

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Evaluation Cycle 2019-2020

Expert report

“The Hansa”

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of the Council of Europe
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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 guidelines

This report is a certification evaluation of the Hansa Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. It is based on a desk review of the Route using information provided by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, the Manager and the Secretary General of the Route, internet research, interviews with members of the Route, and site visits.

Based on submitted dossier and additional documents, and having conducted field visits, the evaluation has concluded that the Hansa Route still strongly complies with all of the thematic criteria for certification as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. The theme of the route clearly represents a common value – historical, cultural and heritage shared by many Northern and Central European countries surrounding the Baltic Sea.

The Hansa Route has illustrated that it is involved in activities that conform to all fields of action. Minor recommendations include the development of a stronger web presence with links to tourism organisations, a visual charter (guidelines) for the Hanseatic Days websites and a database of research expertise in English.

The Cultural Route Network is managed by the Association 'HanseVerein - Verein zur Förderung des internationalen Städtebunds DIE HANSE e.V', a newly established association under German law, needed in regard to the criteria for the award of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certification under the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67. The Association seeks to promote cooperation between Hanseatic cities and to manage their development as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, especially with regards to the execution of projects undertaken by the City League Hanse. Financially the management of the network will be more sustainable through income generated from membership fees. Visibility of certification has greatly improved since the last evaluation and it will be now specified by the Secretary General of the Route in a visibility charter (guidelines) for all members.

1. Introduction

This report has been undertaken as part of the re-evaluation process of the Hansa Cultural Route of the Council of Europe (CoE). The Hansa Route is the second oldest member of the Cultural Routes of CoE Programme, it entered the Programme in 1991 as an already well-established network of cities (League of Cities), referring to the historic German merchants' league along the coasts of Northern Europe.

The Hansa is an impressive network, based on a solid historical and cultural ground of the shared history and supported by an outstanding academic and research work and cooperation. It is seen by some as the medieval forerunner to the European Union, as the historic Hansa had an important influence on the economy, politics and trade until the 17th century and these effects resonate in the culture and identities of today's modern European societies. The birth of Hansa was already in 1161. It started as a network between German merchants, by mid-fourteenth century developed into an impressive league of nearly 200 sea and inner cities that for three centuries kept power and control over trade and markets related to the Baltic Sea. The contemporary Hansa includes a wide-range and far-reaching network of cities built upon a very strong representative theme of shared tangible and intangible heritage. The Cultural Route is a traceable journey through the Hansa world that includes examples of Hanseatic cities and former large depots such as Novgorod in Russia, as well some smaller trading posts. The authenticity of the network is being secured by the state of art academic research and cooperation.

The contemporary Hansa network was established already in 1980 and it was a democratically run organisation, with multiple separate bodies and connecting structures. Now the Hansa has 195 members in 16 countries: Belarus, Belgium, England, Estonia,

France, Finland, Germany, Island, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia, Scotland and Sweden. In 2018 two cities have join, in 2019 - five. A new city may join, which will enrich the whole network with a new country – Spain. Many of the sites have a World Heritage status and are members of ICOMOS, and many also are related to the Pilgrimage Route of Santiago.

The last evaluation in the 2015-2016 cycle concluded with an overall positive recommendation for the maintenance of the certification for Hansa as a European Cultural Route, however some weakness in compliance was stated as to the legal status of the network. To respond to the recommendations from the previous evaluation report an association under German law was established in 2016. The membership is made up of 41 members from 5 countries (Belgium, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Russia). The Association is a voluntary organisation with an elected board of 5 including a chair, open to all members of the Hansa Network, with headquarters in Lübeck. The Chair of the Board is always to be the mayor of Lübeck, the other 4 are the members of the Board of the Hansa network elected by the General Assembly (GA). The purpose of HanseVerein e.V. is bound by the goals of the Hansa network, that is to act in the spirit of the cross-border thinking of the Hanseatic League and to manage, coordinate and strengthen the Hansa as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

3. Main Body Evaluation

The evaluation of the Hansa Route has involved a thorough review of the network's theme, activities and management in line with certification requirements of the Resolution CM/Res (2013)67 for the award of the 'Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe'. Material and dossier submitted by the Route, direct contact with a number of its members, the Manager and the Secretary General, visits to a selection of sites, information provided by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and internet-based desk research has been used to further inform this evaluation.

The evaluation will focus on the Route's main activities, rather than those of its members. Nevertheless, projects undertaken by the members show the key strengths of this extensive network – a variety of towns and cities across Northern and Central Europe, in different regions and with a different heritage and tourism potential that promotes the self-awareness of the Hanseatic legacy and develop cooperation in the Hanseatic spirit.

Given the size of the network (195 members in 16 countries) it was not possible to analyse the activities and the visibility of the Cultural Route at the local level, except for the field visits.

3.1. Cultural Route Theme

The theme of the Route clearly represents a common value – historical, cultural and heritage to several different European countries. The Hansa legacy illustrates a number of important European values – including a common identity, unity in diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Hansa story is one of migration and transnational collaboration and the importance and extent of their trade culture is highlighted throughout the Hansa network.

