

## Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Evaluation Cycle 2018-2019

### Expert report

## VIKING ROUTES

*Susan Bagwell*

*Sue Bagwell Research and Consultancy*

[suebagwellrandc@gmail.com](mailto:suebagwellrandc@gmail.com)

+44 (0)7960754901



Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



*\*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.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Introduction	5
3. Main Body Evaluation	6
3.1 Cultural Route Theme	6
3.2 Fields of Action	6
3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development;	6
3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage;	8
3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans;	9
3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice;	10
3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.	11
3.3 Cultural Route Network	13
3.3.1 Network extension since last evaluation	13
3.3.2 Network extension in the three years to come	14
3.4 Communication Tools	14
3.4.1 Compliance with the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”	14
4. Conclusions and Recommendations	16
5. List of references	18
6. Annex 1: Field visit programme	19
7. Annex 2: Checklist	20

## 1. Executive Summary

This report is a certification evaluation of the Vikings Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. It is based on a desk review of the route using information provided to the European Institute for Cultural Routes, internet research, interviews with members of the route, and site visits. Having reviewed this evidence the evaluation has concluded that:

1. The Viking Route still strongly fulfils 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 to several different European countries.
2. The Viking Route has illustrated that it is involved in activities that conform to all the five priority fields of action
  - Cooperation in research and development
  - Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage
  - Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans
  - Contemporary cultural and artistic practice
  - Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

Minor recommendations include the development of a database of research expertise, considering the establishment of a virtual scientific committee, collection of statistics on youth programme participants, and a stronger web presence with links to tourism organisations.

3. The Cultural Route Network is managed the Destination Viking Association (DVA) – a democratically run organisation with 68 members spread across 16 countries. There is regular communication and sharing of expertise across the network and collaboration on key projects.

Financially the management of the network is sustainable through income generated from projects and membership fees.

4. Visibility of certification has greatly improved since the last evaluation and is now specified by the DVA in a code of conduct for members. The home and landing pages of the webpage will soon be translated into French.

<b>Summary of the conclusions table</b>		
<b>According to Annex 2 – Check list,</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The theme complies with the eligibility criteria for themes, CM/Res(2013)67, I. List of eligibility criteria for themes.	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria listed in CM/Res(2013)67, II. List of priority fields of action.	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route complies with the criteria for networks, as in CM/Res (2013)67, III. List of criteria for networks.	<b>x</b>	
The Cultural Route implements the Guidelines for the Use of the Logo “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe”	<b>x</b>	
<b>Therefore the certification Cultural Route of the Council of Europe</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Should be renewed</b>	<b>x</b>	

## 2. Introduction

This report has been undertaken as part of the re-evaluation process of the Viking Cultural route of the Council of Europe.

The Viking Age lasted from approximately AD 700 - 1100 during which time the Vikings developed unrivalled boat building, navigational and seamanship skills allowing them to travel widely throughout Northern and Western Europe, the North Atlantic, into the Mediterranean and deep into Russia. They raided, traded and settled in many of these places establishing important mercantile centres in many areas and leaving a clear legacy behind them wherever they went. This can be seen in their early law courts, known as Things, local place names and language, social structures, their legacies of art and literature, and surviving architecture and archaeological sites. The Vikings had profound cultural effects on the societies they visited, transforming them as well as the Scandinavian homelands themselves. These effects resonate in the culture and identities of today's modern European societies.

The Viking Cultural Route includes a wide-ranging and far-reaching collection of sites and cultural heritage attractions relating to the shared Viking heritage of Europe and beyond. It is a traceable and identifiable non-linear journey through the Viking world that includes examples of forts, towns, farms, quarries, ships, objects, and museums, archaeological remains and reconstructed longhouses. This borderless Route encourages the exchange of stories, ideas and travel between shared Viking roots. It first received certification from the Council of Europe in 1993.

Since 2007 the Route has been managed by the Destination Viking Association (DVA) whose stated purpose is, 'to bring together diverse organisations promoting, researching, disseminating and demonstrating the widest Viking heritage, and to develop authentic and quality Viking Tourism experiences for local, regional, European and world-wide audiences'. The membership is made up of 68 organisations from 16 countries and includes a wide range of museums, attractions, sites and organisations not just within Europe but in places as far afield as Canada in the west, Russia in the east, Norway in the north, and Spain in the south. The DVA is a voluntary organisation with an elected board of 12 including a chair, two vice chairs, a treasurer, and secretary. The Shetland Amenity Trust in Scotland, UK, provides administration.

In 2015 the DVA secured a €2 million grant from the EU's Creative Europe programme for a major project designed to raise the visibility of the network. A large amount of the network's activity over the last three years has focused on delivering this project - *Follow the Vikings (FTV)*. The project has enabled an intensified exchange of knowledge and experience between the network members and others involved in Viking tourism as well as supporting the creation of joint transnational presentations and products on Viking legacy. It has included an International Touring Event that incorporates specially commissioned performances by contemporary artists from all over Europe to create a stunning visual celebration of European Viking heritage and raise awareness of Viking heritage and tourism. Seminars organised as part of the project have enabled the DVA network to develop skills in marketing and managing Viking attractions, website and social media development, all leading to a greater level of professionalism within the organisation. The project has also strengthened the network and provided the foundation for a range of future collaborations with both with existing and new members and those beyond the network.

