

2021/22

ENG Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the  
Council of Europe  
Certification cycle 2021-2022

Regular evaluation:

# ATRIUM – ARCHITECTURE OF EUROPE'S TOTALITARIAN REGIMES OF THE XX CENTURY IN EUROPE'S URBAN MEMORY

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 2021-2022

### Independent expert report

# ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX Century in Europe's Urban Memory

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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 following report documents the second 3-year cycle evaluation of “ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX Century in Europe's Urban Memory” and despite the challenges brought about by the COVID pandemic since early 2020, the Network remains stable and focused on its aims and intentions as outlined in its Certification Form.

The ATRIUM Network is fortunate in many ways that it embraces a wide range of themes as defined by the Council of Europe; from supporting economic regeneration, via building re-use and heritage restoration, to ensuring that young people receive opportunities to reevaluate history, in this case through the impact on totalitarian regimes on Europe’s citizens during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Throughout the duration of the last evaluation cycle, the ATRIUM network has consistently developed and contributed to projects that belie the size of its management structure and overall Network size.

There is considerable scope for the actions of the Network to expand still further over the next three years and for the make-up of the membership to grow. This, along with the complexity and demands of securing future project funding and guaranteeing the agreed outcomes, is likely to put extra demands on selective players within the Network. However, the key recommendations from this evaluation process (including the delivery of a clear Communications Strategy and a simple but appropriate Strategic Plan and even a SWOT analysis) should ensure that the Route continues to work in the most effective, collaborative way possible, focusing on its priorities and safeguarding the quality of all its future outputs.

Overall, the past successes and on-going actions of the ATRIUM Route would seem to fully justify the re-certification of this organisation as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

### Expert summary conclusions

	Yes	No
The theme complies with criteria listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, <b>I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for actions listed in Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, <b>II. List of priority fields of action.</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for networks listed in Resolution CM/Res (2013)67, <b>III. List of criteria for networks.</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the <b>Logo “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe”</b>	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This report is an independent assessment and evaluation of the European Cultural Route “ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX Century in Europe’s Urban Memory” as part of the Evaluation Cycle 2021-22.

The views expressed in this report build upon developments and progress made since the publication of an inaugural evaluation undertaken during Evaluation Cycle 2017-18. The following information has been collated from the Certification dossier, attendance at a number of webinars and Zoom workshops and in the absence of a Field Visit (due to the complications brought about by Covid-19), a number of online meetings/discussions with Route management and Network partners.

The ATRIUM Route continues to comply with the criteria outlined in the Council of Europe’s Resolution CM/Res (2013)67. It also satisfies the full list of both ‘eligibility criteria for ‘themes’ and ‘priority fields of action’ being a transnational project that explores European memory, history and heritage through the multi-disciplinary efforts of a broad mix of professionals (representing areas of local, regional and transnational cultural, historical and social matters). In particular, the Route puts forward a new understanding of European dissonant heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but importantly maintains a critical and ethical, ‘non-judgmental’ repudiation of the associated regimes by contributing to a wider political education and the need for democracy building.

The project was awarded the status of Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2014 and together its members make a significant contribution to on-going academic/research outputs at a pan-European level. It has been highly successful in its completion and on-going delivery of collaborative EU-funded projects (Erasmus +, Interreg etc.) along with similar undertakings at a regional level such as the ERDF Operational Programme.

The Route also continues to propose and implement programmes and initiatives (including tourist products) that cut across educational and cultural tourism themes whilst ensuring that these appeal to an increasingly large and diverse audience (from youth groups to seniors) ensuring the ongoing sustainability of the Route. These range from educational/study resources, interpretative displays and exhibitions, walks and guided tours, along with community-based activities. Furthermore, as the Route’s profile increases so does to opportunity showcase its past activities through presentations and network events beyond its core business, thereby strengthening its reputation and potential still further.

The ATRIUM Route also satisfies the ‘criteria for Networks’. Membership of the Network has increased since the last evaluation cycle and number of further members are actively being considered at the time of this evaluation.

The ATRIUM Association continues to engage and participate in a number of comparable initiatives and projects bringing in additional (financial) resources to further aid its sustainability and there is a concerted effort to emphasise its status as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe through the standardised use of the recognised/approved Cultural Route logo.

### **3. MAIN BODY EVALAUTION**

#### **3.1. CULTURAL ROUTE THEME**

##### **3.1.1. DEFINITION OF THE THEME OF THE ROUTE**

Awarded European Cultural Route status in 2014, the remit of the “ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX century in Europe’s Urban Memory” is primarily to address the legacy of the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes of 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe through the continued existence of architecture and urban developments from these periods of history. In some ways it can be seen to as a precursor, in part, to “The Iron Curtain Trail” (certified as a European Cultural Route in 2019). This more recent cultural route retraces the physical border dividing Eastern and Western Europe for almost half a century following the end of the Second World War. It, like ATRIUM, also connects the lives and experiences of European citizens past and present through the medium of historic structures, monuments and the wider urban and rural landscapes.

##### **3.1.2. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

The ATRIUM Route is a follow-on project to one financed under the South-East Europe Transnational Cooperation programme (from 2011-13) which saw the establishment of the ATRIUM Association in June 2013.

Authoritarian and totalitarian regimes have existed and continue to exist well beyond Europe’s borders so whilst ATRIUM’s own activities are clearly limited under the terms of the European Cultural Route (and currently focus on Italy and countries to the East and South-East of Europe), it is very likely that many of its actions, could in time, be seen as beneficial and positive within future discussions and activities on a much wider international stage.

##### **3.1.3. COUNCIL OF EUROPE VALUES REPRESENTED BY THE THEME**

“ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX century in Europe’s Urban Memory” continues to function as a European Cultural Route and represents a number of common values as outlined in the Treaty of Lisbon (December 2009). These are common values that support, coordinate or supplement individual Member States’ actions in areas such as tangible and intangible culture, heritage promotion, tourism development and educational training.

The focus of the ATRIUM route offers considerable scope for ongoing research and development in keys areas of tangible and intangible European cultural heritage and its interplay with the social/political movements of the time. Its extensive network of academic partners, representing institutions beyond the current 5 nations directly involved in the Route itself, provides excellent opportunities to further expand and disseminate the key themes of how totalitarian and dictatorial regimes impacted on the urban/natural landscape – much of which is still visible today.

Meanwhile, the premise of the ATRIUM Route is that it also embraces cultural, historical, and political themes that have impacted on citizenship and these themes offer scope for excellent cross-over activities that educate and bring together diverse audiences with different interests, many perhaps for the first time.

Furthermore, the Route/Association's positioning on ethical and political matters is very much led by the principle of the "promotion of the values of democracy and cooperation between peoples as the foundation for peaceful and civil coexistence" and, that in no way, does it accept "expressions and forms of historical revisionism, exculpation for authoritarian, dictatorial or totalitarian governments".

Given the relative contemporaneous nature of the Route's underlying themes, there are numerous opportunities for the project's activities to engage with people of a certain age who will have lived through these conflicting times, under either Fascism or Communism.

However, for the younger generation there is understandably less 'personal' ownership of past events so the Route continues to make strenuous efforts to engage with a youth audience through workshops, internships, and educational exchanges and many of these programs, linked to school and universities are likely to be embedded into future curricula.

