Cultural Routes
signposting
Guidelines for signposting along the Cultural Routes in the EU macro-regions

Routes4U Project

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Council of Europe

Contents

1. Introduction

A s of 2019, there are 38 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. Of these routes, 35 have members that are located in countries covered by the European Union strategies for the macro-regions (Adriatic and Ionian Region, Alpine Region, Baltic Sea Region, Danube Region).

Defining the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

A certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is "a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values".[1]

▶ Cultural Routes are transnational networks with legal status certified by the Council of Europe in which at least three entities from different European countries participate. The network partners carry out a vast range of activities in the academic, educational and artistic fields.

▶ Each Cultural Route is based on a European theme bringing together tangible, intangible and natural heritage that are common to several countries and represent European values.

▶ Depending on the geographical distribution of the heritage, Cultural Routes can be classified as linear routes presenting linear patterns, reticular routes with geographically separated elements or territorial routes involving territories presenting one common theme or character.

▶ Cultural Routes are landscapes, that is dynamic areas in which people live and interact with the surrounding nature.

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1. Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA).

According to Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification " following the award of the certification, the entire mention 'Cultural Route of the Council of Europe' and the logo of the Council of Europe must be placed on all communication material, including press releases.

Whenever possible, the certification accompanied by the Council of Europe logo must appear on road signs and boards indicating the cultural route."[2] The latter rule may be especially difficult to follow because Cultural Routes are transnational networks and as such, they face different regulations for signposting in every country they cross. For example, according to the European Ramblers' Association (ERA), four regions with different waymarking systems can be found in Europe (see map below).

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2.   Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification.
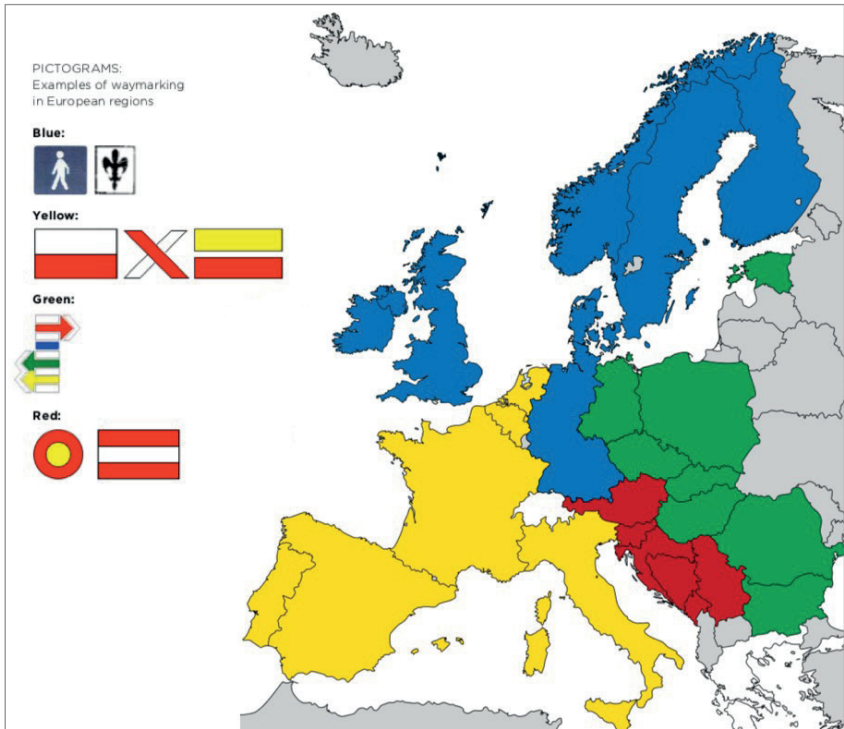
Source: European Ramblers' Association (2017), Waymarking in Europe 2017, p. 5.

Although this map mainly concerns the waymarking practices for hikers, it is evident that the rules for signposting in the Alpine, Danube, Baltic Sea and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regions are quite heterogenous.

The aim of this manual is to present an overview of existing policies for signposting in each macro-region and at European level as well as good practices for handling the different legal requirements, taking the example of one Cultural Route in each region. As Cultural Routes favour sustainable forms of mobility, this manual focuses mainly on signposting guidelines for non-motorised traffic. The following section deals with the purpose of signage in cultural tourism. The document concludes with the formulation of concrete and practical guidelines for implementing signage in the context of Cultural Routes.

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2. The purpose of signposting Cultural Routes

Signposting or signage is considered to be the most important way of directing visitors.[3] Although policies regarding signage in tourism are usually drawn up at national level, their coherence, centralisation and co-ordination may vary substantially between European countries and the forms of mobility they concern (for example, there are different rules for roads and for hiking trails). Among the competent bodies in charge of adopting and implementing visitor signage are national tourism offices, tourism ministries or other government departments, national associations (for hikers, cyclists and so on), local and regional authorities or tourism stakeholders and land owners.[4]

There are various types of signage that can serve to show the way (directional signage), to inform or to restrict.

- ► **Signposts** help with orientation by indicating a nearby destination – either with a single signpost or several signposts until the destination is reached. They are normally put up at junctions, entries and intersections.

- ► **Information and orientation boards** represent, for example, one or several maps showing tourist attractions in the area or on the routes, but they can also convey more complex content such as historical background information. They are often placed at the entrance to tourist areas, central locations and junctions.