### **3. Main Body Evaluation**

The evaluation of the Viking 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 submitted by the route, direct contact with a number of its members, visits to a selection of sites, information provided by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and internet based research has been used to further inform this evaluation report.

#### **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 Vikings travelled widely across Europe and settled and left traces of their culture on many areas thereby influencing the structure and culture of modern day Europe. The Viking Route focuses on this shared tangible and intangible heritage.

The Viking theme easily lends itself to fulfilling the eligibility criteria for a European Cultural Route. There is a wide body of research on the Vikings undertaken in numerous academic institutions and museums across Europe and beyond. This expertise has been used to inform the development of the Route and continues to help ensure the authenticity of its activities and attractions. There is a strong interest in the Vikings among young and old alike and tremendous scope for applying the study of Viking culture to youth cultural and educational exchanges. The tremendous appeal of the Vikings provides an ideal opportunity for the development of innovative new cultural activities and tourism products.

Thus the theme is fully in accordance with all 6 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 Viking 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 each field individually and provide the important highlights.

##### **3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development;**

Research forms a vital aspect of the activities of the Destination Viking Association (DVA). Members are involved in managing a wide range of museums, sites, cultural and educational events which all rely on research to ensure the authenticity of the attractions and activities offered. These are constantly being revised as new research emerges. For example the reconstruction of the Viking houses in the Fotevikens fortress in Sweden and the Trelleborg fortress in Denmark was based on archaeological evidence and research, and as new research on Viking building design emerges the buildings are modified accordingly.

Much of the research undertaken has helped to provide a better understanding of Viking culture and counter stereotypical views of Vikings as warriors with horned helmets who were only involved in raping and pillaging. Research into Viking 'Things' (meeting places where political decisions were made, laws upheld and disputes settled) provides evidence of a society with its own legal system. Whilst the discovery of the skeletons of two women in a well-preserved Viking ship burial grave provide evidence of the fact that women were also involved in travelling. Thus the study of Viking culture illustrates how the Vikings travelled

around Europe and beyond, but rather than just being about conquest the Viking story is also one of migration, settlement and transnational collaboration – themes that are of vital importance today. Viking culture illustrates a number of important European values – including a common identity, unity and diversity, and intercultural dialogue. The study of the Vikings can be used as a basis for discussion on these topics today.

The DVA has a wide range of links with research bodies including some of the leading institutions undertaking research on the Vikings. Three University Departments are DVA members; the Universities of Stavanger and Oslo in Norway, and the Centre for Nordic Studies, at the University of Highlands and Islands in Shetland. Many DVA members have strong relationships with other Universities and research institutions and some also publish research themselves. For example in 2018 Manx National Heritage published a new book on the Manx Crosses by Sir David Wilson, former Director of the British Museum. The Roskilde Viking Ships Museum, in Denmark has produced a particularly large number of research outputs, which have been widely published and/or presented at numerous local and international conferences and other events.

As part of the Follow the Vikings (FTV) project a seminar was held which included presentations on different aspects of Viking Culture by leading academics in the field, historians and museum staff. A number of pieces of research relating to best practice were also commissioned and were undertaken by PhD students. For example one study focused on developing a better understanding of what attracts visitors to the Viking period and this led to the development of a market segmentation of different visitor types. The results of the study are being incorporated into a best practice guide.

The last evaluation noted that whilst there was active collaboration with some of the major academic research institutions with an interest in the Vikings, this tended to be carried out on a project-by-project basis. The report recommended that a formal scientific committee be created under the Destination Viking Association in order to completely fulfil the Cultural Routes of Europe criteria and to help co-ordinate and centrally promote research. This suggestion has been considered by the network but has not been implemented for a number of reasons. The network has pointed out that many research partnerships and activities were well established before the DVA was set up and that much of the research on Vikings tends to be co-ordinated at a national level and is usually tied to funding streams within each jurisdiction. Different members of the network also concentrate on different aspects of Viking heritage. Iceland for example specialises on Sagas and literature. Research partnerships also tend to focus on links between institutions and projects focusing on the same issue. Thus Roskilde works with a wide range of bodies interested in Viking ships both inside and outside the DVA network.

Instead of forming a scientific committee the DVA has developed close links with the Viking Congress – an international academic gathering of scholars of Viking culture that meets every four years. The DVA has sponsored and played a key role in the organisation of the Congress for a number of years. In 2017 the Congress was held in Denmark at the DVA member sites of Trelleborg and Roskilde.

The issue of whether to set up a specific scientific committee is being kept under review by the DVA and an interim target for the organisation is to increase the number of Universities in its membership. Members of the DVA differ in the extent to which they have links with research institutions with the larger organisations tending to have the strongest links and sometimes in-house research staff. Smaller and newer members of the DVA may need more support in gaining access to research expertise. The network itself already provides for a 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 DVA could consider formalising this support by creating a register of research experts and technical specialists. 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 of common benefit – the research undertaken on Viking markets provides a case in point. A scientific committee would be a good means of identifying key areas where such research needs to be identified, commissioned and disseminated, ensuring its quality and authenticity as well as informing educational programmes. This need not require a huge investment of time and resources but could for example be a virtual committee that convened once a year or as and when discussion on key topics would be beneficial. It could identify areas of research that could be undertaken by PhD students, or collaborations with research institutions that might attract research project funding.