That said, the Route continues to strengthen its ties (and relevance) to the wider community by focusing on its shared heritage and as such adheres to the principles laid out in the FARO Convention of 2005. For instance, the documenting of oral histories or personal recollections are not only valuable in capturing 'first hand memories and experiences' before they are lost forever, but these can play an influential role in engaging with those younger audiences by simply bringing the 'past to life'.

Likewise, there is clear recognition amongst Network members that the Route offers considerable potential to develop themed European cultural tourism at a local, regional, national and ultimately at a transnational level. Between 2018 and 2020 a number of new tour products along with new and improved visitor attractions were introduced by partners and other external operators although it remains to be seen what impact COVID-19 travel restrictions will have on these in the long term.

Interestingly, it is widely believed that as the world emerges from the pandemic and tourism starts up again there will be a conscientious move, at least in the short term, to focus on local and regional travel and the so-called 'staycation' experience. With this in mind, the ATRIUM Route is well placed and its support and promotion, particularly of smaller initiatives and sites who perhaps operate with limited resources and struggle to maximise their local tourist potential, will be critical in the months and years to come.

However, broader transnational and international initiatives will be increasingly relevant as global travel returns to pre-pandemic levels and an expansion of participating Route membership and particularly to new geographical areas such as the Baltic states and to Western Europe, most notably Spain, Portugal and Germany, opens up new avenues for research and relevant public debate.

From the outset, the ATRIUM Association (headquartered in Forli, Italy with its strong associations with Benito Mussolini and the implementation of Fascism and Socialism) has actively engaged with an extensive range of academics and experts, including many from organisations beyond the core membership of the Route reflecting a clear, wider interest in the subject.

As of 2021, the Route maintains an Academic Network of over 40 universities and research centres from across Europe who assist and cooperate with ATRIUM's aims and intentions. And as the Route seeks to expand its geographical membership there is every likelihood that



its Academic Network will increase not only in size but in new areas of interest too, further enhancing the credibility of the ATRIUM Route.

## **3.2. FIELDS OF ACTION**

### **3.2.1. CO-OPERATION IN RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

The ATRIUM Route provides a considerable platform for co-operation in research and development across multi-disciplinary themes in support of European cultural themes and values as outlined by the Council of Europe, most notably in key areas of tangible and intangible culture heritage and its interplay with the social/political movements of the time.

The general theme of the Route is widely recognised as an existing source of social and political discourse; less so on the impact that the various totalitarian and dictatorial regimes have had on national developments in urban development and related architectural and design practice, much of which is still clearly visible in the landscape today.

As many of the structures built during the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been abandoned, and as the risk of decay and eventual loss increases, the Route's documentation of these sites and their potential safeguarding becomes ever more time critical. Therefore the Route's ability to tap into a project such as "Revival: Interreg Italy-Croatia", which involved a collaboration between the municipalities of Cesenatico and Forli in the delivery of an inventory/database of abandoned buildings during 2019, proved to be a timely opportunity.

Likewise, the Route's continuing support for the photographic project "Totally Lost: Exploration of Abandoned European Totalitarian Architecture", including showcasing the related exhibition twice in recent years, and providing ongoing content and links through the ATRIUM website is recognition that the Route considers co-operation and support of relevant external/3<sup>rd</sup> party projects as a boost to its own aspirations. There may even be scope perhaps for the ATRIUM network to consider producing its own documentary exhibition that provides an on-going public face to its activities and something that engages and supports all partners equally?

Totalitarian and dictatorial regimes have been prevalent across many European countries during the 20<sup>th</sup> century and regardless of their 'left wing' or 'right wing' tendencies, together, these regimes often imposed sometimes strict social parameters on their respective populations. Although these autocratic values have long since been abandoned, much of the resulting, chiefly institutionalised architecture from the period remains and together it offers a shared visual legacy, irrespective of borders.

Not surprisingly, the Route continues to play a significant role in identifying and disseminating common traits in built heritage emanating from many European transnational landscapes throughout this period. And the Route continues to share best practice, with multiple research centres, institutions and universities and this remains one of the Route's underlying strengths.

This knowledge exchange is of particular benefit to the smaller municipal partners who for obvious reasons lack the resources or infrastructure that many the larger ones have, as can be seen in the case of the Municipality of Cesenatico (with a population of just 26,000), yet able to benefit from its involvement with the "Revival: Interreg Italy-Croatia" project (mentioned above). And there is implied value in acknowledging the work undertaken by

young and newly qualified academics as an adjunct to the more widely recognised and better established 'senior' researchers, hence the citing of recent university theses along with links to an extensive list of relevant scientific publications, all accessible via the Route's website.

The current membership of the Scientific Committee provides a well-balanced pool of recognised and established experts from a variety of countries with appointments made based on a broad range of specialisms including architecture, history, sociology and cultural tourism. As of late 2021, Committee membership includes an academic from a UK university highlighting that interest in the Route's theme is pertinent and relevant to individuals and institutions well beyond the five countries currently represented within ATRIUM itself – Italy, Croatia, Albania, Romania and Bulgaria – and further justification perhaps that the Route has the potential to widen its appeal still further.

Moreover, the Route's Academic Network now extends to over 40 institutional partners with an impressive numbers from countries not otherwise directly associated as members of the Route, including representatives from Sweden, France, Greece, the UK, Slovenia, Slovakia, Germany and Hungary. This Academic Network's role remains critical in that these partner institutions are able to support and enhance the importance and significance of the Route's purpose and through them, open up additional opportunities for future collaborative activities and promotion.

There is evidence that the Route's acceptance as a certified European Cultural Route in 2014 and its re-confirmation in 2018 drew heavily on its success in delivering research on a number of levels and it is clear that this activity has continued over the last 3 years and whilst COVID restrictions have understandably limited face-to-face activities over the past 18 months or so, it is good to see research outputs at local, regional, national and international levels have continued.

Given that two-thirds of ATRIUM members are Italian-based there is understandably still a key focus on Italian research subject matter being undertaken solely or primarily by the Italian academic community, but there is growing evidence of a significant move towards more high-level transnational collaborations across academia.

Of these, the following are worth highlighting:

- "Recovery in Benghazi: Preserving. Reusing and Valorizing Historical Buildings". A conference hosted by the University of Bologna in October 2018 (in partnership with a French-based NGO) and with a contribution by ATRIUM considering the recovery and restoration of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian architectural heritage in Benghazi, Libya.
- "Heritage in the making: dealing with legacies of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany". A conference organized by the Cambridge Heritage Research Centre, University of Cambridge, UK (December 2018), at which six individual papers were presented from ATRIUM's Italian partners and related sites.
- UNA EUROPA is a consortium of eight leading universities including the University of Bologna with its extensive ties to the ATRIUM route. European cultural heritage is one of the consortium's key collaborative themes and in February 2021, UNA EUROPA together with UNESCO delivered an international conference 'Tourism and Heritage Dissonances: Narratives, Interpretation and Management'. Here the ATRIUM president and one of its own external experts presented an overview of the Route and the ATRIUM Plus project. More recently in November 2021 ATRIUM was

asked to contribute a workshop to another UNA EUROPA event staged contemporaneously at the universities of Krakow and Bologna.