- ► **Mandatory signs and prohibition signs** indicate restrictions. Mandatory signs indicate required behaviour (for example suggesting that visitors push a bike instead of riding it), whereas prohibition signs explicitly exclude certain types of behaviour, or deny access or use for individuals or groups.[5]

Signposting is either destination- or route-oriented. Destination-oriented signposting guides tourists along the shortest possible route to a specific place. The destination is shown from different directions, therefore, the route guidance begins at different starting points. In the case of route-oriented signposting, tourists are guided to selected destinations. The aim is to keep the visitor on a particular route such as the transregional hiking trails.[6]

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3. Groß S. (2017), *Handbuch Tourismus und Verkehr. Verkehrsunternehmen, Strategien und Konzepte*, UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2nd edn, p. 154.
4.. UNWTO (2001), *Tourism signs and symbols. A Status Report and Guidebook*, p. 43.
5. Groß S. (2017), pp.466-467.
6.. Ibid., p. 469.

The following list presents the advantages of signposting Cultural Routes.[7]

► **Spatial accessibility**: a well-developed signage system provides orientation and information and guarantees a fast and safe arrival at a destination, especially for tourists lacking local knowledge.

► **Discovery of new destinations**: signage promotes and strengthens the visibility of Cultural Routes and can therefore raise awareness of the routes to locals and tourists.

► **Generation of economic effects**: visitors who are unfamiliar with an area can find information and guidance on sights and tourist facilities more efficiently. As a result, their satisfaction with their visit may be higher, which may increase the probability of another visit.

► **Unified brand**: common quality and design standards for signposting along the sites, paths and monuments of Cultural Routes create links between these often geographically scattered places and make the routes internationally recognisable. In this way, signage contributes to the creation of a strong brand.

► **Hospitality**: guidance systems can replace travel literature and/or maps and they signal to the local population that tourism in the region is wanted and encouraged.

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7.   Some items in this list are taken from Groß S. (2017), pp. 460-461.

3. Case studies: signposting of Cultural Routes in the Alpine, Danube, Baltic Sea and Adriatic-Ionian macro-regions

3.1. Case study for the Alpine Region: Via Francigena[8]

Source: Via Francigena (2019), p.4.

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8. Unless otherwise indicated the information in this sub-chapter stems from an interview conducted with Luca Bruschi, Director of the European Association of the Via Francigena, on 26 April 2019.

©*Via Francigena*

A Cultural Route of the Council of Europe since 1994, the Via Francigena is an ancient pilgrim trail leading from Canterbury to Rome, crossing 13 regions in four European countries (United Kingdom, France, Switzerland and Italy).[9] In the near future, the route will probably be extended as far as Puglia (in the direction of Jerusalem). The section called "Via Francigena of the South" will cross the regions of Campania, Molise, Basilicata and Puglia. The macro-regional part of the Via Francigena involves 20 members (13 in Italy, four in France, three in Switzerland) which are either cities/municipalities or regions (see figures below).

Number of members of the Via Francigena in the Alpine Region

Switzerland	3
Slovenia	0
Liechtenstein	0
Italy	13
Germany	0
France	4
Austria	0

Types of members of the Via Francigena in the Alpine Region

City/Municipality 17 Region 3

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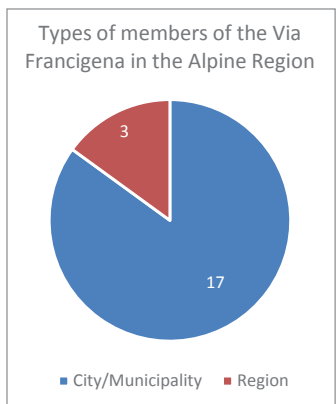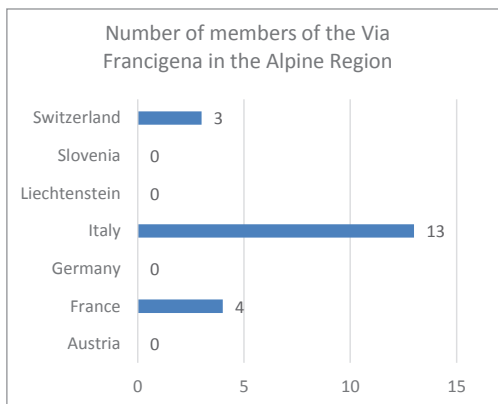
9.   The Via Francigena passes through the following regions: United Kingdom: Kent; France: Nord Pas de Calais-Picardie, Champagne-Ardenne, *Bourgogne-Franche-Comté*; in Switzerland: *Vaud, Valais*; in Italy: *Aosta Valley*, *Piedmont*, *Lombardy*, Emilia-Romagna, *Liguria*, Tuscany, Lazio (regions that belong to the Alpine Region are in italics). See www.viefrancigene.org/en/AEVF/comitato-europeo/, accessed 25 October 2019.

The route is managed by the European Association of the Via Francigena (EAVF), which gathers more than 150 local and regional authorities and co-ordinates the stakeholders of the Via Francigena at local, regional, national and European levels.[10] Two representatives from each member region form the European Committee for Technical Interregional Coordination (ECTIC) of the Via Francigena. In the Memorandum of Understanding among the regions of the Via Francigena – Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, the ECTIC lists the objective to "strengthen signposting relating to the official Via Francigena (the one certified by the Council of Europe) in order to avoid misunderstanding and confusion with the other routes to Rome, and with other national or local routes".[11]

The signage activities of the Via Francigena follow the vademecum "Guidance on European common path and accommodation standards on the Via Francigena",[12] which was jointly written by the EAVF and the European regions of the ECTIC, in close co-operation with national and local associations as well as the ERA.