### **3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage;**

The DVA and its network members are involved in a wide range of activities that encourage the enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage – both tangible and intangible.

The Vikings travelled widely and settled in and colonised many of the places they went to. Many attractions managed by members of the DVA are actively involved in explaining and interpreting this heritage. For example the newly reconfigured JORVIK Viking Centre in York, UK, offers visitors a ride back in time to experience the sights, sounds and smells of Viking-age York. The setting created includes 22 animatronic figures whose characters have been carefully researched to portray a citizen or visitor to Jorvik. Each character has been voiced in Old Norse, Old English or Old Irish using translations completed by specialists working at the University of York and Bath. They include a trader from the Eastern Mediterranean that has landed to sell his silks, a slave trader from Dublin pulling his Irish slave from the ship, and others who left their mark on the city of Jorvik, such as the antler worker, blacksmith and pole lathe worker.

Vikings were some of the first transnationals and the importance and extent of their maritime culture is highlighted throughout the DVA network. For example the Rosala Viking Centre in Finland highlights the history of its Viking harbour and trading place that was situated in the offshore archipelago in the Southwest of Finland at the route to Russia and the Black Sea. Modern day Viking festivals are held in numerous locations to celebrate the Vikings maritime adventures. A good example is the annual Viking festival held every August in Catoira, Spain. The highlight of this weeklong event is a spectacular re-enactment of the Viking invasions that occurred a thousand years ago. Local people dressed as Viking invaders arrive at the northern Spanish coast on board a replica 11th-century Viking vessel with the goal of capturing Torres de Oeste Castle.

The Saga is a world famous literary form closely associated with the Vikings in general and Iceland in particular. Several of the Icelandic partners use acting and storytelling as a form of introducing Viking culture and the Icelandic Sagas. The Lofotr Viking Museum, in Norway, famous for its reconstructed banqueting hall, has developed a scripted performance that includes music and excerpts from the Viking Sagas and is delivered as part of a theatrical banquet in the Hall.

The Vikings had an enormous impact on Northern Europe and beyond. Within Scandinavia the Viking Period witnessed the transformation from tribal to state societies and a change of religions. The three Christian kingdoms that developed from this transformation, and out of



which the present Nordic States evolved, were by the end of the Viking Age an integral part of Europe. The Vikings also had a well-organised legal system. Gulating in Norway is the site of one of the oldest and largest regional Viking Parliaments and Courts of Law in Norway (800-1300AD) and the Gulating Millennium site was established to commemorate the legacy of this form of direct democratic institution.

Thus, Viking culture has contributed significantly to the creation of cultural coherence, symbolic values and cultural identity of much of northern Europe. Many aspects of Viking Culture and its modern day interpretation by members of the DVA network echo the Council of Europe's (CoE) core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Members of the DVA have been involved in the identification and restoration of a number of sights where Vikings settled. Several of these sites have World Heritage status and are members of ICOMOS. Larger sites often employ archaeologists and other experts to ensure that recommendations on heritage preservation are complied with. These sites and attractions are constantly being developed as new research emerges.

The development of new Viking museums in recent years has helped revive local areas by bringing cultural tourism and creating jobs for local people. Most tangible heritage sites tend to be in rural areas as Viking archaeological sites in city areas are less likely to have survived. An exception is the York JORVIK Viking Centre in the UK, and the Waterford Treasures, Three Museums in the Viking Triangle, in Ireland, both of which have provided a focal point for the regeneration of the inner city area.

### **3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans;**

The Vikings is a topic that is hugely popular with young people and many DVA members run cultural and educational activities that are very successful in engaging young people in learning more about Viking heritage. These activities tend to be locally based, as the DVA does not have a budget or infrastructure to support transnational exchange programmes. These activities often attract young overseas tourists, however, thereby encouraging international dialogue and cultural exchange.

Many of these activities allow young people to actively participate in events or experience what life was like in Viking times. For example at the new visitor centre in Stavanger, Norway, children can learn how to play traditional Viking games. At the Fotevikens centre in Sweden school children can spend a week learning how to live like a Viking, staying in the re-constructed Viking houses. Many come from disadvantaged communities and the experience helps them develop vital work and employability skills. Those with particular learning difficulties, such as autism or attention deficit disorder, have particularly benefited from the programme. Acting as a Viking guard at the site has proved to be particularly popular. Similarly staff at the JORVIK Viking centre in York, UK, have also found that the topic of the Vikings can be used to engage with autistic children, and staff from the centre have received special training for this purpose.

DVA members use Viking culture to introduce young people to topics that are of key concern today. Schools use Viking history and visits to attractions as a means of stimulating discussion on many of the key values that are highlighted by the CoE. For example the Viking tradition of taking slaves, which is highlighted in several museums, is used as a means of discussing modern day slavery. The transnational and multicultural nature of some of the Viking settlements also provides an opportunity to discuss issues linked to multiculturalism today. A study of the Vikings is often integrated into the school curriculum. At the Trelleborg Viking Fortress, in Denmark, maths and science are made more exciting by

introducing practical tasks such as how to measure the dimensions of a Viking house or longboat. This has been proved to be particularly effective in educational support programmes for refugees. For example Syrian children have been able to study the geometry of a Viking house thus bringing an otherwise rather abstract topic to life.