- “In Restauro: Post-War Heritage of Art and Architecture in Central and Eastern Europe – Integrated Approaches to Dissonant Monuments and Sites”. This was an international conference organized by the Bulgarian Buzludzha Foundation (together with ICOMOS partners in both Germany and Bulgaria) in July 2021. Focusing on the significance and viability of restoring the important communist Buzludzha Monument, ATRIUM were once again invited to present their own activities and to contribute to the debate.
- “Urban Agenda for the EU. Partnership on Culture/Cultural Heritage”. ATRIUM joined this EU funded project in February 2021 under the auspices of the so-called ‘Action 10. Integrated approaches to Dissonant Heritage’. Here the objective is to prepare a report regarding dissonant heritage sites throughout Europe following surveys of almost 50 sites and various in depth interviews including representatives from ATRIUM. (The project’s coordinator Dr Jan Schultheiss from the German Federal Ministry of the Interior presented an update on the project at the ATRIUM on-line EGM held on 26 October 2021)

### **3.2.2. ENHANCEMENT OF THE MEMORY, HISTORY AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE**

Whilst the focus of Route’s activities is an analysis of European totalitarian architecture its significance is reflected in the interplay with other historical, social and political factors and it recognises that capturing the ‘human experience’ of those who lived through these times and imparting this onto younger generations is of equal importance too. The Route’s activities also promote the ‘brand’ of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe through its commitment to sharing and enhancing a ‘living’ heritage, a heritage that is pertinent to different cultures and countries throughout Europe.

This can be achieved through various means, by focusing on oral histories, community ‘reminiscences’ and the rise of counter-cultures, Literature too can be impactful as in the case of the Municipality of Dimitrovgrad where the local writer, poet and journalist Penyo Penev is widely celebrated. His idealised poems reflecting the early years of Communist rule in Bulgaria have been the subject of various events including a National Literary conference in 2019 and more recently an exhibition “50 years Penyo Penev Days of Poetry” held in 2020.

In Tirana, the importance of Albanian writer Ismail Kadare is also recognised through the opening of a new museum in 2019, ‘House Studio Kadare’. This is the studio apartment where Kadare and his family lived under the totalitarian system, from 1974-1990, and where most of his most significant works were written. The small house museum is an important ‘time capsule’ or ‘snapshot’, a valuable and almost unique insight into urban living in one of the capital’s most popular neighbourhoods during a period of intense political repression. The building itself was criticized at the time of its construction in 1972 for its overly Western-influenced ‘cubist style’ design, and just a few years later its architect Maks Velo was sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment for “agitation and propaganda” against the Hoxha regime. Now just half a century later both the architect and the building are revered, further evidence if needed, that attitudes to the recent past can easily change.

The Route’s activities support European cultural co-operation as stated under the terms of Article 15 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (adopted 18/12/2013). These are to

“promote the European identity in its unity and diversity” in this case through the studying of fascist and communist European totalitarian architecture, thereby encouraging transnational “intercultural dialogue”.

The Route recognises the value of various international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation and in particular the importance of the European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada 03/10/1985) and the role played by bodies such as ICOMOS and UNESCO. The Route also acknowledges that whilst some of its buildings and sites might secure heritage protection at national or international levels, it is often left to local actors, often at the behest of organisations such as ATRIUM, to consider protecting and safeguarding lesser known examples of this type of 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture. And no more so than when this architecture is associated with painful, more recent memories and where it stems from periods of mostly unpopular, undemocratic, totalitarian regimes.

Whilst the Route does not directly enhance or valorize the heritage value to ethnic and social minority audiences, the subject of a totalitarian legacy can often be considered dissonant or ‘uncomfortable’ in a variety of ways to different social or political groups. Each group has the ability to attribute different stories or memories to certain objects, built environments or moments in history, such as the short-lived anti-fascist uprising in the Croatian mining town of Labin in 1921 or the Nazi occupation of Merano (between 1943-45) and the wholesale deportation of its Jewish community to concentration camps.

The ATRIUM Route endeavours to offer a multi-perspective approach to this complex legacy, allowing for diverse and complementary interpretations of this dissonant heritage, and by doing so ensures that minority views can be expressed and represented on equal terms.

Given the social and political ideologies linked to the creation of these totalitarian architectural landscapes the ‘Faro Convention’ principles remain central to the Route’s activities whereby European states agree to protect cultural heritage and the rights of their citizens to access and participate in that important heritage. Here a good example is the collective efforts of the Foro Boario neighbourhood in Forli which resulted in the awarding of an FAI (Fondo Ambiente Italiano) prize resulting in the on-going restoration of the local Foro Boario (cattle market). Built in 1927 and enlarged in 1932, the building is renowned for being approved by Mussolini and although it ceased trading as a market in 1987 it remains an important and well-loved building by the very community it originally served, hence their commitment to seeing it being restored and made available for wider public use.

Community engagement, at all levels, remains a constant and the public’s commitment to ATRIUM’s intentions as outlined in the Association’s statutes and through community-led projects such as “Come In Forli” ([www.comeinforli.it](http://www.comeinforli.it)) continues to sustain the Route’s future ‘sustainable’ development. Elsewhere in Carbonia, the Great Mine of Serbariu (central to Mussolini and his plans to ensure the country’s energy independence) has contributed to activities centred around the town’s annual ‘Festa de Patrimonio’ and participation in the European Night of the Museum initiative.

Elsewhere the members of the Route remain active in the delivery of their own workshops, guided tours, exhibitions and other activities in support of European Heritage Days and other external initiatives. At the Municipality of Ştei, and as a contribution to the European Heritage Days program, high school students were involved in public debates and presentations linked to the city’s architectural legacy during 2019 and 2020. Meanwhile in 2019, the authorities in Tirana linked International Museums Day and Children’s Day through the

delivery of guided tours focusing on the capital's totalitarian architecture and supplemented this with an exhibition addressing changes to the city's 20<sup>th</sup> century urban landscape.

Reflecting on memory and history can take many forms. In 2018 in Bertinoro, secondary school pupils worked on a project researching the construction and development of the town's Fratta Terme thermal spa, leading to the publication of a limited edition booklet. Meanwhile, in both 2018 and 2019 the Route's transnational headquarters in Forli contributed to the city's "900Fest – A Festival of 20<sup>th</sup> Century History".

Elements of memory and history run through the majority of the projects either initiated by the Route itself, or supported by it, including where the Route's primary activity is to identify, preserve and enhance many of its heritage sites, located either in central, urban neighbourhoods or in more rural/semi-rural locations.

Membership of the ATRIUM Association includes a number of very small municipalities and almost half represent locations with a population of less than 20,000; two members Raša and Torviscosa are little more than villages with less than 4000 people each. The Route embraces the potential that these smaller partners can make to the wider association and there is clear recognition that the larger partners can and do provide suitable support and assistance in ensuring that these smaller, lesser known and more rural locations receive equal attention with regards to their preservation and promotion. A good example of this being the restoration of the former Casa del Fascio in the Municipality of Predappio which was the subject of a documentary photographic exhibition between 2017-2019.

Since its inception, the Route has continued to identify and support the preservation and development of former industrial sites created under totalitarian and autocratic regimes and particularly where the re-use of abandoned, neglected sites in more rural areas can make an important contribution to the economic regeneration of a region, often in partnership with relevant communities, local and regional authorities, investment agencies etc.

The Route has initiated and collaborated with a number of external partners in the delivery of projects whereby the successful restoration and 'new use' of buildings has been achieved and these outcomes are clearly outlined on the website <https://atriumroute.eu/projects-menu/restoration-and-new-uses>. Of these projects, the most notable example is probably the 'reinvention' of the former mining complex of Pijacal in Labin which now serves as a multifunctional cultural centre and includes a new public library for this small Croatian town. Although much of this work was undertaken prior to the creation of the current ATRIUM Route, its success is recognised as an exemplar.