Growing from a few North German towns in the late 1100s, the league came to dominate Baltic maritime trade for three centuries along the coasts of Northern Europe. The Hansa network was revived in 1980 and currently has 195 member towns and cities in 16 European countries. The network spreads as far west as to the United Kingdom, and as far East as to Russia. A new city, and a new country will most probably join the Hansa – Laredo in Spain.

The Hansa theme easily lends itself to fulfilling the eligibility criteria for a European Cultural Route, as the Route is built upon the authenticity of shared history and is informed by a strong academic and research work and cooperation. This expertise has been used to inform the development of the Route and continues to help ensure the authenticity of its activities and attractions. The 'new' Hansa is said to be the largest voluntary association of cities in the world and it is open to any town or city that belonged to the historic Hanseatic League, was an associated town/city, or there was a Hanseatic office or trading post for a considerable period of time. Authenticity must be evidenced by historical documents or deeds from respective town/city archive. Application for acceptance in the Hansa is made in writing through the responsible bodies of the town/city to the Commission. Decision on acceptance is done by the General Assembly of the Hansa, following proposal by the Commission and the advice of the Hansischer Geschichtsverein.

The Hansa Route focuses on this shared tangible and intangible heritage. This is clearly being emphasised by the contemporary cultural activities of the Route and its structure: historically, the members were meeting once per year to discuss topics of main concern, mostly strategically important issues related to trade and the protection of common interests. This one-day meeting now refers to the Hanseatic Day, organised annually, as the main activity of the Route. As to the structure, here the historical bounds are as well being kept: the mayor of Lübeck is the President (Vormann) of the network and the Chair of the HanseVerein e.V., Lübeck is also home to the Network, the headquarters of the Association and more recently – the seat of the office of the Secretary General of the Route.

Thus, the theme is fully in accordance with all six of the eligibility criteria defined in Resolution CM/Res (2013) 67 of the Council of Europe.

3.2. Fields of Action

In this section, the Hansa Route has been evaluated against the priority fields of action that are defined under Resolution CM/Res (2013)67 of the Council of Europe. The sub-sections look at the extent the Route addresses the list of priority fields individually and provide important highlights.

3.2.1. Co-operation in research and development

Research forms a vital aspect of the Hansa activities, as it ensures the authenticity of the attractions and activities of the network. The Hansa Route has a wide range of links with research bodies and institutions. However, in this field of action, the strongest actor is the Hansischer Geschichtsverein (henceforth HGV) – the association devoted to research Hanseatic history, legacy and heritage, formed by universities, museums, individual scholars and researchers. It is a multidisciplinary platform for cooperation in research, with a state of art deliverables such as annual international conferences (the 135 annual conference held in 2019) and an annual publication (136. 'Hansische Geschichtsblätter - Hanseatic History Review' published in 2018). The association has a long history, was established in 1870, and was finally formalized in the 90s. Much of the research undertaken has helped to provide a better understanding of the Hanseatic heritage. The valuable output is, that academic cooperation on the Hansa topic is not being done on the project-by-project basis, it is a well-established, long lasting academic and research cooperation which is an important strength of the network. It is a sustainable and reliable research and development mechanism for the Cultural Route and can serve as a model for other Routes.

The HGV maintains an online archive and links to studies (<http://hansischergeschichtsverein.de>). Since 2016 the Association is publishing the Hansische Geschichtsblätter in cooperation with the Callidus-Verlag and in line with the more

open research policy, after 18 months from the publication, the articles are available on the website of the Association as PDFs (on the <https://www.hansischergeschichtsverein.de/hansische-geschichtsblaetter> page). In addition, the HGV is providing all volumes on which the copyright has expired, as digital copies on the website. The HGV tries to internationalize its work. Since 2004 the Association is offering more publications in English to promote their work to a wider international public.

Another important initiative is the Netzwerk Kunst+Kultur der Hanse Städte – the network for Culture and Arts of the Hansa Cities, engaging in research, as the members are mostly universities. One of the main activities of the network are conferences, seminars and workshops on Hanseatic topics related to culture and arts. The network is involved in a wide range of informative and educational activities, such as publishing comic book series for children, curating exhibitions, fostering research and collaboration through a database with contacts to research groups and individuals, institutions and cultural organisations and links to digital resources, archives, photos and other useful data.

The research can form a platform for a dialogue on the topics of cross-border thinking of the Hanseatic League and revive the traditional spirit and ideas of the European city/municipality. The HGV provides useful sharing of research expertise and several of those interviewed emphasised the benefits of being able to approach others in the network for advice. The network could consider formalising this support by creating a register of research experts and technical specialists. This can identify areas of research that could be undertaken by master or PhD students, or collaborations with research institutions that might attract research project funding. This would provide a valuable resource for many of its members.

There are also some issues where research by the network as a whole may be a common benefit, as a good tool for identifying key areas where such a research needs to be identified, commissioned and disseminated, ensuring its quality as well as informing educational programmes. Establishing a database of research expertise in English can be also valuable since the network is still expanding and many project are engaging members from the non-German speaking countries.

3.2.2. Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage

The Hansa Route and its network members are involved in a wide range of activities that encourage the enhancement of the memory, history and heritage of Europe – both tangible and intangible. This field of action seems to be one of the strongest assets of the Route.