The FTV Roadshow has included an outreach programme with schools and young people in each of the areas it has visited. These sessions have been led by the York JORVIK Viking Centre who has worked in partnership with local organisations to deliver programmes to groups of local school children designed to teach them about Viking heritage and culture.

In each city where the Roadshow was staged young people from the local area also had a chance to be involved as stage make-up artists learning new skills that might support their future career. For example when the Roadshow was held in Dublin, Ireland, in March 2018, specialist make-up artists from the TV production 'The Vikings' led make-up workshops for degree students from the local Make-up School at the Institute of Design and Technology. The students were able to use these as part of their credits towards their 4-year degree programme. In Waterford, Ireland, young locals were involved along with the cast in the Roadshow and Festival, in make-up, drumming and a torchlight procession.

A few DVA members have started to organise transnational exchanges for young people. Trelleborg Viking Fortress in Denmark has participated in a transnational school exchange programme supported by the Lions Club during which youngsters spent time at the Viking Fortress. The Fotevikens Museum in Sweden is planning an Erasmus project that will incorporate a summer exchange of young people from different parts of Europe and will involve teaching traditional handicraft skills including making honey.

Thus the DVA network as a whole is clearly engaging with several thousand young people each year from across Europe and beyond. Some members of the network have provided an estimate of the numbers involved, but the DVA does not have an exact figure for the network as a whole. It is recommended that this data be compiled in the future, as an estimate of the total number and diversity of visitors to the DVA's Viking sites would assist with project development and fundraising applications.

### **3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice;**

The DVA network is engaged in several activities in which contemporary cultural and artistic practice draws on traditional Viking heritage. The Vikings had a strong tradition of crafts including metal working, knitting and jewellery making, and their designs have had a strong influence on current day practice. Traditional dance and poetry has also been adapted for modern productions.

The Follow the Vikings (FTV) project cultural programme is a key example of this. The Roadshow, which formed one of the key outputs of this major EU project, is based on the traditional Viking saga of Egil Skallagrimsson and the poem "Head Ransom". It is a contemporary production where actors perform to a digital backdrop. The show highlights Viking heritage, with a particular focus on Viking art and its legacy. The Roadshow has a core cast from the network and beyond, including drummers/fire-eaters from Catoira, the Spanish project partner, who have participated in a number of the events. However it also engages local dancers, drummers, warriors and others engaged within living history and heritage sectors to participate in the show. The Roadshow is supplemented with an Outreach

Programme, where members of the public can learn more about Vikings, Viking sites and places of interest on the cultural route. Each location has sought out professional and amateur artists and performers, as well as members of the public, both young and old, to be involved in their local event. These groups and individuals are given the exclusive opportunity to work with the project's creative producer and professional choreographer, as well as specialists drawn from the local region, including make-up artists, musicians and dance professionals. The Roadshows therefore support the development of new or enhanced career skills for the professional artists and the partners' staff. They enable the artists to work in international co-operation and open opportunities to internationalise their careers. They also offer opportunities for members of the local communities to acquire new skills that can be used to further their careers in whatever artistic field they wish to pursue.

Member attractions and DVA events are increasingly integrating traditional Viking heritage with modern day culture and new technologies. The National Museum of Denmark, for example, has recently launched a special exhibition *Meet the Vikings* with scenography designed by the famous designer and modern day Viking Jim Lyngvild. The Waterford Treasures, Three Museums in the Viking Triangle, in Ireland offers *The King of the Vikings Virtual Reality Experience* that is the first of its kind in the world. It takes place in the reconstructed Viking house and seamlessly blends cutting edge technology with ancient Viking house building techniques.

At the JORVIK Viking Centre in York, UK, visitors have the opportunity to be immersed in a Viking city in which life-like animatronic figures portray the every day way of life, and which recreates the smells and sounds of the time. One character is a storyteller sitting by a hearth, recounting part of the Poetic Edda in Old Norse, whilst animations illustrating the story of Ragnarök, (the end of the world), shoot out of the fire.

Viking sites are regularly used for Viking festivals and markets and provide an opportunity for visitors to learn about traditional Viking handicrafts and cultural practices as well as for modern day artists to sell Viking inspired wares. Vikingagården Gunnes gård, Sweden operates a traditional Viking farm but also employs a contemporary textile artist to provide modern interpretations of period patterns and weaving. Trelleborg fortress in Denmark uses art, music and theatre as a means of engaging with younger people in its Viking Festival and widening their understanding of Viking Europe. Similarly at the Stiftelsen Sør-Troms Museum, Norway contemporary dance, music and theatre are used as part of the Viking festival.

TV programmes and film producers have also used several sites as a venue for historic and adapted productions. Fotevikens museum in Sweden for example has been host to 30 films in the last year.

### **3.2.5 Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.**

Thousands of people across Europe and beyond identify as Vikings and/or have a strong interest in Viking culture. The Fotevikens museum in Sweden estimated that there are around 10,000 Vikings moving around different Viking sites each summer, and Viking groups exist as far afield as Texas in the US, Japan and Australia. Much of popularity of the Vikings can be attributed to recent films and TV shows. However the DVA has also undoubtedly contributed to the growing interest and sense of a shared Viking identity through its visitor attractions, Viking festivals and other cultural events.