More recently, efforts to restore the former Santarelli Kindergarten in Forli began with extensive engagement with the local community as to its preferred choice of future use, prior to plans being finalized and grant funding secured. Disappointedly, progress on the restoration has been extensively delayed, caused in part by on-going discussions and changes to the building's eventual, long-term use and something that the Route's local partners have been mostly excluded from.

However, the Route continues to be supportive of proposals and initiatives being put forward by organisations outside of its core membership, mostly notably perhaps the communist Buzludzha monument in Bulgaria (as mentioned previously) whose future use is being taken forward by a committed private foundation.

### 3.2.3. CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES FOR YOUNG EUROPEANS

There is a general recognition that the overall theme of the ATRIUM Route presents certain problems when considering the task of engaging particularly younger 'school-based' audiences, not least because their age prevents them from any direct 'ownership' of past events whilst for their parents and certainly their grandparents there is generally a much more personal and closer connection with these periods of totalitarian and autocratic regimes.

That said, the Route remains fully committed to raising and sharing awareness of its themes, across multiple generations, in particular through a greater understanding of Europe's totalitarian regimes and the legacies that they left behind, most notably in the field of architecture and the built environment; a physical 'tangible' legacy.

Understandably the pandemic and subsequent COVID restrictions have limited more recent activities in the area of educational and cultural exchanges, and particularly at a transnational level. However, since its last evaluation the Route has continued to deliver a number of successful initiatives that have engaged middle and high schools, university faculties and community groups in a variety of outcomes - from a Youth Conference in Dimitrovgrad, "Come thousands of young people", held as part of European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018) through to the commissioning of an innovative dance/theatrical performance by pupils of Forli's Liceo Classico Morgagni in partnership with the Associazione Fantariciclando in 2019.

Other singular activities such as the creation of a digital/e-book on the history and architecture of Torviscosa by pupils of the local secondary school (during academic year 2020/21) highlight simple opportunities that can be delivered quickly and without the need for substantial resources. Here perhaps there is scope for other partners to find ways to deliver a similar 'product' pertinent to their own unique locale?

Elsewhere, a number of educational initiatives have been successfully replicated on a yearly basis such as the International Festival for Children and Young people held in Iași each October since 2018, and the 40+ workshops for schoolchildren held in Forli as part of the 'Laboratories of the Memory' project.

In a number of other instances, one-off initiatives that have proved successful could be considered as a regular addition to future school curricula; a good example being 'Memorie di Confine' (Borders' Memories). Here high school pupils from Forli were tasked with looking at the issues surrounding refugees on the Italian/Croatian border at the time of the implementation of Communism in the former Yugoslavia. Given Europe's ongoing refugee 'crisis', many of the humanitarian issues faced by Europe's global citizens of the 20<sup>th</sup> century remain sadly just as pertinent today.

Likewise successful study visits in Spring 2019 between schools in Italy and Croatia (under the auspices of the ATRIUM + project) have already provided a creative base for educational exchanges, as is the W-Child project, with its focus on groups of students capturing and reflecting on oral histories. In both cases, it would be good to see these resurrected and developed further if possible, once COVID restrictions have finally been lifted.

Lastly at a university level, there is always a demand for 'live' projects and particularly where it generates substantial institutional-driven research. Therefore, the arrangement of internships whereby architecture students from the University of Oradea (Romania) and from

the Polytechnic University of Timisoara (Albania) in 2019 and 2020 were tasked with studying and surveying certain totalitarian-styled buildings in Ştei could surely be replicated on a larger scale perhaps elsewhere? A new network of architecture schools working across many of the Route's transnational partners could well secure access to new and additional educational funding that the Route itself would otherwise be excluded from.

In conclusion, the educational/youth activities of the Route are one of its key strengths. It has proven and established links with high schools and university partners and these provide excellent opportunities for many of the initiative and collaborations to be rolled out year after year and particularly where this is achieved by means of digital/social media deliverables. By doing so they deliver a constant programme of learning that will ensure that the legacies and histories surrounding the various totalitarian regimes across Europe will not be forgotten and importantly, this awareness is passed on from one generation to the next.

### **3.2.4. CONTEMPORAY CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE**

At first glance, perhaps, the Route's theme isn't a particularly good match for engaging with contemporary cultural and/or artistic practice. However in reality the ATRIUM project provides excellent opportunities for artists to deliver interesting and diverse responses to the subject of dissonant heritage; from utilizing existing buildings and sites for multiple artistic interpretations and site specific installations, through to hosting music, film, dance and drama events with the sites acting as an important, integral backdrop. In addition, and away from the buildings themselves, the individuals and collective stories associated with the development, use and later rejection of this totalitarian ideal provide avenues and further scope for the telling of more impassioned, animated and perhaps more personalised experiences.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic and associated lockdowns and social restrictions have seriously hindered opportunities for artistic practice and community engagement throughout 2020 with museums, galleries and theatres closed and collective public gatherings either banned completely or with strict limitations over numbers, access etc. However, where possible, attempts have been made to continue the dissemination and sharing of artistic output. "Die Mauer – Il Muro" (The Wall) is a theatrical play, the culmination of a three year research project. Following successful live performances in 2018/19 the play was subsequently developed into a film to coincide with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and whilst live-screening may have been curtailed due to COVID, the instigators have instead brokered a deal whereby the movie is now available via Amazon Prime Video.

Looking forward, post-Covid, the Route should consider actively engaging and collaborating with more individual artists and/or collectives. These artistic practitioners will in many cases have been adversely effected by COVID restrictions themselves and opportunities for new partnerships and commissions will be universally welcomed. In particular, addressing dissonant heritage through the work of conceptual artists whose own work can sometimes be difficult to fully comprehend might be challenging itself but potentially all the better for it.

### 3.2.5. CULTURAL TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sadly, but not surprisingly, the ATRIUM Route's ability to fully maximise its commitment to cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development has been substantially impacted since the beginning of 2020.

Initiatives and projects successfully implemented during 2018 and 2019 have mostly been on hold since then including a partnership with DEINA a non-profit association that would normally be offering school trips and study visits. Meanwhile, the implementation of the educational resource "ATRIUM GO!" – School Tours of Architecture and Power of the Twentieth Century" (a by-product of the ATRIUM Plus project funded under the auspices of Interreg Transnational Cooperation Programme) has inevitably been held back until the COVID situation improves. And, as the tourist economy is only now starting to re-establish itself, the future shape of tourism at all levels (local, regional, national and international) is still far from clear. So there is some justifiable hesitancy in proposing completely new products or schemes until the overall picture improves.

There is wide recognition amongst the industry that locally-focused tourism is likely to be the main winner, at least in the short to medium term. Here then, many of the activities pursued and delivered by ATRIUM and its partners in recent years are liable to be resurrected quite quickly in the context of a post-COVID world. The majority of the Route's cultural offers have mostly been targeted towards local/regional audiences or specialist niche groups and as access to many of the key locations are subject to physical limitations, perhaps because of health and safety concerns, the long term sustainability of some smaller sites could be an issue but one that the Route and its partners are all too aware of.

A substantial number of guided tours were being offered by partners in the lead up to the pandemic and with restrictions increasingly being lifted (at least in some locations) there is clear scope to not only resurrect these 'offers' but where possible to improve on them.

