

THE CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 185 (2004)¹ on the promotion of cultural tourism as a factor of development of the regions

The Congress, bearing in mind the proposal of the Chamber of Regions,

1. Having regard to the work carried out in the Council of Europe, and in particular:

a. Recommendation Rec(2003)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion of tourism to foster cultural heritage as a factor for sustainable development;

b. Recommendation No. R (94) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a general policy for sustainable tourism and environment-friendly tourism development;

c. Recommendation No. R (95) 10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on a sustainable tourist development policy in protected areas;

d. Resolution No (98) 4 of the Committee of Ministers on cultural routes of the Council of Europe;

e. Recommendation 1133 (1990) on European tourism policies and Resolution 1148 (1998) on the need to accelerate the development of tourism in central and eastern Europe, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe;

f. Recommendation 31 (1997) and Recommendation 40 (1998) of the Congress on the preliminary draft European landscape convention;

g. declarations adopted at the European Symposia of Historic Towns by the Congress;

2. Bearing in mind the work of other international organisations and institutions, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), the European Union, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (Icomos) and the World Tourism Organisation;

3. Acknowledging that tourism has become a complex, rapidly changing phenomenon, with important economic, social, cultural, educational, scientific and aesthetic dimensions;

4. Noting that tourism offers the opportunity to discover other regions and cultures, and that the development of tourism in general, and by regional authorities in

particular, can help to bring people closer together, creating a respectful awareness of the diversity of cultures and lifestyles;

5. Considering that cultural tourism is a form of tourism which allows people to discover sites and monuments and the mosaic of places, traditions, art forms, celebrations and experiences that portray a region and its inhabitants;

6. Convinced that tourism helps to bring peoples together, to develop the feeling of a European identity and to raise awareness of the values of the cultural heritage of peoples in their regional diversity, while promoting respect for different cultures and constituting a factor for tolerance;

7. Aware of the work on various cultural routes, which have been identified by the European Institute of Cultural Routes;

8. Noting the recent tendency of European governments to transfer responsibility for tourism to regional authorities;

9. Convinced of the importance of creating high quality sustainable regional cultural tourism, which raises awareness about the European cultural heritage,

10. Invites the regional authorities of the Council of Europe member states to:

a. proceed methodically in the strategy for sustainable development of cultural tourism;

b. study the short, medium and long-term effects of tourism development, especially aspects related to the historical, cultural, social and economic context;

c. develop a practical methodology for making an inventory of the heritage and analysing the tourism potential of the particular heritage;

d. set up special working structures for the promotion and development of a regional tourism strategy;

e. organise the participation and consultation of all parties concerned in the drawing up and implementation of a regional strategy, including conservation specialists, owners and managers of sites, tourism professionals, representatives of the transport sector, local elected representatives, associations and the population at large;

f. pursue cross-border co-operation and set up regional co-operation bodies in order to promote regional cultural tourism across borders;

g. co-operate, or sign agreements, with professionals within the tourism business, such as tour operators, with a view to promoting cultural tourism in their regions;

h. aim at offering tourists as diversified touristic experiences as possible; for example, in addition to the more traditional sites such as archaeological sites, churches, castles and museums, visits based on regional gastronomic traditions, regional rural or industrial produce, etc.;

i. acknowledge that tourism development and infrastructure projects should take account of the aesthetic, social and

cultural dimensions, natural and cultural landscapes, biodiversity characteristics and the broader visual context of heritage places;

j. fully exploit cultural tourism attractions which are of a temporary nature, such as exhibitions, theatre plays, festivals;

k. control the flow of tourists to sensitive cultural heritage sites, which may otherwise suffer physical damage if overexploited;

l. to support the creation of European cultural routes bringing together regions of western, central and eastern Europe to develop tourism strategies, policies and projects;

m. acknowledge that more interregional co-operation in the field of cultural routes should be undertaken in the future along the lines of existing co-operation such as Routes of Pilgrimage, Silk Route, Viking Heritage, European Route of Brick Gothic, etc.;

n. promote regional co-operation in the framework of existing cultural routes and give particular importance to projects bringing together regions of western and eastern Europe;

o. exchange experiences with regard to the transfer and sharing of competences between central government level and regions;

p. arrange training for their officials and elected regional politicians in how to promote and profit from cultural tourism in an optimal but sustainable manner;

q. profit from new technologies such as the Internet when promoting cultural tourism in their regions;

r. carry out periodic evaluations so that, if need be, objectives can be adjusted, priorities can be changed and working methods or planned activities can be reviewed, in the light of experience;

s. create and promote networks and to set up partnerships for the promotion of regional cultural tourism on a larger scale;

t. support local or regional initiatives launched by various civil society groups, associations or organisations to promote regional cultural heritage projects such as folk festivals, theatre, book fairs, song and music festivals in regional languages and traditions, as a driving force for regional cultural tourism;

11. Invites the Committee on Culture and Education of the Chamber of Regions to continue its work on cultural tourism, in particular that related to European cultural routes, in co-operation with Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, and where appropriate with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Regions on 25 May 2004 and adopted by the Standing Committee of the Congress on 27 May 2004 (see Document CPR (11) 3, draft resolution presented by G. Virag (Romania, R, EPP/CD) and G. Krug (Germany, R, NR), rapporteurs).