The theme of the Route – the trade exchange, as a vehicle for cultural and intellectual exchange, provides knowledge and interprets the Hanseatic legacy, highlights similarities and fosters cooperation between partners and regions, as the Hansa covers a very large geographic area of Northern and Central Europe.

The network does not involve partners from rural areas, as all the members are towns and cities, however the differences between the members and the variety of the partners are considerable and enable cooperation on different levels and topics. The Hansa is working with many different stakeholders, by raising awareness among decision makers, entrepreneurs, practitioners, researchers and general public.

The Hanseatic Days, the main activity of the network, are referring to the historic yearly meeting of the League, bringing the whole network together. All member cities are welcomed to join the activities. This is an example of an annual event, that helps building, maintaining or re-discovering the shared Hanseatic heritage of the whole network. Modern day Hanseatic days were held since 1980 in numerous locations in Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. In the last three

years the Hanseatic days have been organised in Kampen, Rostock and Pskov. This year's edition, the 40th Hanseatic Days, will be held in Brilon, Germany. The hosts for the next celebrations are already known and defined till 2030. All preparations and activities are being arranged, planned, financed and performed at local/regional level. The highlight of this three-days long event are spectacular Hanseatic markets (including medieval and craft markets), historical re-enactments, and cultural events such as the HANSEartWORKS, which help discover and promote the Hanseatic traditions in an interactive and engaging way.

It is an annual act of celebration of common Hanseatic legacy and shared tangible and intangible heritage. It is also an annual meeting for the different bodies of the network and its supportive structures. The festival starts on Thursday evening and ends on Sunday with a tradition of handing over the Hanseatic flag to the next host of the Hanseatic days in year to come. The foreseen elements of the Hanseatic Days include activities on many levels for the network itself: internal meeting of the organisational structures (the Board, Commission and the working groups, including workshops on tourism), an economic seminar/forum, meetings of the youthHanse.

In 2017 the celebrations in Kampen gathered around 200.000 visitors, with delegates from 100 cities and 14 countries, 91 representatives of the youthHansa from 9 countries and 19 artists involved in the HANSEartWORKS. Next year, Rostock welcomed 450,000 visitors on the Hanseatic Days, 2000 delegates from 119 cities in 14 countries, 102 YouthHansa delegates and 17 artists on the HANSEartWORKS.

The impact of the Hanseatic days is to be seen especially in the partner towns and cities, which are not being enlisted into the UNESCO World heritage Lists or are not major touristic destinations. For the celebration in Pskov large investments were made by the local government, and as stated by the organisers, the Hanseatic Days Festival was the most important cultural event for the city in the last decades.

The Hanseatic heritage held an enormous impact on Northern and Central Europe and beyond. Thus, Hansa has contributed significantly to the creation of cultural coherence, symbolic values and cultural identity of much of Europe. Many aspects of the Hanseatic culture and its modern-day interpretation by members of the Hansa Route echo the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Moreover, the Route is in conformity with many international charters and conventions on cultural heritage protection and safeguarding. Firstly, many of the members are UNESCO World Heritage sites of 'outstanding universal value', thus stimulating a more sustainable tourism development, taking into consideration the regulations of the 1972 World Heritage Convention. Secondly, the Hansa is strongly involved in activities that promote the value of cultural heritage for and within society in line with the Faro Convention (2005). Thirdly, recently developed projects on Hanseatic food, traditional cuisine and food preparation adhere to the principles of the UNESCO 2003 Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage aiming to foster the awareness, practice and transmission of elements of intangible culture within the local communities.

3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans

European heritage needs to be promoted particularly among the young generations. The Route provides an engaging and meaningful way for the young generations to acquire an awareness of the shared Hanseatic history and heritage as a vehicle for a common European identity.

The Hansa topic is popular with young people and many Route members run cultural and educational activities that are successful in engaging young people in learning more about Hanseatic heritage.

Furthermore, the network has an internal mechanism for engaging and promoting youth activities – the youthHansa. This youth organisation, established in 1998 during the youth forum organised in Visby, Sweden, is a well-structured and democratic organisation, which

can serve as an international platform for education and youth cooperation and exchange programmes. The main aims of the organisation are to promote the exchange of views and experiences concerning youth issues; to develop specific youth projects between the Hanseatic cities; promote school partnerships and youth exchanges; to improve the mutual understanding between young people from the Hanseatic cities; to bring non-organised young people and youth groups together in order to strengthen the sense of community between the Hanseatic cities and their young inhabitants. The young representatives meet annually, during the Hanseatic Days, to discuss topics of common interests and engage in projects and cooperation. The official language of the organisation is English, which is a very important indicator of their openness and transnational character. Inclusive character of the youthHansa is also worth underlining – it is open to every young citizen of a Hanseatic city or town, from the age from 16 until 25, with no regard to national, ethnical or educational background.

The youthHansa is led and represented by the Hanseatic Youth Commission, that comprises five representatives of the member cities who share equal responsibilities and duties as well as voting rights. The Youth Commission is coordinating the organisation of the annual meeting during the Hanseatic days and providing support to the host cities if needed. There is no Chairperson, two ‘Speakers’ are appointed to represent the youthHansa on official meeting, especially during the General Assembly meetings of the Hansa and at the Commission meeting of the Hansa.