The development of authentic and quality Viking Tourism experiences is a major objective of the DVA and most of its members represent Viking museums or cultural events. These are

welcoming an increasing number of visitors each year. For example the Fotevikens Museum in Sweden attracts 60,000 visitors a year 93% of which are from overseas. The Trelleborg fortress in Denmark attracted 87,000 visitors in 2017, and Lofotr Viking Museum in Norway, famous for its reconstructed banqueting hall attracts an incredible 100,000 visitors annually from across Europe and America.

Viking Festivals have also become important tourist attractions. For example the annual Viking festival in Catoira attracts 30,000 visitors on the main day. The Follow the Viking Roadshow itself has attracted large audiences in many cities. Over 3,000 people watched the show in Copenhagen, 1,556 in Dublin, 3,100 in Waterford, 2,500 in Catoira, and 1,800 in Gunnesgard, Sweden.

Collaboration across the DVA partnership, particularly through the FTV project, which has 15 partners, has resulted in a sharing of experience and dialogue between organisations across different parts of Europe (north, south, east and west), as well as from urban and regional areas, and more affluent and disadvantaged communities. Language and cultural differences have had to be overcome, but this has provided an important source of learning and cultural exchange that the participants have found to be invaluable. Those interviewed for this evaluation emphasised the benefit of membership as a means of sharing knowledge and expertise on Viking heritage and the management of attractions and events. Seminars organised for the FTV project and the DVA's AGMs always include visits to Viking attractions in the host country giving participants a chance to see how other Viking museums and attractions are presented.

These attractions and events undoubtedly enhance tourism numbers and provide a boost to the local economy by creating jobs and stimulating related local businesses. Research by Visit York tourism in the UK suggests that the economic impact of the annual Jorvik Viking Festival in York is around £6m per annum. Some local policy makers recognise the value of Viking festivals and provide financial or promotional support. For example the regional government provides financial and marketing support for Catoira's Viking festival as they recognise its importance to local tourism.

The DVA members are clearly working hard to market their cultural projects to a wide range of audiences and in developing new innovative tourism products. Most of the members surveyed by the DVA in 2017 reported that they had links with local and/or national tourism organisations. Shetland Amenity Trust, for example works with VisitScotland, Promote Shetland, and Historic Environment Shetland. Viking tourism is highly successful in Iceland and the DVA partner (Iceland Saga & Heritage Association ISHA) works closely with many of the biggest tour operators such as Iceland Tours, Reykjavik Excursions, Iceland Excursions, and Promote Iceland (Íslandsstofa). The Sagas and Shadows storytelling programme developed by L'Anse aux Meadows Historic Site, Parks Canada is promoted through Visit Canada, and Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism. There are numerous other examples of similar partnerships.

Often DVA members collaborate with tour operators to provide specialist Viking input to tours. Shetland Amenity Trust provide a guide and lectures related to Viking themes to the Archaeological Institute of America and the tour operator Andante. Several DVA members have developed links with cruise ship operators. Lofotr Viking museum works with numerous tour operators and specialises in handling cruise ships, working with Destination Lofoten and Visit Norway. Similarly Manx National Heritage in the Isle of Man is collaborating with Cruise Isle of Man on a Viking history route.

A range of new tourism products has been developed. The Museum Vestsjælland, Denmark has worked with the local tourism organisation Visit Vestsjælland to offer bus trips to the three local Viking sites as one trip. They have participated, along with other Viking museums, in a huge scale Viking Voyage with several Viking ships around the island of Sjælland, and have been working with a local Restaurant – Bispegården in Kalundborg to develop a Viking menu.

The DVA has been engaging in a joint retail initiative across its membership commissioning the production of high quality souvenirs that can be brought in bulk and sold by several members' attractions. Mobile phone covers, temporary tattoos and metal products are found to be particularly popular. This will lead to economies of scale and increased income for partners. Production is being undertaken by Asgard, a small company based in Scotland that makes replica pewter, bronze and silver Viking period artefacts for the general public, and a number of museum clients and organisations. Former staff of the York Archaeological Trust who were trained archaeologists set up the company. Their training allows museums to have confidence in their ability to handle and understand museum artefacts and so they have developed a range of commercial products based on real items that have a significant level of authenticity and accuracy. The company has also generated a range of social media and educational YouTube videos that explain the techniques used by Viking craftspeople. Collaboration with this company has also enabled the DVA members to develop a greater understanding of "real world" marketing, pricing and packaging issues as well as sustainability and safety issues to do with the use of metals.

The DVA recognises that there is still considerable scope for developing its marketing and promotional activity and tourism products. Whilst members promote their own organisations through a range of print, broadcast and social media channels, there has been limited promotion of the DVA route as a whole apart from the website. A guide to the various attractions is currently in production as part of the FTV project.

There are a number of other strategies that the network could also adopt to encourage visitors to visit multiple Viking attractions. Establishing a Friends organisation whereby membership of one attraction automatically gives access to others in the network might be a useful means of promoting the network as a whole. It was also suggested that the CoE could help by raising awareness of Cultural Routes in general and producing a leaflet highlighting all the different Routes. This could be made available at attractions throughout the Cultural Routes network.