> This Guidance sets out the shared and common quality standard[s] which are essential to guarantee safety and access throughout the whole route. This Guidance provides guidelines for planning and implementing the route, for its maintenance-related activities, its signposting and the organization of the accommodation along the route, within a participatory planning framework which is respectful of the levels of responsibilities among the bodies concerned.[13]

The development of the vademecum took about 18 months and included a range of partners in the four countries crossed by the Via Francigena. However, the following explanations will focus on the development of the common visual standards for the signposting. A two-level approach was used when drafting the document. On the one hand, the EAVF entered into negotiations with the respective national bodies in charge of signposting (see below for more details) in order to reach a compromise for a common visual signage standard despite the different regulations. Although the signposts vary among the four countries, some visual elements are now featured transnationally. This concerns especially the image of the (mostly) yellow pilgrim, the official logo of the Via Francigena which has been registered, among other things, for sign-related purposes and which contributes to the route's international recognisability.

The regions of the ECTIC were consulted and shared good practices regarding their signage activities. Subsequently a draft version of the vademecum was distributed for revision to the various local and regional authorities and associations (volunteers and hikers) belonging to the network of the Via Francigena. A final version of the guidance was developed and approved for all the countries in 2015. It is important to underline that this document remains open for future changes and is regularly revised. A second

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10. See www.viefrancigene.org/static/uploads/mou_en_final.pdf
11. Ibid.
12. See www.viefrancigene.org/static/uploads/vademecum_hd_en_ld_web_(2).pdf, accessed 25 October 2019.
13. Via Francigena (2019), "Guidance on European common path and accommodation standards on the Via Francigena", ibid., p. 5.

edition of the vademecum was published in 2019 from which the following general provisions on common visual standards for the signposting along the Via Francigena are taken:

"Signage is ruled differently in the four countries crossed by the Via Francigena, therefore different characteristics feature it in every country. Nevertheless common visual elements can be used as they are in compliance with national laws while providing a European visual coherent image. The European Committee for Technical Interregional Coordination recommends the use of common visual standards for European signposting of the Via Francigena, as specified here below:

ROAD SIGNS:

- ► Name of the cultural route 'Via Francigena' or
- ► The yellow pilgrim logo (with the Council of Europe flag)

HIKING SIGNS:

- ► Name of the cultural route 'Via Francigena' or
- ► The yellow pilgrim (with the Council of Europe flag) or black pilgrim symbol

STICKERS, PAINTED SIGNS AND OTHER SIMPLE SIGNS:

- ► Acronym of the cultural route, 'VF' or
- ► The yellow or black pilgrim symbol or
- ► Complete name of the cultural route 'Via Francigena'.

At the entrance of every municipality crossed by the certified route, the Committee recommends the use of the signpost 'City on the Via Francigena.'"[14]

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14.   Ibid., p. 25.

Responsible bodies for the implementation and maintenance of the signposting of the Via Francigena

Beside their involvement in the development of the transnational visual standards for the signposting of the Via Francigena, the different national bodies also agreed to participate in the maintenance of the signage along the Cultural Route that often runs along existing national hiking trails. The role of the EAVF with regard to the implementation and maintenance of the signposting is to co-ordinate the work at local and national levels. Moreover, the Cultural Route provides free signage stickers but does not allocate any funds for this purpose. The Cultural Route is also an import contact point for travellers that report via the route's online channels about problems along the path or missing signage.

The specific characteristics of each country crossed by the Via Francigena regarding signposting of footpaths and/or hiking trails are in the following paragraphs. Regulations dealing with cycle and road signs will not be considered because they can vary greatly from those for walkers, who make up the majority of visitors to the Via Francigena.[15]

In the United Kingdom

The section of the Via Francigena in the United Kingdom (Canterbury to Dover) belongs to the National Trails of England and, more particularly, to the North Downs Way, which therefore is responsible for the signposting and its maintenance. The physical maintenance of the path is guaranteed by the Public Rights of Way teams in Kent and Surrey.[16]

In France

In France, the Via Francigena leads from Calais to the Franco-Swiss border (Les Fourgs) and is part of the Grande Randonné (GR®) hiking trails network. GR® trails are designed and approved by the French Federation of Hiking (Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre, (FFRP)) which is represented by 115 regional committees and hiking departments, bringing together 3 500 associations or local clubs.[17] The signage on these itineraries is governed by two official charters: La Charte Officielle du Balisage et de la Signalisation and Charte technique and graphique.[18] They provide

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15. Bruschi, Luca (2017), "Walking on the Via Francigena. Analysis and consideration", see www. viefrancigene.org/en/resource/news/chi-si-mette-cammino-sulla-francigena-analisi-e-ri/, accessed 25 October 2019. The cycle route of the Via Francigena is for the moment only developed and signposted between the Great St Bernard Pass in Switzerland and Rome. The existing signage mostly consists of adhesive bands and white-blue arrows, with the writing "CicloVia Francigena" and/or the symbol of the pilgrim enclosed by a bike wheel. See www. viefrancigene.org/en/segnaletica/ciclovia/, accessed 25 October 2019.
16. See www.nationaltrail.co.uk/north-downs-way/information, accessed 25 October 2019.
17. See www.ffrandonnee.fr/_11/missions.aspx, accessed 25 October 2019.
18. See www.ffrandonnee.fr/data/itineraires-balisage/file/Charte_Officielle_Balisage_Signalisation_2006.pdf and www.ffrandonnee.fr/data/itineraires-balisage/file/charte-technique-balisage.pdf, accessed 25 October 2019.

consistency throughout the territory and guarantee the quality of materials and manufacturing processes (respect of the trail environment, durability of materials and colours used, etc.).[19]

The Via Francigena is marked as GR145® following the official rules for GR® signage (two superimposed rectangles of white and red) and sometimes combined with the pilgrim logo.[20] The maintenance of the Via Francigena/GR145® is the responsibility of the FFRP, in co-operation with its local and regional partners.