Since 2017 the organisation is working on an improvement of the web and social media presence and the visibility of the Hansa activities on-line. A structural change of the youthHansa has been started recently – from this year, there are several ‘departments’ within the youthHansa, one of which is the ‘Communication and Representation Department’, responsible for strategic planning and strengthening the web and social media visibility.

Other structural and organisational changes are undertaken: the permanent seat in the Commission is no longer given to Lübeck, the youthHansa aims to establish regional Hanseatic youth groups or regional Hanse networks, a cooperation with the BusinessHanse regarding internships is being developed. The YouthHansa is also engaging in shared cultural heritage projects, like the initiative of compelling short stories from the Hanseatic cities into one publication to show the multi-narrative and transnational character of this common legacy within a European perspective.

The previous evaluation report recommended to make a plan for educational activities which involve educational institutions at various levels. This suggestion has been considered by the network but has not been implemented for a number of reasons. The network has pointed out that much of these activities are being performed on city/regional level. The issue of whether to set up an educational activities plan for the whole network was under discussion, however given the size of the network it cannot be a task for the Route Management.

There is still room for more active cooperation within the youth network, which the YH is acknowledging and making relevant organisation adjustments to the existing structure. The weak social media and web presence will be improved, and an Instagram account for the network will be created. All those new developments and initiatives are highly positive and will strengthen the network as a whole. The YH is willing to work closely with the newly established Association and to contribute to the projects related strictly to the Cultural Route.

3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice

The Hansa had a strong intellectual influence on its network. We can trace common elements among the whole network, and they are present in the tradition of crafts (including metal working, knitting, jewellery making, armour and ships building). Many traditional

elements have been adapted for modern productions and have influenced contemporary artists.

The Route draws on traditional Hansa heritage and we can easily see the links between the historic network influence on contemporary artists. The Route and the Route's main activity – the Hanseatic Days are fostering exchange between cultural and artistic practices in the different countries.

The Hansa has a working group on contemporary cultural and artistic practice engagements relevant to the topics of Hansa – the 'HANSAartWORKS', launched in 2006. The group is actively involved in the programme of the annual Hanseatic Day, and each attending Hansa member-city is responsible for selecting and supporting its representative artist to participate. The HANSEartWORKS is an extremely successful project, which is being carried out for the 13th time and is now also a well known initiative on a European level, attracting many international artists. The HANSEartWORKS in Pskov, under the motto "Traditions and Modernity", has received great response and attention, presenting works of 24 artists from 6 nations. The motto for the 14th HANSEartWORKS in Brilon will be "People, Places, Dreams" and here the artists are expected to do film- and/or photo-work.

Members of the Route are involved in their own local projects, many of them have an international impact as well. The city of Vyšiji Volochyok plans to establish a Hanseatic Gallery, which should be another element of the cultural link between the Hanseatic Cities.

Member attractions and Route events are increasingly integrating traditional Hansa heritage with modern day culture and new technologies (a new exhibition planned in Valmiera City Museum, augmented reality for the presentation of Hanseatic history within the Interreg V A – Germany Netherlands 'Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit Hansestädte – damals und heute'). This field of action is being assessed as a fully positive one.

3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

The development of sustainable and authentic quality tourism experiences is a major objective of the Route and most of its members are engaged in fostering sharing identity through regional, national and transnational programmes. The old historic bounds provide a strong foundation for joint actions, however the complex structure of the network can be challenging for devising a sound touristic production and marketing strategy.

On the level of the Route management, the biggest events are the annual Hanseatic Days. It is a very visible and large festival, that brings a focus on the whole network and has become a major tourist attraction – for example the Hanseatic Days in Rostock welcomed more than 400.000 visitors. Hanseatic Days are usually excellently covered by the local, regional and often national media, they generate significant tourism income and stimulates development of new products and projects within the whole network.

As a part of the activities during the Hanseatic Days a tourism workshop is organised, attracting more and more participants each year and are being seen as a possibility to gather and exchange information, find partners and learn about new funding opportunities. For the next workshop the Manager of the Route and the Secretary General are preparing an overview of the funding opportunities for different members of the Route and the Route as a whole, aiming to facilitate new projects within the network and some general application as a Cultural Route. As reported by the Manager of the Route and the Secretary General – there is an initiative to extend the Steering Committee of the network, to include more countries and

tourism organisations in order to foster a wider cooperation with a bigger geographical spread, and to include partners from Russia.

The Hansa Route covers a great number of destinations with rich cultural heritage. Members are very successful at their local/regional level in development of new tourism products and offers, attracting various public, also with dedicated programmes for seniors for example. The theme of the Route can establish sustainable links between different parts of Europe, bringing together UE member countries with non-UE partners. It was evident during the field visits that there is a successful partnership between highly developed regions and relatively disadvantaged sites, they are also plans for next shared projects between Western and Eastern European members, with some initiatives already in the pipeline.

