Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans	Approach schools and/or other Huguenot and Waldensian national associations to encourage more international exchanges.	☒	☐	Intensify cooperation between schools and associations in the member countries in order to reach a wider audience of young Europeans.
		Greater emphasis on media coverage of transnational exchanges	☒	☐	Encouraging participants to share their experiences and stories on social networks would increase the visibility and impact of the events.
	Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	Expanding artistic practice along the Route to Italy	☒	☐	
		The artistic presentation of the next transnational theme, "The Exile of Plants", should be more diversified to	☒	☐	Diversifying the artistic approach to reach a wider audience

		appeal to a younger audience too.			
	Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development	Produce a "stakeholder map" of national tourism partners	☒	☐	Regularly update the "stakeholder map".
		Add the digital navigation system on the international agenda	☒	☐	Regularly update the digital navigation system
		Ensure that a common standard for visitor guidance is established between the cantons of Switzerland	☒	☐	Continue to ensure the implementation of consistent solutions
		Change the link from the Italian Route website to the international Route website	☒	☐	
		Identify product development success factors and use them to transfer knowledge between partners	☒	☐	Continue knowledge transfer between partners
		Carry out an additional visitor census	☐	☒	Analyse existing data to adapt products to tourists' needs
		Devote at least one meeting at international level to development in the member countries	☒	☐	
III. Cultural Route Network	The members of the Union should meet more often and focus on specific themes in order to exchange views on the functioning of internal affairs.	☒	☐		
	Raise the profile of the development of the four national networks	☒	☐		
		☐	☐	Rigorous coordination of staff to ensure actions are harmonised	

		☐	☐	Define a detailed timetable for implementing the network extension
Communication Tools	Discuss the graphic charter and technical framework of the website at international level	☒	☐	
	Find a new section on the website to make multilingual scientific reports available	☐	☒	Allow scientific articles to be downloaded directly from the European site
	Reduce the quantity of printed documents	☒	☐	Strike a balance between digital and printed media
	Constantly remind partners in the member countries that they must apply the logo	☒	☐	Regular monitoring of logo application by members
		☐	☐	Strengthen the network's presence on social networks
		☐	☐	Develop multilingual versions of all key communication media

5. List of references

List of documents provided by the Cultural Route :

- Certification file
- Self-evaluation grid
- Declaration of honour
- Up-to-date legal status of the network
- Up-to-date list of network members
- Reports of the last three years' Ordinary and Extraordinary General Meetings
- IU HWT network budget documents (Financing of joint International Union actions)
- 3-year business plan IU HWT
- Copy of the latest Route evaluation report (2020-2021 Evaluation Cycle)
- Charter of values "Hugenot and Waldensian Trail".
- Graphic charter for the "Hugenot and Waldensian Trail"

All the documents required for the evaluation were submitted by the Route.

Additional documentation or sources of information analysed :

- Map of the city of Lausanne
- *Presentation file. French Federation Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois and its local associations.*
- FFRandonnée. *Grande Randonnée, Topo Guides. Sur les pas des huguenots. De la Drôme provençale à Genève.* FFRaondonnée, 2020.
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- *Exhibition booklet. Taking root - People and plants in exile.*
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<https://hugenotten-waldenserpfad.eu>
<https://www.lestradedeivaldesi.com>
<https://www.via-huguenots.ch>
<https://www.museedudesert.com/index.php>
<https://www.bhm.ch/fr>
<https://www.via-hugenotten-zh.ch>
<https://museovaldese.org>
<https://fondazionevaldese.org>
<https://www.museumburghalde.ch>
<https://itineranceenfrance.org>

<https://www.WALDENSIANduluberon.com>
<https://www.ffrandonnee.fr>

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

Programme of the field visit and people met from 1 to 4 November 2024 in France :

Friday 1 November

- Arrival at Mialet and welcome by Hubert Pfister, legal representative of the French Federation "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois" (FFSPHV), and by Henry Mouysset, FFSPHV historical referent.
- Visit the Musée du Désert at Mas Soubeyran with guide Philippe Herbster.
- Presentation of the Route from the Cévennes and its extension to the Mediterranean: path, operation of the Route committee, partnership with the FFRandonnée.
- Hiking on part of the Route.

Saturday 2 November

- Travel to Mérindol and welcome by François Wencélius, representative of the International Union SPHV, and Michel Walter, President of AEVHL, the local FFSPHV association for Vaucluse.
- Ascent to the Waldensian Memorial (start of the Route)
- Visit to La Muse, a centre dedicated to the history of the canton of Vaud
- Working meeting at the Muse to present the Route for the Vaucluse part of the Provençal branch of the ECR HWT (path, historical and cultural aspects, promotion of tourism and partnerships).

Sunday 3 November

- Journey from Mérindol to Le Poët-Laval. Welcome at the Musée du Protestantisme (Museum of Protestantism) by Davide Rosso, leader of the International Union "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail", Jacques Peyronel, administrator of the FFSPHV, Laure Alvarez, project manager for France, and Olivier Cadier, vice-president of the Museum.
- Visit to the Museum of Protestantism.
- Presentation of the Route from the Dauphiné.
- Departure for Saoû by car with Davide Rosso and Laure Alvarez.
- Discover the Saoû forest in the company of Bernard Foray Roux, writer, author and lecturer. Hike to the Camp de l'Eternel (a place of worship in the desert) and the hamlet of the Huguenots (semi-troglodyte houses). Passing by the Château de Lastic (site of the Wars of Religion).
- Return to Dieulefit by car.

Monday 4 November

- Meeting in Dieulefit about the European Route "Hugenot and Waldensian Trail": answers to questions about the re-certification dossier, with Davide Rosso and Laure Alvarez.
- Departure.

7. Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST					
QUESTIONS			Yes	No	Comments (if any)
3.1 FIELDS OF ACTION	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	
	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?	1	
		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	

3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage	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	
	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?		1
	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 the 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	

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans	25	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	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	
	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	
	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	
3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	35	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?**	1	

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development	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	
	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?	1	
	46	Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?		1
	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?	1	
3.3 NETWORK		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	
		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?	1	
	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?	1	
	77	Is the title of “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?	1	
	78	Is the certification logo present on all communication materials?	1	
	79	Is the certification logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	1	
	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			76	5

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. Appendix 3: List of acronyms, figures and tables

List of acronyms used in the report :

AEVHL: Association d'Études Vaudoises et Historiques du Luberon (Association for Waldensian and Historical Studies in the Luberon)

FFRandonée: Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre (French hiking federation)

FFSPHV: French Federation "Sur les pas des Huguenots et des Vaudois".

Fondazione CCV : Fondazione Centro Culturale Valdese

ECR HWT : European Cultural Route "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail".

IU HWT : International Union "Huguenot and Waldensian Trail".

IU: International Union

Photos from field visits in France :

Visit to Mialet



Desert Museum

Visit to Mérindol



The Muse and the Waldensian Memorial

Visit to Poët-Laval and the Saoû forest



+

The Dauphinois Museum of Protestantism and the Saoû forest