In Switzerland

The Swiss section of the Via Francigena runs along SwitzerlandMobility route 70 (two-digit numbers indicate regional routes). SwitzerlandMobility is the "national network for non-motorized traffic (hiking, cycling, mountain biking, skating, canoeing, winter hiking, snowshoe trekking, cross-country skiing, sledging) in particular in the leisure and tourism fields".[21] Its routes are uniformly signposted throughout the country following the Swiss norms (SN 640 829),[22] the only international norm for standard signalisation of non-motorised traffic.[23] The development and maintenance of pedestrian paths and hiking trails in Switzerland is subject to the federal law of 4 October 1985 (Loi fédérale sur les chemins pour piétons et les chemins de randonnée pédestre, (LCPR)).[24] According to this law, the cantons are responsible for the construction, maintenance and signage of pedestrian and hiking trails (Article 6). For this purpose, they can co-operate with specialised, private organisations (Article 8).

In Italy

After going through the Great Saint Bernard Pass, the Via Francigena arrives in Italy where the local authorities, often supported by local associations, are responsible for the signposting of the path. In order to help the regions, local authorities and associations to install the signs correctly, the EAVF produced in 2016 "The manual on signage along the Via Francigena in Italy",[25] which illustrates the signposts' technical characteristics and modalities of use in the different Italian territories.

19. See https://paca.ffrandonnee.fr/html/495/charte-officielle-du-balisage, accessed 25 October 2019.
20. See www.mongr.fr/trouver-prochaine-randonnee/itineraire/gr-145-la-via-francigena, accessed 25 October 2019.
21. See www.schweizmobil.org/dam/jcr:d87d294f-02f9-4567-81ad-b5ed95a6d097/A_1_Was_ist_SchweizMobil_Final.doc, accessed 25 October 2019.
22. See www.ur.ch/_docn/45600/Schweizer_NOrm_SN_640_829a_Signalisation_Langsamverkehr.pdf, accessed 25 October 2019 (in German and French).
23. See www.schweizmobil.ch/en/hiking-in-switzerland/more-wl/hiking-trail-network-and-signalization.html, accessed 25 October 2019.
24. See www.admin.ch/opc/fr/classified-compilation/19850207/index.html, accessed 25 October 2019.
25. See www.viefrancigene.org/static/uploads/vf-manualesegnaletica-abaco.pdf

The left picture shows the boards installed in the context of the Stop & Taste Project; the right one depicts an example of an information board. Source: Via Francigena

The manual also recommends types of layout for information panels aimed at:

► pilgrims, who can find information about the route, attractions, available services and the official website from which to download practical information such as maps, tracks or apps;

► tourists who may not know the itinerary but who are interested in discovering it or may wish to organise a future trip there;

► local communities who can learn about the itinerary and perceive it as a common good, an opportunity for development.[26]

These panels can include an overview map of the previous and next stages of the itinerary, a brief description in two languages (Italian and English), a presentation of the signs to follow, points of interest, interesting aspects of the territory or local specialities and traditions. For example, in the framework of the "Sosta & Gusta" ("Stop & Taste") project, three information boards were put up in the province of Parma (in Fidenza, Medesano and Berceto) to inform tourists that they are "in the Land of Parmigiano Reggiano". The project allows pilgrims to visit the Parmigiano Reggiano factories and to find sales points close to the Via Francigena (section Fidenza-Passo della Cisa) without diverting from the route.[27]

Furthermore, interactive signage has been recently installed in Palestro, a Via Francigena stage in the province of Pavia (Lombardy), in the form of information boards near important monuments that display a QR code that can be scanned with a mobile device such as a smartphone. This allows the user to access an online guide in multiple languages and with interactive services, also for disabled persons.[28]

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26. Ibid., p. 15.
27. See www.viefrancigene.org/en/resource/news/sosta-gusta-tre-cartelli-informativi-nel-par-mense-/, accessed 25 October 2019.
28. See www.viefrancigene.org/en/resource/news/palestro-una-segnaletica-turistica-interattiva/, accessed 25 October 2019.

With regard to the maintenance of the signs in Italy, the EAVF organises a local walking day several times per year in co-operation with local associations in order to renew the stickers along the path. In 2019, the "Trail Angels" initiative was launched by the EAVF and the Movimento Lento association, with the aim of marking the Santiago de Compostela-Rome pathway. "Trail Angels" is in the process of developing a network along the Italian Via Francigena that will assign sections of the pathway for signage maintenance to different associations, thus allowing for co-ordination of the signposting done by volunteers.[29]

What this case illustrates

► Even though the national regulations for signage differ widely, the Via Francigena has achieved a certain visual uniformity across all countries (the pilgrim as the route identification mark) thanks to a fruitful transregional consultation process and the development of a vade mecum that includes rules for signage.