Collaboration across the Route partnership, particularly through Interreg Central Baltic (the 'HANSA' project) and COSME ('HANSATOUR' project), has resulted in a sharing experience and dialogue between organisations across different parts of Europe. The projects themselves have not been gone through as a part of this evaluation, however it is worth mentioning, that the lessons learned stimulated the application for new projects and showed the need for a more centralised management of the Route. As identified after the COSME 'HANSATOUR' project the Route Management should provide more information on the Route members and stimulate a better communication between the member organisations. This can be of big importance in applying for smaller projects within the route network and form a good foundation for applying for funding as a Cultural Route through the newly established Association.

The sub-projects like Interreg and COSME reported that they had built links with local and/or national tourism organisations and that some local policy makers recognised the value of Hansa festivals and provided financial and/or promotional support. The development of new Hansa activities, tourism packages and festivals in recent years has helped revive local areas by bringing cultural tourism and creating jobs for local people. An amazing example can be the Latvian Hanseatic cities, who took part in the Interreg Central Baltic HANSA project. For those cities and town, the Hanseatic projects provided opportunities for the development of alternative forms of tourism, more sustainable use of resources and stimulated interest to areas which were not currently on the tourist map.

However, the thematic potential of the Route, as a whole, still has room for further improvement and has not been fully explored and utilized. Some tourism packages are presented on the website, but not really in the context of the Cultural Route. The Route does not represent a clear touristic product, and connection with general marketing of cultural tourism has not been established. This has been acknowledged by the Route's Management and a new strategic plan for tourism cooperation and touristic packages will be presented. Moreover, the role of the association HanseVerein e.V. will be to offer a more centralised management and coordination of the Route, a strategic development of tourism packages and secure funding through projects.

Whilst members promote their own organisations through a range of print, broadcast and social media channels, there has been limited promotion of the Hansa Route as a whole, apart from the website. The Hansa Route recognises that there is still considerable scope for developing its marketing and promotional activity and tourism products. This is one of the main strategic goals of the Secretary General of the Route.

The shared Hanseatic heritage is being recognised as an important factor to local tourism enhancement. The Hansa Route members are clearly working much harder to market their cultural products to a wide range of audiences and in developing new innovative tourism products since the last evaluation. The Route's Management could consider a joint retail

initiative across its membership commissioning the production of high quality souvenirs that can be bought in bulk and sold by several members' attractions within the next years.

The outcomes of the multiple projects run by the members of the Route should be presented on a web site, or in a database for members only. They can be helpful in providing data on members cities attractions' main profile and create new collaboration. Can also identify gaps in the marketing of existing offers and provide insights of what new products would be interesting and which stakeholders should be involved.

3.3 Cultural Route Network

The main area of concern with regards to compliance with the requirements of Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 was in the last two evaluations that of the formal network for the Route. The sheer size of the Hansa League of Cities and the range of countries involved is challenging for the development of a tight network association that brings all the members together in line with the CoE network requirements.

Since early 1980s, the Hansa had a very well-functioning and democratic management structure that suits the needs and aims of its members, before the launch of the Cultural Routes Programme of the CoE and had its organisational structures in place before it was brought into the Programme.

The General Assembly (GA), as the superior body of the Hansa, comprise all member cities and towns. Their delegates can vote, all the resolutions are passed by a majority of members present and eligible to vote. The HanseGuild (Hanseatic Guild) and the youthHanse can participate, however their role is only consultative. The Commission deal with decision making regarding preparation of activities and policy taking to the Assembly. It meets normally at least twice per year, in autumn, and before the GA. Each country elects a representative to the Commission, only Germany has five representatives (as the network is most strongly represented in Germany, more than 100 towns/cities are members), along with the Board members and a representative of the youthHanse. The validity of the term of office of the Commission representatives is 3 years.

The Board (Präsidium) – is the executive committee that deals with the routine and urgent activities of the Hansa network. It comprises five members: the President – the 'Vormann' (Mayor of Lübeck), a 1st and 2nd Vice-President. The Board is elected by the GA on recommendation of the Commission and it is to have representatives from three European countries. The period of election of the Board is identical with the term of office of the Commission (3 years).

The Hansa Cultural Route obtained legal status in 2016. It is now an association under German Law. Membership is open to those who participate in the Hansa network and it operates on a democratic basis. Membership takes place by joining the Association and an enrolment declaration is to be presented in writing at the business offices of the Association. The Board makes decisions concerning acceptance. The Board is identical with the Board of the Hansa network. According to the Statute, the HanseVerein e.V. aims to create a tighter cooperation with a strong focus on tourism activities and promotion of the Hansa as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. The Association and the Secretary General will aim to secure funds through projects and EU funds, to foster innovative activities, and explore the outstanding potential of the Hansa as a Cultural Route. The newly established legal entity will be supported by an administrator – the Hansa Office, hosted and founded by the city of Lübeck, as a condition of the city holding the presidency.

Until this year, all financial costs and expenditures were borne by the member-cities/towns themselves. There was only a small fee for the operating the website and an initial payment for new members. To comply with Regulation CM/Res(2013)67 and to strengthen the position of the Cultural Route an increased membership fees model has been established: the membership fee range from 150 euro to 2000 euro per year, depending on the number of

inhabitants (0,0085 EUR per inhabitant), which will generate a budget of approximately 115.000 EUR per year. This will secure the position of the Secretary General of the Route.