Providing unique or added-value experiences to otherwise traditional guided tours is 'on-trend' now and initiatives such as tours by communist tram in Iași, offered through the local Public Transport Company (in 2019 and 2020), or the dining-related, experiential guided tours offered by the Municipality of Predappio (in 2018) reflect new innovative approaches that could be further enhanced or modified to suit alternative locations. Elsewhere, 'self-guided tours', supported by online resources, is another trend that continues to see tremendous growth.

That's not to say that the role of the traditional 'guided tour' is being diminished, rather the 'self-guided' experience provides an additional option which will appeal to a certain audience. This could easily be a relatively simple and cost effective 'new product' based mostly on the 'verbal' content of the traditional guide and simply replicated in the form of traditional hand-outs, maps and itineraries (available through local tourist offices etc.), or provided digitally through new apps or enhanced, existing website content; there are plenty of examples where this has already been successfully achieved.

Where the traditional form of guided tours is likely remain central, perhaps through the promotion of (current) lesser known locations and sites, the delivery of a uniformly high standard of customer service remains fundamentally important. Moreover the guides themselves are uniquely placed to communicate and interpret to the public the otherwise conflicting views and contested values of dissonant heritage.



The training sessions aimed at tourist guides and tour operators' and their understanding of Rationalist architecture, developed through the ATRIUM Plus project (2018-2019) and similar, subsequent training organised by the Municipality of Tresignana in 2019, is recognition of the specific challenges faced by the partners in successfully interpreting and sharing what for many is still an uncomfortable, dissonant heritage.

Whilst digital and on-line marketing continues to grab an increasingly large share of available funds, more traditional methods of public engagement and promotion still have their place. Physical brochures, leaflets, maps and flyers advertising the Route's individual or collective activities remain invaluable and can be effective in emphasising specific issues such as the need to consider the (physical) vulnerability of certain sites. Regular feedback from tourist offices and other official distributors of the Route's marketing materials along with the public as 'customers' and 'end-users' of this information provide important and valuable evidence as to the suitability and effectiveness of all such documentation and what direction this should take going forward.

### **3.3. CULTURAL ROUTE NETWORK**

#### **3.3.1 OVERVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL/LEGAL STRUCTURE OF THE NETWORK**

The Route has its origins in the SEE-EU (South East Europe Transnational Cooperation) funded "Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX century in Europe's Urban Memory (ATRIUM) project, from 2011-13, and the eventual establishment of the ATRIUM Association in June 2013. The following year the Route gained acceptance from the Council of Europe as a European Cultural Route and following a positive evaluation report in 2018, ATRIUM's status as a recognised Route was extended for a further 3 year period taking it up to the present time, 2021.

The Route's activities are overseen by the ATRIUM Association, a non-profit organisation with its registered offices and headquarters located in Forli, Italy and as such its actions fall under the jurisdiction of Italian law.

Following the Association's establishment in 2013, its initial Statutes were amended in April 2014, with a subsequent amendment approved at the Association's General Assembly held in Lastovo-Ubli, Croatia on 16 May 2019. This was primarily as a result of a desire to strengthen the Route's cultural and scientific position, in particular to ensure that its anti-revisionist position was viewed as being more explicit.

The Statues provide clear evidence of how the Association is structured and how it seeks to undertake its business, from the eligibility criteria needed to join the organisation, through to the role and management expectations of the Board of Governors, President and Vice-President. Elsewhere, the Scientific Committee's primary responsibility is to assess the suitability of new applicants wishing to join the Association. Whilst a number of individual committee members have recently overseen the co-ordination of a series of online lectures and worked in support of two specific on-going EU funded projects, it does seem that a more coordinated and coherent approach by the Scientific Committee (as a whole) would help to shape the future direction of the Association, and by default, the Route.

The Statutes also refer to the contribution envisaged from the associated research networks and the non-profit institutions regarded as 'Friends of the Association'. In many instances this 'contribution' has been limited to specific projects and outputs and the Route accepts that a

failure to engage with many of these organisations on a more consistent level is a missed opportunity.

Meanwhile, and partly in accordance with Italian legislation, the Route's website provides information relating to the Association's governing body and management structure, minutes from the General Assemblies (although those from more recent meetings are not currently accessible online), activity plans and the results of regular financial auditing.

### **3.3.2. CURRENT COMPOSITION OF THE NETWORK BY COUNTRY AND TYPE OF MEMBER**

As of November 2021, membership of the ATRIUM Route comprises 19 Network members representing 5 countries – Italy (with Route headquarter in Forli), Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania. All 19 members are representative of local authorities and are a mix of very large cities such as Tirana and Iași (with populations of 500,000 and 300,000 respectively) through to very small towns such as Labin and Predappio, each with less than 7,000 residents.

Membership by nationality currently stands at: Albania (1 x partner), Bulgaria (1 x partner), Croatia (2 x partners), Italy (13 x partners) and Romania (2 x partners).

### **3.3.3. NETWORK EXTENSION SINCE THE LAST EVALUATION**

Since the last evaluation took place in early 2018 there has been some movement in Association membership with a total of 5 new partners being admitted as against the loss of two previous representatives; one larger partner, whose commitment to the project never really materialised and one much smaller authority, where a significant change in local administration was sufficient to justify its termination.

Applications to join the Association are first evaluated by members of the Scientific Committee and their approval then formally ratified by the Board at appropriate General Assemblies. Each of the new members (since 2018), satisfy the criteria of the Association as laid out under Article 7 of the Statutes. All add value to the scope and range of the Network and will themselves benefit from interacting with the Association. The last to join in 2020, Cervia, on the Adriatic coast is an example of a town 'reborn' and 'reshaped' by the creation of large holiday camps for workers' children. Meanwhile the remaining four (listed below with their accession dates) all help to diversify geographical coverage away from the Association's current core membership, in and around the Emilia Romagna region. These are:

- Carbonia: the only Sardinian-based partner; its mining heritage provides worthy comparisons with that of Labin in Croatia (2018)
- Merano: the northernmost Italian partner and significant because of Mussolini's drive to encourage Italians from the south of the country to relocate here and to elsewhere in the north (2018)
- Ștei: in Western Romania; an example of large scale Communist urban planning and comparable to Dimitrovgrad but in contrast to both Iași and Tirana with its mix of totalitarian and other architectural styles sitting side by side (2019)

- Mascali; the southernmost Italian partner. A Sicilian town whose urban landscape was uniquely shaped by Fascist ideals in the late 1920s following the destruction of the previous town due to the eruption of Mount Etna (2019)

### **3.3.4. STRATEGY FOR THE NETWORK EXTENSION IN THE THREE YEARS TO COME**

At the time of the last evaluation, 11 out of 16 members were Italian-based, representing around two-thirds of total membership. As of late 2021, that figure is now 13 out of 19 members, and as a percentage is roughly the same as before.

Since its inception back in 2013, Italian partners have continually dominated and whilst official communications and operational documents are drawn up and sent in English it is understandable that much inter-partner communication is carried out in Italian and the online General Assembly held on the 26 October was a mix of English and Italian facilitated by use of interpreters.

There is clear recognition that the number of potential new Italian partners, going forward, is likely to very limited as the most obvious ones will either have joined or have been approached over the last eight years since the Association's inception. That said an application from Cesna, close to Forli, is likely to be considered in the near future. There would still appear to be room for growth with additional partners from countries already represented in the Network and contact with two potential members, Pemet and Gjrokaster (both Albania) has also been made and an application by one or both could be forthcoming in the months to come.