► The route's partnerships combining public and private bodies at national, regional and local levels are effective in implementing and maintaining signposting.
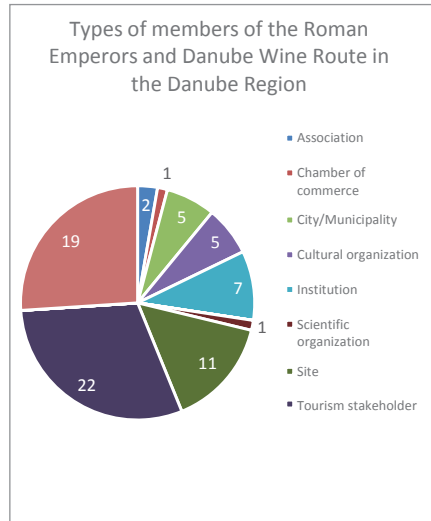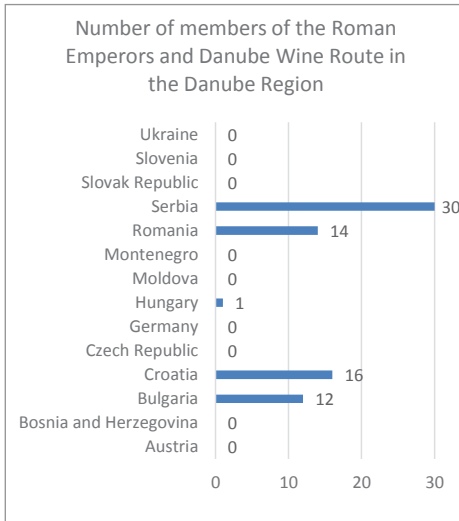
3.2. Case study for the Danube Region: Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route[30]

The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route was certified in 2015 as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe and covers five countries – Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. It is a network of sub-destinations, created around individual archaeological sites, locations and buildings, which are monuments to the leadership of the Roman emperors in Late Antiquity (see the network composition of the route below). The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route therefore can be classified as a territorial route, that is, it involves territories presenting one common theme or character. The route links the regions of the former Danube frontier of the Roman Empire, where wine was introduced in Roman times and where the tradition of wine production is continued until today. The network is managed by the Danube Competence Centre in Belgrade (Serbia).

Since the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route is not a physical path, its signage is destination-oriented, including road signs (only in Serbia) and information panels at archaeological sites. The route employs simple standardised information panels for most of its sites in all the countries crossed (see the picture below for the Sexaginta Prista site in Bulgaria). The panels are made of simple but long-lasting material (a poster on

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29. See www.viefrancigene.org/en/resource/news/i-trail-angels-della-francigena-una-rete-la-manute/, accessed 25 October 2019.
30. Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this sub-chapter stems from an interview conducted with Danko Cosic, Director of Programmes at Danube Competence Centre, on 10 May 2019.

Number of members of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route in the Danube Region

Country	Members
Ukraine	0
Slovenia	0
Slovak Republic	0
Serbia	30
Romania	14
Montenegro	0
Moldova	0
Hungary	1
Germany	0
Czech Republic	0
Croatia	16
Bulgaria	12
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0
Austria	0

Types of members of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route in the Danube Region

- Association — 2
- Chamber of commerce — 1
- City/Municipality — 5
- Cultural organization — 5
- Institution — 7
- Scientific organization — 1
- Site — 11
- Tourism stakeholder — 22
- 19

Сексагинта Приста   Sexaginta Prista   Sexaginta Prista

Source: Danube Competence Centre

metal plate) which normally does not require regular maintenance, except in cases of vandalism. The signage is provided and financed by the Danube Competence Centre and put in place by the responsible local organisation according to the respective national regulations.

The panels display general information about the route and the respective site in three languages (the local language, English and German). They also give information about other sites in the area. The panels target visitors as non-experts and point to the relevance of the places without giving too much information. More details about each destination can be found on the route's official website[31] and some mobile

31. http://romanemperorsroute.org

telephone applications are currently being developed to improve the visitor's experience at the sites. For example, for the Sexaginta Prista site, the website provides practical information about the service and the facilities offered at the site, a description of the destination, pictures, the address of the tourist information office, and the route's accessibility using different means of transport.

In co-operation with the Serbian Tourism Ministry, road signs were erected along the major roads along the Serbian part of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route. Extending the road signage to other countries was not feasible due to very tight regulations in Romania and Bulgaria.

Road sign in Serbia, Source: Danube Competence Centre

International regulations concerning signs for tourist attractions

In its Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals from 2010, which amends the Convention on Road Signs and Signals from 1968 (Vienna Convention), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe defines regulations concerning signs for tourist attractions.

a) "signs for tourist attractions shall be installed only in places where they are undoubtedly useful. It should be ensured that their value is not impaired and that the attention of road users is not distracted by the presence of too many signs;

b) since road users shall concentrate primarily on traffic regulations and information designed to ensure safety or clarify touring, signs for tourist attractions shall never be installed in places where there are already a number of regulatory or informative signs of particular importance for traffic safety;

c) signs for tourist attractions should be set up only with reasonable proximity to the places or centres to be indicated;

d) the brown colour reserved for tourist attraction signs shall never be used for other road signs. It is recommended that countries using other colours for signs

for tourist attractions replace them gradually by signs bearing light-coloured symbols and/or inscriptions on a brown background or brown symbols and/or inscriptions on a light-coloured background;

e) inscriptions used on signs for tourist attractions should, as far as possible and practicable, be replaced by symbols or pictograms, so as to make these signs more easily understood by foreign road users."[32]

What this case illustrates

▶ The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route handles signage in accordance with its general marketing approach that is based on its online presence.