3.3.1 Network extension since last evaluation

The Hansa Route is already the biggest voluntary network of cities in the world. With the impressive 195 members is still growing. The last evaluation in 2015 reported that there were 178 members from 16 countries. In 2019 it includes 195 members from 16 countries.

In 2017 joined the cities of Maasbommel, Tiel and Ipswich the Hanseatic League. Rijssen-Holten and Vyschnij Volotschjok are members since 2018, this year Great Yarmouth, Hanover and Staraja Russa were admitted to the Hansa.

3.3.2. Network extension in the three years to come

In the documents provided by the Management of the Route a financial report was not included due to the fact, that until October 2019 all the activities were being funded on a local/regional level. An operational budget was also not available for the evaluation because of the newly established structure and some organisational issues. Although requested, an activity plan for the next three years was not delivered.

However, during the field visits, some general goals for the next years were stated by the Management of the Route, namely to include further initiatives to promote the Hansa as a Cultural Route of CoE, to build a sound touristic strategy and to strengthen the media presence and visibility of the network. The recent changes of legal, administrative and managerial nature should facilitate the implementation of this action plan.

In terms of membership, during the next three years there are plans to invite the city of Laredo and to expand the network to a new country – Spain.

3.4 Communication Tools

3.4.1 Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo 'Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe'

The Route has its own logo that is used alongside that of the Council of Europe.

The visibility of the Council of Europe certification was raised in the previous evaluation. As a result, the Hansa Route has worked to use the common Cultural Routes' visual identity more. This has been done in two key ways: using the identity on the website and on the Facebook site in a correct manner and by encouraging members to use the formal identity in their domestic and individual activity. Giving the extensive network it has been not possible to visit most of the attractions and view the materials they generated. However, on the materials provided by the Hansa Route materials the Cultural Route logo seems to be being used as specified by the CoE Guidelines.

The Route has a dedicated website (hanse.org) that is currently more linked to the network itself than to the Route. The website is available in German and English. In 2019 it was reported that user numbers of the hanse.org website rose slightly and now reach 288,000 a year. 40% of the traffic was from mobile devices and 60% of the hits were from Germany, then 15% from the USA and the rest is spread over many states. There are some links to touristic packages on the website, however it is not possible to book a tour/package on-line.

The Route has worked its social media presence, however there is still room for improvement. The Facebook page has 631 members and includes posts, videos and specific information about related events. It is updated quite regularly.

The Hansa Route management recognises that its web presence needs to be strengthened. This will be also one of the main goals of the Secretary General. In particular it needs to do more to ensure that the Route's website appears higher up on Google searches for thematic tourism, Hansa heritage, etc.

It seems that the Hansa Route does not have sufficiently developed communication tools, including social media networks. There clearly is potential for making greater use of social media, but this requires dedicated resources and staff hours. The budget for the next years anticipates additional income being generated from increased membership fees some of which will be used to fund staff hours for administration. The involvement of the youthHansa can be extremely helpful and valuable in building a Twitter and/or Instagram account for the network.

In the opinion of the evaluator it is necessary to set up guidelines for the Hanseatic Days websites. The Management of the Route should be responsible for applying these rules.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The Hansa Route is an active and highly competent member of the Cultural Routes of Europe, with a solid shared historic and cultural foundation and despite its extremely large and diverse network, has still continued to grow in strength and professionalism over the last years. It has largely responded to critique and recommendations made during the previous evaluation cycle and has built a strong foundation for future activities.

The Hansa is a strong and long-standing member of the Cultural Routes of Europe network and it embraces the CoE core values to promote the European identity in its unity and diversity. As a cultural network it is more established than many of the other Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and due to the historical tradition, the way that its management is organized and its policy of not being dependent on project-based funding, it has a strong and sustainable future.

Some areas are very strong and others have room for further improvement. The visibility of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is still weak, especially when it comes to its members. The website has been improved, however there is an urgent need for a Code of Practice or Guidelines on Visual Identity as a Cultural Route of the CoE for the member towns and cities.

The theme of the Route is based on a very solid basis of shared European cultural and historical heritage. There is a strong evidence of the Hanseatic legacy across much of Northern and Central Europe and beyond and these links have shaped the structure and culture of modern Europe.

The Hansa Route currently has 195 members spread across 16 countries and it encourages a transnational exchange of knowledge and expertise. Members have collaborated in a number of projects.

In the priority fields of action, it fulfils the needed requirements – and in some areas offers models of best practice that could be replicated by other Cultural Routes. The Route fulfils all the criteria enumerated below:

Co-operation in the fields of research and development is very intensive and strong. This strong and well-established cooperation helps to ensure the authenticity of provided attractions and organised events and projects of the members. The portrayal of the Hanseatic heritage, both tangible and intangible is authentic and in line with the current state

of art of research and academic work on these topics. A Hanseatic PhD programme could be interesting development to ensure the transmission of academic work, with a more practical emphasis on cultural management and tourism, that can be highly helpful for the management of this impressive and very large network.