However, as previously highlighted in the 2018 evaluation, the Association continue to seek out new partners and particularly where these represent areas of Europe, close geographically but not otherwise represented, so countries such as Poland, Germany, Hungary, Serbia and the Czech Republic. Further afield destinations in both Spain and Portugal offer potential for future collaboration too.

Interestingly, the Association has indicated that universities and research centres are relatively easy to reach and engage with and are often very interested in collaborating with ATRIUM and its projects as these can support and enhance on-going areas of academic study. By contrast, relationships with local municipalities and larger regional governments can often take time to build. Sometimes trying to identify the right champion in the right department can be surprisingly difficult and if there are (political) changes to the administrations and a refocusing on priorities, reductions in allocated funding etc. this can have understandable consequences for externally managed organisations such as ATRIUM.

## **3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS**

### **3.4.1. CURRENT STATE OF COMMUNICATION TOOLS DEVELOPED BY THE NETWORK ETC.**

The Route's website remains the most important communication tool employed by the Association and it continues to act as a key knowledge platform, a showcase for Network partners, and a means to promote cultural-related tourism.

According to the ATRIUM headquarters in Forli, the website has been substantially overhauled since 2018 and partly as result of observations and recommendations made following the last evaluation, much consideration has been given over to recognizing the need for non-celebrative language when communicating/explaining the Route's dissonant heritage.

Although the overall design of the website is relatively simple it provides a wealth of information, much of which is unique to the site and should appeal to both generalists (with links to tourist resources, where available) and to specialists, thanks to an extensive and growing list of relevant scientific papers and other academic outputs. Whilst the majority of the site's content is in English (the working language of the Route), overall accessibility has improved since the last evaluation with the 'About Us' section now fully translated into the partner languages of Italian, Croatian, Romanian and Bulgarian, alongside French.

The site also provides links to the Association's social media platforms and there is every likelihood that these online resources will play a far greater role in promoting the Route's activities in the months and years to come. These platforms are:

- Facebook. It has had a dedicated page here since August 2017 and now has 600+ followers. It is used as an effective tool in promoting and sharing the ongoing activities of the various projects that the Route contributes too and is likely to be most effective social media platform going forward
- Instagram. Just 30 posts from the Route but with almost 200 followers. Posts are a combination of architectural imagery coupled with the occasional ATRIUM activity, such as guided tours. Whether this 'mixed' approach to posts is particularly effective remains to be seen?
- YouTube. Just under 30 video posts with the latest ones all summer 2019 or before. Along with Facebook this could be a significant platform for the Route but requires regular, video content to be uploaded and this maybe beyond the Route's capabilities right now
- LinkedIn. Despite having just 75 current followers, the platform's focus on professional/ business content could be particularly useful if content (perhaps from its Facebook posts) could be edited to satisfy the noticeably different demographic of a LinkedIn user. (At the time of writing, November 2021, the ATRIUM website does not seemingly provide a connecting link to its LinkedIn account)

Elsewhere, the idea of implementing a unified series of 'traditional' road signs across the entire Route to waymark sites of interest has long been viewed as a potentially effective communication tool. Unfortunately there has been little progress since the last evaluation with difficulties over an agreed design format and issues concerning local planning regulations being cited as the main issues.

The city of Labin (Croatia) had implemented ATRIUM signposting on its own architectural heritage back in 2015 whilst in Merano this remains limited to a single plaque on the wall of the Municipality. More recently Forli has managed to install some directional road signs which reference the city's ATRIUM heritage but it remains the responsibility of local actors to pursue what can be done within existing legal frameworks. In this respect the roll-out of digital QR codes as 'way markers' at relevant locations across the entire Route is a much simpler and cheaper option to implement and is still being pursued. QR codes not only afford

increased public accessibility to a location but can also deliver enhanced information and content.

Finally, at the last evaluation, reference was made the Route's 'digital catalogue and it was noted that this was "currently subject for debate" with "an update being considered". As of late 2021, no formal decision has been made in this regard.

However, the Route's on-going involvement with the WalkEur project (an 'EU-Creative Europe Programme') could go some way to addressing this outstanding issue. The four main pillars of the WalkEur project are: Sources, Citizens involvement, Cultural management and Cultural marketing and storytelling. Within the project, activities are set to encompass "digitisation through training and capacity building, exchange of experiences, pilot actions and the development of a guide to help promote synergies and new working methodologies in these fields among the routes". With this in mind, there are clear opportunities to identify and work alongside sympathetic existing organisations, libraries, archives etc. who are perhaps better equipped to formulate plans for the development and dissemination of any sort of new digital catalogue for the Route.

### **3.4.2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE LOGO "CULTURAL ROUTES FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE"**

From evidence submitted and following further additional research the Route's own printed materials including brochures, reports and agendas, programmes and press releases comply with the regulations concerning the use of the 'Cultural Route of the Council of Europe' logo as outlined in the updated CoE Guidelines (November 2019). Overseeing materials published by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party organisations at which ATRIUM has a presence (such as at conferences or seminars) is far less easy to control but where possible the use of the Council of Europe logo is fully encouraged.

On the Route's website the Council of Europe's official logo occupies a clear and prominent position alongside the ATRIUM logo and is static a feature - a constant presence on each 'clickable' web page.

However, the reciprocal use of the 'logo' and reference to the activities of the ATRIUM Association in the official commune/municipality websites of the various partners is mostly absent, despite the best efforts of the Route's representatives. Ultimately this situation is at the behest of those responsible for the content of each local authority website and it is understandable that priority content will always focus on the essential, critical services one would expect to find, such as civil protection, infrastructure, schools, social care, tax collection etc.

Meanwhile, regional tourist agencies are much more likely to be sympathetic to including content relating to the Route's key sites; a good example being the Rationalist architecture of Castrocaro Terme via <https://emiliaromagnaturismo.it/en/search?q=Rationalist> although here too the decision has clearly been taken to exclude any direct reference to the Route. Once again these reflect agenda decisions that are mostly out-with the control of the Association itself.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **i. List of Eligibility Criteria for Themes:**

“ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe’s Urban Memory” continues to reflect the historical and present day social and cultural values as expressed by the Council of Europe. Through its awareness raising of the tangible and intangible heritage associated with Europe’s totalitarian regime, ATRIUM remains a valued and justifiable European Cultural Route.

Ultimately the Association and the activities of the Route seeks to put forward values of democracy that clearly identify with the principles expressed in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In its Statutes, the Association’s principles are explicitly outlined stating that, in no way does it [the Association] “accept expressions and forms of exculpation for totalitarian, dictatorial, authoritarian or non-democratic governments” .

### **ii. List of Priority Fields of Action:**

Not surprisingly the task of educating the public and particularly the youth of today is critical to the success of the Route through its exploration and sharing of historical elements linked to the dissonant, mostly urban built heritage associated with both Fascist and Communist-led societies. Going forward the Route needs to build on these early successes by:

- continuing to work in partnership with schools and youth groups, across multiple nationalities
- looking at ways that new creative approaches to the subject of a dissonant heritage can offer fresh insights into the subject
- building on existing networks and professional expertise, through academia and research or through the encouragement and support of heritage restoration/re-use projects
- supporting local economies, by means of developing a perhaps unique ‘cultural offer’ that can enhance existing tourist activities and attractions.