▶ The variety of organisations in the route's network requires local solutions for signposting instead of a single strategy. The route follows a bottom-up approach to involve local stakeholders in the signage activities as often as possible, although in Serbia, co-operation with the Tourism Ministry led to the implementation of road signs.

3.3. Case study for the Baltic Sea Region: St Olav Ways Route – St Olav Waterway[33]
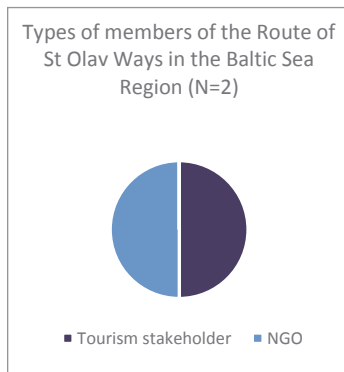

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The Saint Olav Ways are a network of seven pilgrim paths through Norway, Sweden and Denmark which obtained certification as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe in 2010. For centuries, the myth of the Norwegian King Saint Olav led thousands of pilgrims to travel across the European continent in search of his burial place in Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim. The St Olav Ways are managed by the National Pilgrim Centre in Trondheim under the supervision of the Nidaros Cathedral Restoration Workshop and the Norwegian Ministry of Culture.[34] The route's network has two members in the Baltic Sea Region (see below).

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32. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2010), Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals, pp. 4-5.
33. Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this sub-chapter stems from an interview conducted with James Simpson, Project Manager of St Olav Waterway, on 25 April 2019.
34. See https://pilegrimsleden.no/en/about/om-pilegrimsleden, accessed 4 November 2019.

Since its official opening in May 2019, the St Olav Waterway leads from Turku (Finland) to the Åland Islands and finally to the Swedish city of Hudiksvall. The Waterway Route progressively joins other St Olav routes in Sweden and Norway (as far as Trondheim). The route runs mostly along existing paths, bicycle routes and old forest roads, but some completely new paths were created as well, in particular the section over water along the Finnish Archipelago, which makes the route unique and allows, besides walking and cycling, for more innovative forms of pilgrimage such as sailing and kayaking. The St Olav Waterway was developed in the framework of a European Union Interreg project (2016-2019) and received certification by the Council of Europe in 2018 (as part of the St Olav Ways Route). This also marked the beginning of the signposting work, which was mainly funded by the Interreg Central Baltic Programme and the European Regional Development Fund.[35]

Types of members of the Route of St Olav Ways in the Baltic Sea Region (N=2)

■ Tourism stakeholder   ■ NGO

The signage of the St Olav Waterway basically follows the design standard proposed by the National Pilgrim Centre in Trondheim which is applied to all St Olav Ways. However, there is a need for local adaptation in each country due to different regulations (relating to the design and the materials used, for example) and administrative responsibilities. The St Olav Waterway therefore negotiated individual solutions with private land and road owners, various municipalities and the national roads agency. This process took about six months. In the end, the original idea of adding the route's English name to the signs had to be abandoned because this was not foreseen by national law (which allows only Finnish).

Information boards have been put up at every major tourist site along the St Olav Waterway and more material is provided online because it is difficult to guarantee the longevity of the boards after the end of the project. Moreover, it causes problems to provide the information on such a board in three languages (English, Swedish and Finnish), whereas, on the website, users can choose their preferred language. For the directional signage, the route mainly relies on existing signage infrastructure, which limits the number of signs in an area, as requested by some private land owners. Of course, this can only be done in areas where the route follows existing paths.

Regarding the implementation in Finland and Sweden, the Waterway received support from volunteers from local municipalities, parishes and/or environmental organisations who were mostly informed via Facebook. During such "signage days", these volunteers are brought together with experienced leaders who know the exact route and are equipped accordingly. In the future, the Waterway will review the feedback for improving the signage from hikers from previous seasons. Comments that are

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35.   See http://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/65, accessed 4 November 2019.

Types of signposts used by the St Olav Ways Route and the St Olav Waterway, Source: Pilegrimsleden (2015), Merkesystemet, p. 4.

published on its Facebook page or on TripAdvisor are collected, as well as complaints that are received from other sources, such as accommodation providers along the route. Moreover, since the route's water section relies mostly on ferries, there are plans to provide some information directly on the (private) ferries themselves.

What this case illustrates

► There is a need to adapt the signage to local requirements while keeping, at the same time, the route's visual identity.
► The engagement of local volunteers and organisations is crucial for implementing and maintaining the signposts.

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3.4. Case study for the Adriatic-Ionian Region: Iron Curtain Trail

 The Iron Curtain Trail (ICT) invites people to retrace and experience the former division of the European continent on a 6 800 km cycle track (EuroVelo 13) along the length of the former border from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea, combining European culture, history and sustainable tourism. In 2005, following the initiative of MEP Michael Cramer, the European Parliament recognised the ICT as a model project for sustainable tourism and called upon the member states for support.