Enhancement of European memory, history and heritage is a natural outcome of many of the Route's activities. The member cities have developed sites and attraction and projects that highlight the extent to which the Hanseatic legacy has influenced the trade, cultural and intellectual exchange across the cities and countries and how those bounds shaped the common European heritage. Hansa's legacy is remembered and celebrated through modern day festival in many of the cities and also once per day on the Hanseatic Days. This all serve to provide an illustration of how Hansa's legacy has contributed to modern day Europe and European values.

Valuing of European memory, history and heritage – the very nature of The Hanse ties it to a common memory and shared European heritage that covers 195 cities in 16 countries. It promotes this shared heritage through being an active network. The Hanse covers a huge geographical area of North and Central Europe and was influential in shaping aspects of many of the member cities and countries history. The Route enhances tangible and intangible cultural heritage and promotes a shared understanding of the significance of the Hanseatic legacy.

Cultural and educational exchange for young Europeans are of a special concern for the Hansa route. The youthHansa is coordinating the transnational programmes for young people each year. Given success of the work in this area and having a centralised organisation it is important to document the activities more effectively (no statistics on the number of participants across the network are recorded).

Contemporary cultural and artistic practice is being coordinated mainly by the HANSEartWORKS. This network is actively engaged in drawing on traditional (often intangible) heritage to inspire contemporary cultural and artistic practice. HANSEartWORKS is a multidisciplinary program and works with both established and upcoming new artists.

Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development form one of the most important goals of the newly established Association and one of the main tasks of the Secretary General. The recent sub-projects of many member cities have engaged with diverse groups of tourists and developed different cultural products on regional, national and international levels. The wide range of events and attractions are popular with growing numbers of tourists. This is contributing strongly to a sense of shared Hanseatic heritage and is boosting local economies. Moreover, there is a growing cooperation between the member cities and regional and local tourism organisations and increasingly innovative range of cultural tourism products being developed. A common Route's guide to various attractions would be very helpful, presenting the regional, national and transnational projects and attractions. However, tourism based on the Hanse has the potential to become much stronger and better developed in coming years.

Cultural route network is an impressive and large city network in the world. Responding to Regulation CM/Res(2013)67 and the last evaluation's recommendations the network has established an Association, as a democratically managed voluntary organisation with a legal status registered under German Law, that will manage the Route. The Secretary General is a new, full-time position dedicated to the Cultural Route only. The presidency of the Hansa, the Secretary General of the Association and the Hanseatic Museum are all located in Lübeck. This is assessed as a positive development, as long as the institutions will take into account the partners from non-German speaking countries, and provide touristic offers and products in different languages.

The network has grown in the last years. Major changes occurred to the membership policy of the Route – the member cities now contribute more to the network with a much higher fee to enable core administrative work and the maintenance of the website and social media.

Communication tools have been significantly improved since the last evaluation. The newly established Association also recognises the need for an increased visibility of the Council of Europe's visual identity. On the website the logo is used correctly and it appears in several brochures and pamphlets. However, it is still not very visible on the websites of the members. A code of good practice, might be helpful, it can be also introduced as a formal requirement for the member organisations. There is a scope for improvement in the social media presence and the resources should be assured to developing the Hansa Route's social media presence.

Based on the research undertaken for this evaluation it is recommended that the certification of the Hansa Route should be maintained.

CRITERIA		Recommendations previous evaluation 2015-2016	Has the route addressed the recommendation since the last evaluation?		Recommendations current evaluation 2019-2020
			YES	NO	
<i>I.</i>	<i>Cultural route theme</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>II.</i> <i>Priority fields of action</i>	<i>Cooperation in research and development</i>	Language limitation: both the website and the annual book are mainly in German	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A Hanseatic PhD programme could be interesting development to ensure the transmission of academic work, with a more practical emphasis on cultural management, tourism, and can be highly helpful for the management of the network.
	<i>Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage</i>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<i>Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans</i>	The website must be updated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Given the success of the work in this area and having a	

					centralised organisation it is important to document the activities more effectively.
	Contemporary cultural and artistic practice		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Cultural Tourism and Sustainable Cultural development	The Hansa cities does not represent a clear touristic product; is not presented and promoted as a cultural route	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Route has addressed the critique from the previous evaluation, however there is still room for improvement.
III. Cultural Route Network		The need for registration of the network as its own legal body in the correct way	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communication Tools		The use of the Council of Europe logo and Cultural Routes identity across the Hanse Cities network has been very weak	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A code of good practice (Visibility charter for the members), is needed; it can be also introduced as a formal requirement for the member organisations.
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. List of references

References provided by the Hansa Cultural Route and checked by the evaluator include the following:

Bylaws – Association "HanseVerein - Verein zur Förderung des internationalen Städtebunds DIE HANSE, 05.11.2016
 Members List
 Minutes of GA in 2017, 2018, 2019
 Projects of the members (presentations, supporting images and brochures)
 Brochure on the Cultural Route
 Programme of Hanseatic Days in Pskov (video material)
 Supporting images
 Supporting materials from the COSME and Interreg Projects
 Supporting Information for the Re-accreditation of the Council of Europe's Hansa Cultural Route

Documents not included in the dossier for the evaluation:

3-year programme of Activities forecast
 3-year budget summary forecast

Not all documents required for the evaluation had been duly submitted by the Cultural Route, however, it has been possible to get a good overview of its activities and achievements and to inform this report.