### **3.3 Cultural Route Network**

The DVA is a voluntary organisation established and registered under Swedish Law. Membership is open to those working in fields associated with its aims and covers a diverse range of organisations including museums, academic institutions, and commercial enterprises and not for profit organisations. It operates on a democratic basis with an AGM being held each year to elect board members.

#### **3.3.1 Network extension since last evaluation**

The DVA network has grown considerably over the last three years. The last evaluation in 2014-15 reported that there were 36 members from 13 countries. In 2018 it now includes 68 members from 16 countries.

The elected board members have met 3-4 times a year over the last three years and have also started using video conferencing as a means of keeping in more regular contact with members. The board includes members from 6 different EU countries. Projects established

by the DVA have also involved members from several different member states. There are 15 partners in the FTV project for example.

### **3.3.2 Network extension in the three years to come**

During the next three years there are plans to invite key organisations to join the network on a more systematic basis. In particular the aim is to ensure that the national museum and leading visitor agency of each member state are signed up as members.

The DVA has relied on membership fees and project income to ensure its financial sustainability and fund the administration of the network. Income from the FTV project has funded a project manager and allowed for a greater spending on network administration, and marketing. Once the project ends in 2019 the DVA will need alternative sources of income to fund these key core activities. Following a Governance Review which included a survey of members in 2017, different categories of membership and a substantial increase in the membership fee have been agreed to help cover these vital costs. The financial projections suggest that this will generate €14,000 per annum by 2021. A greater reliance on electronic communications will also help keep costs down.

A number of new projects are being developed by groups of members that build on the activities of the FTV project. The board has identified 3 key areas where work from the FTV project could be further developed and funding sought. These are education, marketing, and events. Small working groups have been set up to look at each one. Ideas include developing the FTV Roadshow as a cultural product that could be taken to and held in many more cities on a commercial basis. Partners in the UK, Ireland, Denmark and Norway are looking at sharing knowledge about how to present Viking heritage to schools. There are also plans to develop collaboration with some other CoE Cultural Routes – in particular the Hansa that has a number of sites in common with the Viking route. The existing Viking Games held between Sweden and Denmark could also be extended.

## **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 (a Viking longboat) 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 DVA has worked hard to use the visual identity more. This has been done in three key ways

- a. Using the identity in the many and various outputs delivered through the FTV project
- b. Encouraging members to use the formal identity in their domestic and individual activity
- c. Embedding this use formally in a Code of Practice for members

It has not been possible to visit every attraction and view every form of marketing material developed by each member. It is clearly not always practical for some of the larger attractions such as national museums that have exhibits from several different periods and receive multiple sources of funding to display each sponsor's logo. However for specific DVA projects the CoE and Cultural route logo seems to be being used as specified by the CoE.

The manager of the FTV project, Shetland Amenity Trust reported that 'The Council of Europe identity is used in all Follow the Vikings project outputs, literature and related social media'. Responses to a members survey conducted by the DVA also suggested that the vast majority of members had adopted this practice. Others have gone further. Waterford incorporates the logo in its email signature and in the Avaldsnes Royal Palace Project, Norway the logo is used on signage in the landscape and at the main site.

At present there is a DVA website ([www.destinationviking.com](http://www.destinationviking.com)) and a website for the FTV project ([www.followthevikings.com](http://www.followthevikings.com)). A new website is currently under construction which will merge the two. The website is currently only in English but there are plans to have the homepage and landing pages translated into French soon. A small pamphlet presenting a Podcast (Follow the Vikings – let's conquer the World) produced as part of the FTV project is written in five languages.

The DVA recognises that its web presence needs to be strengthened. In particular it needs to do more to ensure that the DVA appears higher up on Google searches for Viking tourism and that it is linked to the websites of key tourism organisations.

The FTV project has provided the resources to enable the DVA to adopt a much stronger visual identity. Marketing material such as posters, leaflets and a magazine (Hugin & Munin) have been produced and a new website and guide book are currently being developed. The organisation has also embraced social media more actively. The FTV project's Facebook page which is managed by the Shetland Amenity Trust has attracted 4.5K followers and its Instagram account has 26.5K followers. The DVA does not appear to be active on Twitter. There is clearly scope for making greater use of social media, but this requires dedicated resources and staff time. The budget for the next three years anticipates additional income being generated from increased membership fees some of which (€1k in 2019 rising to €6k in 2021) will be used to fund staff time for administration. It remains to be seen whether this will be sufficient to cover a substantial increase in social media activity.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the research undertaken for this evaluation it is recommended that the certification of the Viking Route should be maintained. It is an active and highly competent member of the Cultural Routes of Europe network and has continued to grow in strength and professionalism over the last few years. It has largely responded to critique and recommendations made during the previous evaluation cycle and has a built strong foundation for future activity.

The theme of the route is based on a solid basis of shared European cultural and historical heritage. There is strong evidence of the Viking's legacy across much of Europe and beyond and this has shaped the structure and culture of modern Europe.

The Viking Route currently has 68 members spread across 16 countries and actively encourages the regular transnational exchange of knowledge and expertise. Members have collaborated on a number of projects.

The Route's Viking theme easily lends itself to fulfilling all the thematic eligibility criteria for European Cultural Routes: it is representative of European values common across a wide area of Europe and it has been researched and developed by academics and organisations from across Europe. The popularity of the Vikings with young and old provides an ideal opportunity for the development of youth cultural and educational exchanges and for the development of innovative new cultural activities and tourism products.