The ICT is the longest route in the European cycle route network, which was initiated by the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and today counts 17 thematic bike routes. The ECF co-ordinates the implementation and operation, provides quality assurance and publicises the ICT at European and transnational level. At national level, EuroVelo Co-ordination Centres are responsible for the development work in each country. They get support from national, regional and local authorities, commercial service providers and NGOs. The network of the ICT in the Adriatic and Ionian Region countries is composed as follows.
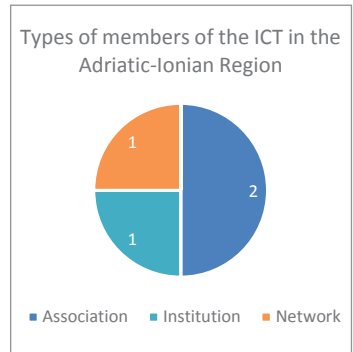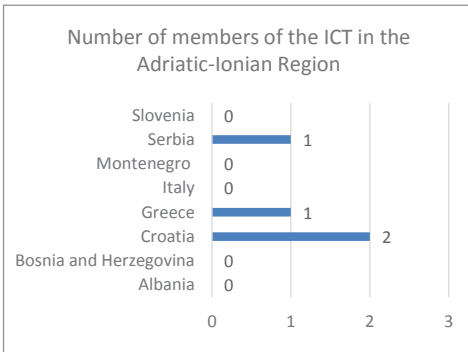
In 2010, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in co-operation with the ECF published recommendations for the signposting of EuroVelo routes in the "Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals". On the basis of these recommendations, the ECF formulated the following principles for the signposting of EuroVelo routes. As a general rule, due to the fact that the signage should be understood by national and international users and in order to ensure the safe conduct of cyclists in traffic, the signposting of cycle routes has to be consistent and clearly recognisable.[36]

Route information panel[37]

"In order to identify EuroVelo routes, the use of an easily recognizable EuroVelo route information panel, added to the existing signage system, should be used. This route information panel is a signing element already widely used in a number of European countries to sign cycle routes. It comprises the following components:

1. Background (colour, Council of Europe blue): displays a European aspect

2. Route number (colour, white): essential for quick route identification

3. Council of Europe stars (colour, yellow): displays a European aspect (optional)

4. EuroVelo route name, e.g. Rivers route (optional, name can be in the local language)

5. Wording: EuroVelo (optional, confirmation of EuroVelo route status)"

Example of a EuroVelo panel in Serbia, Source: ECF (2010), p. 10.

Signing[38]

"The route information panel should be integrated into route signs in the same manner as other route information panels and according to national or regional standards. There is normally no need to change the country-specific design of cycle signage (colour, shape, etc.) for the incorporation of this panel. It is possible to combine EuroVelo information with other route information using the frame version. This version could be used as an interim

36. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2010), Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals, p. 8.
37. European Cyclists' Federation, EuroVelo. Signing of EuroVelo cycle routes, https://www.velo-territoires.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/EuroVelo_Signing1.pdf p. 5
38. Ibid., p. 11.

solution on existing route signs where space for an additional panel is lacking. Countries which have not made provision within their existing cycle signage system for the addition of route information panels, should incorporate the design elements illustrated here into their existing system."

Components of the signing system[39]

- ▶ "Upright signs mounted on posts, street furniture, walls, etc., giving or confirming route direction and number (mandatory)
- ▶ EuroVelo signs, integrated with national and regional signage (mandatory)
- ▶ Road markings and simple signs (optional)
- ▶ Information boards to interpret the route and add interest to the trip (optional)
- ▶ Informative signage to places of interest, such as services and attractions, in the environment of the route (optional). …

The maintenance of signing should be coordinated at the national or at least the regional level. It should include the repair and replacement of missing or damaged signs and posts."

What this case illustrates

- ▶ The signage principles developed at European level by the ECF constitute a useful instrument that provides the Cultural Route with concrete and practical advice for developing its signage system.
- ▶ The ICT serves as good example, as these guidelines were successfully integrated into the often quite heterogenous national regulations.

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39. European Cyclists' Federation (2011), EuroVelo. Guidance in the route development process, https://pro.eurovelo.com/download/document/Guidance-on-the-Route-Development-Process.pdf, pp. 11-13.

4. Recommendations for signposting along Cultural Routes

Whether you are starting from scratch or planning to adapt your signposting strategy, this chapter presents some basic steps to follow and formulates recommendations that can be adapted individually.

First step – Development of a concrete idea of your signage project

► What type of tourists are you targeting (walkers, hikers, cyclists, etc.)?

► What will be the aim of your signage? Is it rather destination-oriented or route-oriented? Do you want to direct people to a destination as quickly as possible or do you want them to follow a specific route?

► What are the types of signage you want to use (signposts, information boards, digital or interactive solutions, etc.)? What information should they present?

► Do you want to complement your signs with other instruments in order to create a visitor guidance system?

Recommendation 1

Prepare a design and style guide for different types of signage (such as directional signs, information panels, stickers, etc.) throughout your network that contribute to easy and effective recognition of your route by using the same logo, name, materials, colours, etc. Bear in mind that your design principles can only serve as orientation, they therefore have to remain flexible for adaptation in line with the respective regional or national signage regulations.

Recommendation 2

Signposting should be combined with other tools for wayfinding, such as digital or printed maps, guides, online applications allowing GPS navigation and further information about sites and practical information.

Second step – Research and revision of your initial plans

Once you have clearer idea of your signage project, you need to check your ideas against reality – whether and to what extent they are practicable before investing too many resources. It is important not to dedicate too little time to this step because it is the basis of your future work. Below are questions that can help to guide you during the research phase.