The Route is in a fortunate position that the theme of the subject continues to be explored within academic/research circles well beyond the extent of the Route itself. Therefore its Scientific Committee should consider taking a more active role in recommending future research activities and this would help to re-energise relationships with many of the institutions currently listed as part of the Academic Network. This in turn should increase the visibility of the Route and provide new and previously untapped sources of financial support.

Elsewhere, the Route is also well placed to contribute to a wider debate centred around the restoration of historic buildings (from all periods in history) and the sometimes difficult problem of providing suitable new-uses for sites that are no longer fit for their original purpose. These issues can often be complex and the Route has the advantage of past experience working in support of those tasked with justifying the restoration of buildings that because of their past histories might not be universally loved.

Concerns about the wider (European) Urban Agenda is something that the Route has been engaged with since the outset. However, with the recent launch of a specific project looking at the Urban Agenda across the EU, and with a specific action addressing ‘Integrated approaches to Dissonant heritage, the Route has every opportunity make significant contributions to the debate at a pan-European level and in doing so this will disseminate the Route’s activities and actions to a much wider audience.

The enhancement of memory and history is a key element that ATRIUM does well, bringing 'people and places' together whether it's through an active involvement with the promotion of European Heritage Days or ensuring that local communities are fully consulted with projects that will directly impact them as with the Foro Boario in Forli or the restored Casa del Fascio in Predappio.

In terms of cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, the Route continues to deliver a number of interesting outputs and although many of these have been deferred due to COVID it is hoped that most can be resurrected. It will be important to evaluate their eventual implementation and to consider the practicalities/benefits of any new initiatives in a post-pandemic world.

Meanwhile opportunities for contemporary cultural and artistic practice should also hopefully see signs of improvement, post-pandemic. Past activities have mainly focused on film, dance and theatre but there seems to be a missed opportunity for engaging with more visual artists, whose work might focus on site-specific installations or where it draws inspiration from the wider landscape. This could be remedied by instigating conversations with various art schools/art academies or even artist collectives.

There is still a great deal of uncertainty concerning the extent to which cultural tourism and tourism in general rebounds post-COVID. Sustainable cultural development is likely to remain a priority and for ATRIUM's individual members, regular engagement with local and regional tourist agencies and even tour operators is critical so as to identify potential gaps in the 'market' thereby ensuring that any new products/activities are able to meet their potential. Here the Network might find it advantageous to consider contacting a number of external organisations who have been involved with promoting so-called 'Dark Tourism', where the telling of sometimes objectionable histories are presented honestly and dispassionately.

### **iii. List of Criteria for Networks:**

Whilst there has been a little movement in members joining or leaving the Route since the last evaluation, Italian partners continue to dominate and it remains highly preferable that the Network continues to seek out new partners from beyond Italy to address what might be perceived as an imbalance.

Understandably, this can be a timely and demanding exercise (particularly when trying to connect with larger local authorities) or when dealing with complex funding applications and ultimately much of this workload is currently directed at the Association headquarters in Forli, its small pool of volunteer contributors and development officers, and the individual efforts from members of the Steering Committee. This may need to be addressed at some point and the creation of a Strategic Plan would be helpful in formalising future duties and responsibilities. A simple SWOT analysis outlining the perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as the Route moves forward would also be useful and might in itself reveal the need to consider less 'unpaid' positions and a slight increase in 'salaried' staff?

As far as communication tools are concerned, a clear and concise communication strategy that draws on the needs and views of all Network partners is currently lacking. However, ATRIUM is one of six Cultural Routes participating in the Erasmus+ funded 'FAB Routes' project. Here one of the key objectives is to professionalise the day to day management of all participating Routes and includes the desire to develop individual communication strategies. This would be particularly useful to ATRIUM, allowing for a more structured, focussed approach as to how it disseminates its activities. Such a strategy would be valuable in considering the implications for the previously proposed 'signposting' initiative (which

remains ongoing) and whether the pursuit of a so-called digital-catalogue (beyond content currently available on the website) is feasible, or whether this idea should be deferred to a third party organisation such as an independent archive?

Meanwhile, the ATRIUM website remains the central focus for the Route’s activities and having implemented the recommendations from the last evaluation, with reference to the need for additional languages and the layout of themes), it now provides a clear and extensive knowledge platform.

Overall, the Route continues to build on its previous successes and although COVID has inevitably limited much of its public facing activities in the past 18 months these, and a number of ongoing projects, provide a valuable foundation for future activities.

In conclusion, the ATRIUM Route is increasingly well respected amongst its peers and is becoming a regular and important contributor to the debate around dissonant heritage at a Europe-wide level. These observations along with its general compliance of the criteria outlined in the evaluation process provide sufficient evidence, in the eyes of the current evaluator, to support the awarding of Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certification to ATRIUM – Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe’s Urban Memory”.

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2017-2018	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation?		Recommendations current evaluation 2021-2022
			YES	NO	
<b>I. Cultural route theme</b>		To increase the visibility and to reorganise key themes/sections on the website and to introduce other languages were possible.	<b>Yes</b> (fully)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>II. Priority fields of action</b>	<b>Cooperation in research and development</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Actively consider greater involvement of the Scientific Committee; initiating/recommending new research activities, and re-engaging with many of the institutions on the Route’s Academic Network list.
	<b>Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider engaging with relevant art schools/artist collectives etc., so as to increase participation from	



					practitioners in the field of the visual arts.
	<b>Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development</b>	Consider the benefits of a greater (visual) digital presence on the Route's website and other partner sites. (Note: this has now transpired into discussions centred around the possibility of a separate digital archive.)	<b>No</b> (change of focus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>III. Cultural Route Network</b>		Greater sharing of tasks and responsibilities. (Note: only limited signs of this being widely implemented)	<b>No</b> (only partially)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Look at increasing membership, primarily from countries and regions not otherwise involved, but recognising the increased workload that this can create.  Formulate a 3-year Strategic Plan that outlines priorities and allocation of all tasks.  Also, formulate a 'SWOT' analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses and possible threats to the Route's future success.
<b>Communication Tools</b>		Implementation of common Route signposting. (Note: very little progress due to external factors, planning regulations etc. The benefits of using QR codes now being considered instead.)	<b>No</b> (change of focus)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Create a 'Communication Strategy' that outlines the key priorities for the dissemination/promotion of all individual and group-based Route activities.

## 5. LIST OF REFERENCES

Working documents supplied by the Cultural Route:

- Certification Form
- Network Governance - including list of members
- Financial and Human Resources – including projects financed in the past 3 years
- Conformity with Eligibility Criteria for Themes
- Activities Implemented by the Network during the last 3 years
- Visibility
- Publications
- Economic and Tourist Impact of the Cultural Route
- Financial accounts, with explanatory notes, 2018-2020
- Provincial Activity Plan 2021-2023
- Provincial Budget for 2021-2023
- Self-Assessment Grid
- Previous Evaluation report 2017-2018
- Minutes of General Assemblies 2018-2020
- Annex to Certification Form
- Annex 2 – Network Information
- List of Enclosures (81 documents)

Selected Web Resources consulted:

- <https://www.atriumroutes.eu>
- <https://www.facebook.com/atriumtransnationalroute>
- <https://www.instagram.com/atriumroute/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeOYMsPaD5Eq9u7boqsWnNw/videos>
- <https://www.totallylost.eu/space/>
- <https://comeinforli.it>
- [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fratta\\_Terne](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fratta_Terne)
- <https://www.intoalbania.com/attraction/house-studio-kadare/>
- <https://buzludzha-monument.com/>
- <https://www.hisour.com/totalitarian-architecture-29773/>
- <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/gallery/fascist-architecture-through-ages>
- <https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/>
- <https://www.urbanagendaplatform.org/about>
- <https://www.una-europa.eu/>
- <https://www.projectrevival.eu/en>
- <https://www.docomomo.com/news/other/call/call-for-papers-eda-special-issue-2021-totalitarian-architecture-and-urban-planning-history-and-legacy>
- <https://www.dark-tourism.com>

## 6. ANNEX 1. (Expert Field Visit and/or Online Interviews with the Network Management and Members)

### Interviews Held:

Yasho Minkov (Network Steering Committee member/City of Dimitrovgrad)  
[y.minkov@dimitrovgrad.bg](mailto:y.minkov@dimitrovgrad.bg)  
Zoom interview: 5 November 2021

John Patrick Leech (Network President/University of Bologna)  
[johnpatrick.leech@unibo.it](mailto:johnpatrick.leech@unibo.it)  
Zoom interview: 10 November 2021

Ramona Novicov (Network Steering Committee member/University of Oradea, Romania)  
[ramona.novicov@gmail.com](mailto:ramona.novicov@gmail.com)  
Zoom interview: 18 November 2021

Alessia Mariotti (Scientific Committee member/University of Bologna)  
[alessiamariotti@unibo.it](mailto:alessiamariotti@unibo.it)  
Zoom interview: 1 December 2021

Stephen Gundle (Scientific Committee member/University of Warwick, UK)  
[s.gundle@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:s.gundle@warwick.ac.uk)  
Zoom interview: 2 December 2021

### Additional Online Engagement:

“Slow or Eco-Designed Cultural Tourism” (Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Hungary) conference, 13-14 October, 2021. (presentation from ATRIUM president). Online attendee.

“1<sup>st</sup> Transnational Training for Training programme” – part of the ‘WalkEur project’. Hosted (in person and online) by ATRIUM, Forlì. 18-22 October, 2021. Online attendee.

ATRIUM Extraordinary General (online but with Italian/English translation). Chaired by Network president, 26 October, 2021. Online attendee.

## 7. ANNEX 2. Expert Assessment Checklist

EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST							
QUESTIONS					Yes	No	Comments (if any)
3.1 THEME	1	Does the theme of the Route represent a common value (historical, cultural, or heritage) to several European countries?	Y				
	2	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges?	Y				
	3	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for innovative activities?	Y				
	4	Does the theme of the route offer a solid basis for cultural tourism products development?	Y				
	5	Has the theme been researched/ developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	Y				
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development	6	Does the Route offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	Y			
		7	Does the Route play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	Y			
		8	Does the Route show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	Y			
		9	Does the Route illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	Y			
		10	Does the Route have a network of universities and research centre working on its theme at the European level?	Y		This could be developed further	
		11	Does the Route have a multidisciplinary Scientific Committee?	Y			
		12	Does the Scientific Committee work on its theme at the European level?	Y			
		13	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the theoretical level?	Y			
		14	Does the Scientific Committee carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on the practical level?	Y			
	3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage	15	Do the Route activities take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	Y			
		16	Do the Route activities promote the values of the Council of Europe?	Y			
		17	Do the Route activities promote the brand of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe?	Y			
		18	Does the route work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	Y			
		19	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	Y			
		20	Do the Route activities identify, preserve and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	Y			
		21	Do the Route activities valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?	Y			
		22	Do the Route activities contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	Y			

		23	Do the Route activities enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	Y		
		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, ...)?	Y		
	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?	Y		
		26	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	Y		
		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?	Y		
		28	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	Y		
		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?	Y		
		30	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	Y		
		31	Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	Y		
	3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice	32	Do the Route's cultural activities promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?		N	Current activities are almost exclusively set against a local or regional context. However, engagement with artist collectives could provide opportunities for transnational collaboration
		33	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage artistic projects that establish links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	Y		
		34	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	Y		A greater engagement with visual artists – perhaps with an interest in site-specific works should be encouraged
		35	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?***	Y		
		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?		N	Current activities are almost exclusively set against a local or regional context. However, engagement with artist collectives could provide opportunities for transnational collaboration
		37	Do the Route's cultural activities encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?	Y		
		38	Do the Route's cultural activities highlight the most innovative and creative practices?	Y		
		39	Do the Route's cultural activities link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***	Y		
	3.2.5 Cultural tourism	40	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development) assist in local, regional, national and/ or European identity formation?	Y		

	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?	Y		
	42	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between urban and rural communities and cultures?	Y		
	43	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between developed and disadvantaged regions?	Y		
	44	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between different regions (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	Y		Currently South and east only, but opportunities exist to the West of Europe with possible opportunities linked to Spain and Portugal.
	45	Do the Route's activities promote dialogue between majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?		N	Not relevant in this context
	46	Do the Route's activities open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?	Y		This could be explored further with potential links to totalitarian regimes in Asia and South America perhaps?
	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?	Y		
	48	Do the Route's activities aim to diversify cultural product, service and activities offers?	Y		
	49	Do the Route's activities develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	Y		
	50	Do the Route's activities develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	Y		
	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?		N	Nothing specific right now
3.4 CO MM UNI CA TIO N TO	52	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	Y		
	53	Was the theme of the route chosen and accepted by the network members?	Y		
	54	Was the conceptual framework of the route founded on a scientific basis?	Y		
	55	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its projects?	Y		There is clear scope to increase membership beyond the current 5 member states
	56	Is the network financially sustainable?	Y		
	57	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	Y		
	58	Does the network operate democratically?	Y		
	59	Does the network specify its objectives and working methods?	Y		
	60	Does the network specify the regions concerned by the project?	Y		
	61	Does the network specify its partners and participating countries?	Y		
	62	Does the network specify the fields of action involved?	Y		
	63	Does the network specify its overall strategy in the short and long term?		N	The formulation of a Strategic Plan would provide clarity and a clearer vision.
	64	Does the network identify potential participants and partners in Council of Europe member states and/or other world countries?	Y		Opportunities exist for increased (permanent) membership and for short-term project collaboration within Europe and beyond
	65	Does the network provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	Y		
	66	Does the network provide details of its operational plan?	Y		The provision of a Strategic Plan would help to shape future operational plans
	67	Does the network append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?	Y		
	68	Does the Route have its own logo?	Y		

		69	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?	Y		Mostly yes, but sometimes when local authority organisations are involved, it is deemed inappropriate, and out with the control of local partners
		70	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	Y		
		71	Is it the website available in English and French?	Y		Primarily in English but following recommendations from the last evaluation, the 'About Us' section is now available in all native languages of the partners, plus French
		72	Is it the website available in other languages?	Y		See above
		73	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	Y		This could be better targeted (see evaluation comments above)
		74	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	Y		
		75	If yes, are the brochures available in English?	Y		
		76	If yes, are the brochures available in French?		N	
	For certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe only	77	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?	Y		
		78	Is the certification logo present on all communication materials?	Y		
		79	Is the certification logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	Y		
		80	Are the logos (Cultural Route + certification logo) provided to all the members of the Route?	Y		
		81	Does the Council of Europe certification logo appear on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?	Y		Although currently there is only limited provision for road signage
SCORE				75	6	
			<i>Note:</i>			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			