The Route fulfils all the needed requirements in the priority fields of action as outlined below:

*Co-operation in fields of research and development* is very strong. Three universities are members of the DVA network and numerous other academic institutions are actively involved in working with its members on particular projects. The network is also involved in the annual Viking Congress – a conference for leading Viking research experts. This co-operation helps ensure that attractions and activities of network provide an authentic portrayal of Viking history and culture. As a result of these wide-scale existing links with academic organisations the DVA does not currently feel that a formal scientific committee is necessary. However it is recommended that it consider compiling a list of research experts that new and smaller members with less established academic links might particularly find useful. It is also recommended that it consider establishing a virtual scientific committee that could identify and/or commission research that might benefit the DVA network as a whole.

*Enhancement of European memory, history and heritage* is a natural outcome of many of the Route's activities. DVA members have developed sites and attractions that highlight the extent to which the Vikings travelled, settled, colonised and traded across Europe and beyond. Viking raids are remembered and celebrated through modern day festivals. The cultural legacy of the Vikings is portrayed through the re-enactment of traditional Sagas and by museums that highlight the Viking legal system and everyday ways of life. These all serve to provide an effective illustration of how Viking culture has contributed to modern day Europe and European values that we know and promote today.

*Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans.*- Members of the DVA provide cultural and educational opportunities at the local and national level for many thousands of young people each year. These include opportunities to 'live like a Viking', cultural re-enactments, linking key subjects in the school curriculum to the Vikings to make them more attractive and accessible to students, particularly from disadvantaged groups. These



activities help boost educational attainment and provide important work experience opportunities.

A few members are exploring the scope for transnational exchanges with support from the EU Erasmus scheme.

Given success of the work in this area it is important that it is effectively documented and that statistics on the number and diversity of participants across the network are recorded.

*Contemporary cultural and artistic practice* - The network is actively engaged in drawing on traditional Viking heritage to inspire contemporary cultural and artistic practice. The most significant example is the Follow the Vikings Roadshow, a contemporary production based on the story of a traditional Viking Saga in which actors perform to a digital backdrop. This has toured 11 cities across the network and played to an audience of circa 11,000 people.

Other DVA members are increasingly making use of state of the art technologies to create interactive living history exhibitions with ever more authentic portrayals of Viking culture.

*Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development* - The Viking Route offers a wide range of attractions that are popular with a growing number of tourists. This is contributing to a sense of shared Viking heritage as well as boosting local economies. There is a growing level of collaboration between DVA members and tourism organisations and an increasingly innovative range of cultural tourism products being developed.

The FTV project has helped develop expertise and a sharing of good practice in this area, but there is still further scope for promoting the Viking Route as a whole. A guide to the Route's various attractions is currently in production, but it is also suggested that a Friends organisation, which allowed access to all the attractions in the network, might be a useful means of promoting the network as a whole.

*Cultural route network* - The Destination Viking Association, a democratically managed voluntary organisation with a legal status registered under Swedish Law, manages the Viking Route. The Shetland Amenity Trust undertakes administration.

The network has grown considerably over the last three years and now includes 68 members from 16 countries. The EU FTV Project has funded a project manager and allowed for a greater spending on network administration, and marketing. The DVA plans to increase membership fees to enable it to continue funding core administrative costs once the project ends in 2019. Several sub-groups are developing new project ideas for the future.

*Communication tools* - The DVA has worked hard to increase the use the Council of Europe's (CoE) visual identity. The DVA and CoE logos are now used in the many and various outputs delivered through the FTV project and a new code of practice makes this a formal requirement for all members.

A new DVA website is currently in production and this will include a home page and landing pages translated into French. More needs to be done to ensure that the DVA appears higher up on Google searches for Viking tourism and that it is linked to key tourism websites.

The FTV project has made greater of social media, but there is still scope for improvement here and resources will need to be found to ensure the DVA can continue developing its social media presence.

## **5. List of references**

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

Bylaws – Destination Viking

Destination Viking 2018 Members List

Minutes of Destination Viking Board Meetings 2015 – 2018

Minutes of Destination Viking AGM Meetings 2016, 2017, and 2018

Destination Viking Association 3-year budget summary forecast (2019-2021)

Follow the Viking Seminar Programmes 2-7.

Programme of 18th Viking Congress, Denmark, 6 - 12th August 2017

Copies of press coverage

Supporting images

3-year programme of Activities forecast (2019-2021)

Destination Viking Association 2018. Supporting Information for the Re-accreditation of the Council of Europe's Viking Cultural

## 6. Annex 1: Field visit programme

Visits were made to key network members in Denmark, Sweden and the UK, and Skype or video conference calls held with others in the Isle of Man, UK, and Spain as follows