6. Annex 1: Expert field visit

Visits were made to network members in Germany and Latvia and Skype or video conference calls held with others in Germany and the Netherlands.

Date of visit	Organisation & Location	Persons met and role
27/11/2019	HANSE Office/Rathaus, Lübeck, Germany	Ms Inger Harlevi, Manager of the Route Ms Stefanie Bischof, Secretary General
27/11/2019	European Hansa Museum, Lübeck, Germany	Ms Felicia Sternfeld, Director of the Museum
1/12/2019	Straupe, Latvia - Visit to the Straupe Castle	Ms Rudīte Vasile, representative of the member town/city, coordinator of the Interreg Central Baltic HANSA Project
1/12/2019	Limbaži, Latvia - Visit to the Old Town - Limbaži Museum tour	Ms Ilze Millere, representative of the member town/city, coordinator of the Interreg Central Baltic HANSA Project
1/12/2019	Cēsis, Latvia - Old town tour	Ms Andra Magone, representative of the member

	- Meeting with the representatives of the all four cities	town/city
2/12/2019	Valmiera, Latvia - Old town tour - Valmiera Museum tour and presentation of new projects and investments	Ms Zane Krūmiņa, representative of the member town/city, coordinator of the Interreg Central Baltic HANSA Project

Skype/Video & Telephone Call

13/11/2019	Zwolle, the Netherlands	Ms Elisabeth Stoit, member of the Steering Committee, representative of a member town/city, HANSATOUR Project, Interreg A Project,
29/11/2019	Neuss, Germany	Mr Rachid Hamdaoui, youthHansa

7. Annex 2: Expert assessment checklist

		EXPERT ASSESSMENT CHECK-LIST	
		Yes	No
3.1 THEME	Does the theme of the Route		
	- represent a common value - historical, cultural, or heritage -to several European countries?	1	0
	- offer a solid basis for youth cultural and educational exchanges?	1	0
	innovative activities?	1	0
	cultural tourism products development?	1	0
	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	1	0
3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development			
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	Does the Route		
	- offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	1	0
	- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	1	0
	- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1	0
	- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1	0
	- have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1	0
	- have a multidisciplinary scientific committee?	1	0
Does the scientific Committee			

work on its theme at the European level?	1	0
carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on:		
- theoretical level?	1	0
- practical level?	1	0
3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage		
Do the Route activities (according with the theme)		
- take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	1	0
- promote the CoE values?	1	0
- promote the CoE CRs brand?	1	0
- work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	1	0
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in rural destinations?	0	1
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	1	0
- valorize the heritage of ethnic or social minorities in Europe?	0	1
- contribute to a better understanding of the concept of cultural heritage, the importance of its preservation and sustainable development?	1	0
- enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	1	0
- take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning (European Cultural Convention, Faro convention, European Landscape Convention, World Heritage Convention, ...)?	1	0
3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans		
Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to		
- develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	1	0
- emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	1	0
- encourage social integration and exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe?	1	0
- offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	1	0
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts?	1	0
- set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	1	0
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	1	0
3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice		
Do the Route's cultural activities (contemporary cultural and artistic practice related)		
- promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?	1	0

	- encourage artistic projects that establish the links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	1	0
	- encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	1	0
	- encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?*	1	0
	-encourage debate and exchange - in a multidisciplinary and intercultural perspective - between various cultural and artistic expressions in different countries of Europe?	1	0
	- encourage activities and artistic projects which explore the links between heritage and contemporary culture?	1	0
	- highlight the most innovative and creative practices?	1	0
	- link these innovative and creative practices with the history of skills development?***	1	0
	3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development		
	Do the Route's activities (relevant to sustainable cultural tourism development)		
	- assist in local, regional, national and/ or European identity formation?	1	0
	- actively involve 3 major means to raise awareness of their cultural projects: print, broadcast and social media?	1	0
	- promote dialogue between		
	urban and rural communities and cultures?	0	1
	developed and disadvantaged regions?	1	0
	different parts (south, north, east, west) of Europe?	1	0
	majority and minority (or native and immigrant) cultures?	0	1
	- open possibilities for co-operation between Europe and other continents?	0	1
	- draw decision makers' attention to the necessity of protecting heritage as part of sustainable development of the territory?	1	0
	- aim to diversify of cultural product, service and activities offers?	1	0
	- develop and offer quality cultural tourism products, services or activities transnationally?	1	0
	- develop partnerships with public and private organisations active in the field of tourism?	1	0
3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION	Did the network prepare and use tools all along the route to raise the number of visitors and the economic impacts of the route on the territories crossed?	0	1
	Does the Route represent a network involving at least three Council of Europe's member states?	1	0
	Was the theme of the network chosen and accepted by its members?	1	0
	Was the conceptual framework for this network founded on a scientific basis?	0	1
	Does the network involve several Council of Europe member states in all or part of its project(s)?	1	0
	Is the network financially sustainable?	1	0
	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	1	0
	Does the network operate democratically?	1	0
3.3 NETWORK			