> **Do you plan to create trails for walkers? A helpful starting point for your research**
>
> The European Ramblers' Association (ERA), which comprises more than 60 walking organisations from over 30 European countries, regularly publishes a structured overview of waymarking systems in numerous European countries.[40] For each country, it contains information about the organisations that perform the marking, the extent of the marked trails network, the marking system – subdivided into foot-path marking, classification of marked paths, types of marks, fingerposts and signs showing a local destination, information boards – as well as European long-distance and international paths and walking maps. Moreover, the ERA has formulated a number of principles for signing and marking footpaths (see Appendix).

- ► What are important national, regional or local regulations regarding the design and placement of your preferred signage type?
- ► Are there any visual standards you have to follow? If so, what are the possibilities for incorporating individual visual elements (for example, the route logo, text or an emblematic symbol) into the predefined design standard?
- ► Who is in charge of the signposting in the respective country? (national or regional bodies, associations, private land owners, etc.) Do you need to seek permission to erect your signposts?
- ► How much will it cost? Would it be possible to obtain specific grants or to co-operate with local associations or national bodies, for example?

> **Recommendation 3**
>
> Being well informed about the national policies for signposting is crucial for the success of your signage project. If you want to use signs for different groups of tourists, be aware that the signs may need approval from different authorities. Be aware that this process can take up to several months.

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40. The European Ramblers Association has information available in English on their website in the following link: http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/frontpage/ . Guidelines for E-path marking, signing and information boards can be found on the link: http://www.era-ewv-ferp.com/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenter/Walking_in_Europe/E-Paths/E-paths_marking_and_sign-ing.pdf

Third step – Design and production of the signs

► How long do you want the signs to last?

► Who will be in charge of the design and production?

► Are your signs aesthetically attractive? What information do you want to convey? Is the information presented in a way that can be easily understood by various target groups?

Fourth step – Installation, evaluation and maintenance

► Who will be in charge of the installation and the maintenance of the signage?

► Where will you put your signs? Can they be built upon existing infrastructure (existing hiking paths, for example)?

► Are there any regulations to consider regarding the placement? Did you get all the necessary permissions?

► Is the spatial distribution appropriate? Should signs be added or dismantled to avoid confusion?

► Do the signs have a positive impact on the visitor experience? How can you evaluate the tourists' satisfaction (surveys, specific website for comments, etc.)?

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41. UNWTO (2016), UNWTO Recommendations on Accessible Information in Tourism, http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/docpdf/accesibilidad2016webennuevoaccesible.pdf, p. 18, accessed 7 November 2019.

Recommendation 5

Develop a plan for securing the long-term maintenance of your signage. Try to engage members of your Cultural Route network (ministries, regions, cities, municipalities, sport clubs or associations, etc.) to help with the implementation of the signage in terms of financial support or staff. Organise regular signage events together with local stakeholders such as hiker associations or volunteers to check the conditions of your signs and to replace them if necessary.

Recommendation 6

When calculating your budget, you should consider the costs for the research and design of the signs, their manufacture and their installation and maintenance. Do not underestimate the financial burden that may emerge at a later stage due to vandalism, for example.[42] Using existing signage infrastructure is normally less expensive in terms of material procurement.

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42.   UNWTO (2001), *Tourism signs and symbols. A Status Report and Guidebook*, p. 19.

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Appendix

General principles for signing and marking footpaths by the European Ramblers' Association[43]

1.   Waymarks should be placed in the direction of the route so that they are clearly visible from a distance

2.   Waymarks should be positioned on an object so that the whole mark is visible from the point of view of the approaching walker, by ensuring that the surface of the mark forms an angle of more than 45° with the line of route.

3.   The route should be waymarked in both directions, with two clearly separate marks. Each of these marks should be positioned with respect to one direction only.

4.   Junctions are places where paths cross, join or diverge from each other. When carrying out marking, special attention must be paid to junctions where the walker could leave the marked path by mistake. For this reason, all junctions must be marked in both directions.

   ► A waymark indicating the correct direction should be placed no more than 10m after the junction so that it is clearly visible from the junction and indicates the change of direction unambiguously. This mark is called the guidance mark.

   ► Another mark should be placed a little further along the correct route. This is called the confirmation mark.

5.   Long sections of routes without junctions should be provided with reassurance marks. The distance should not exceed 250m. This distance should be shortened in difficult or mountainous terrain.

6.   If the marked route turns off on another path or changes direction suddenly, an arrow should be used, with the point of the arrow indicating the new direction.

7.   Increased attention should be paid to the signing of routes in built-up areas, and in particular along sections leaving built-up areas.

8.   Directional panels or fingerposts indicating the route of the marked path should be placed at the starting/ending points of the route, at junctions and at other necessary places along the route.

9.   Fingerposts and directional panels should indicate one or more destination along the marked route and the distance in km (miles) or hours. If a destination is shown on a fingerpost or panel, it must be shown on all other subsequent fingerposts or panels until the destination itself is reached.

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43.   See www.era-ewv-ferp.com/fileadmin/user_upload/dokumenter/Walking_in_Europe/ Waymarking_in_Europe/General_principles__waymarking.pdf, accessed 25 July 2019.

Cultural Routes are transnational networks and as such, they face different regulations for signposting in every country they cross. This manual provides its users with helpful tips and recommendations on how to develop and implement a signage project, illustrating the strategies with case studies of existing Cultural Routes' signage activities.

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