<b>Date of visit/call</b>	<b>Organisation &amp; Location</b>	<b>Persons met/interviewed and role</b>
22/11/18	Foteviken Viking Museum, Hollviken, Sweden	Bjorn M Buttler Jakobsen Museum Director/Vice-Chair DVA
23/11/18	The Viking Fortress, National Museum of Denmark, Trelleborg, Denmark	Anne-Christine Larsen, Museum Director/Member DVA
23/11/18	Museum Vestsjaelland, Denmark (meeting held at Trelleborg as above)	Ea Stevns Matzon, Head of Interpretation and Exhibitions, Vestmuseum, Vestjaelland, Denmark, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-chair DVA
29/11/18	JORVIK Viking Centre, York, UK	Sarah Maltby, Director of Attractions The JORVIKIK Group, Board member DVA
<b>Skype/Video &amp; Telephone Calls</b>		
15/11/18	Manx National Heritage, Douglas, Isle of Man	Edmund Southworth, Director Manx National Heritage, Chair DVA,
26/11/18	Concello de Catoira, Catoira, Spain	Mónica Vilas Cerneira, Manager of Culture Department, Member DVA
28/11/18	Waterford Treasures, Three Museums in the Viking Triangle, Waterford City, Ireland	Rosemary Ryan, Keeper Bishop's Palace – Documentation & Education Officer, Member DVA
30/11/18	Shetland Amenity Trust, Lerwick, Shetland, UK	Mat Roberts, Chief Executive, DVA Caterina Carter, Secretary, DVA

7. Annex 2: Checklist

<b>COE CULTURAL ROUTES EVALUATION CHECK-LIST</b>			
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>3.1 THEME</b>	<b>Does the theme of the Route</b>		
	- represent a common value - historical, cultural, or heritage -to several European countries?	1	
	- offer a solid basis for		
	youth cultural and educational exchanges?	1	
	innovative activities?	1	
	cultural tourism products development?	1	
	Has the theme been researched/developed by academics/experts from different regions of Europe?	1	
<b>3.2 FIELDS OF ACTION</b>	<b>3.2.1 Co-operation in research and development</b>		
	<b>Does the Route</b>		
	- offer a platform for co-operation in research and development of European cultural themes/values?	1	
	- play a unifying role around major European themes, enabling dispersed knowledge to be brought together?	1	
	- show how these themes are representative of European values shared by several European countries?	1	
	- illustrate the development of these values and the variety of forms they may take in Europe?	1	
	- have a network of universities and research center working on its theme at the European level?	1	
	- have a multidisciplinary scientific committee?	0	1
	<b>Does the scientific Committee</b>		
	work on its theme at the European level?		
	carry out research and analysis of the issues relevant to its theme and/or activities on:		
	- theoretical level?		
	- practical level?		
	<b>3.2.2 Enhancement of the memory, history and European heritage</b>		
	<b>Do the Route activities (according with the theme)</b>		
	- take into account and explain the historical significance of tangible and intangible European heritage ?	1	
	- promote the CoE values?	1	
	- promote the CoE CRs brand?	1	
	- work in conformity with international charters and conventions on cultural heritage preservation?	1	
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in rural	1		

<b>destinations?</b>		
- identify, preserve, and develop European heritage sites in industrial areas in the process of economic restructuring?	1	
- 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	
- enhance physical and intangible heritage, explain its historical significance and highlight its similarities in the different regions of Europe?	1	
- 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	
<b>3.2.3 Cultural and educational exchanges of young Europeans</b>		
<b>Are the youth exchanges (cultural and educational) planned to</b>		
- develop a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship?	1	
- emphasize the value of new personal experience through visiting diverse places?	1	
- encourage social integration and exchanges of young people from different social backgrounds and regions of Europe?	1	
- offer collaborative opportunities for educational institutions at various levels?	1	
- place the emphasis on personal and real experiences through the use of places and contacts?	1	
- set up pilot schemes with several participating countries?	0	1
- give rise to co-operation activities which involve educational institutions at various levels?	1	
<b>3.2.4 Contemporary cultural and artistic practice</b>		
<b>Do the Route's cultural activities (contemporary cultural and artistic practice related)</b>		
- promote intercultural dialogue and multidisciplinary exchange between various artistic expressions in European countries?	1	
- encourage artistic projects that establish the links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture?	1	
- encourage innovative cultural and contemporary art practices* connecting them with the history of skills development?	1	
- encourage collaboration between culture amateurs and professionals via relevant activities and networks creation?***	1	

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

	Does the network have a legal status (association, federation of associations, EEIG,...)?	1	
	Does the network operate democratically?	1	
	Does the network		
	- specify		
	its objectives and working methods?	1	
	the regions concerned by the project?	1	
	its partners and participating countries?	1	
	the fields of action involved?	1	
	the overall strategy of the network in the short- and long term?	1	
	- identify potential participants and partners in CoE member states and/or other world countries?	1	
	- provide details of its financing (financial reports and/or activity budgets)?	1	
	- provide details of its operational plan?	1	
	- append the basic text(s) confirming its legal status?	1	
<b>3.4 COMMUNICATION TOOLS</b>	Does the Route have its own logo?	1	
	Do all partners of the network use the logo on their communication tools?	1	
	Does the Route have its own dedicated website ?	1	
	Is it the website translated into English and French?	0	1
	Is it the website translated into other languages?	0	1
	Does the network use effectively social networks and web 2.0?	1	
	Does the network publish brochures on the Route?	1	
	if yes, are the brochures translated in English?	1	
	if yes, are the brochures translated in French?	0	1
	Is the title of "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" present on all communication materials (including press releases, webpages, publications, etc.)?	1	
	Is the logo of the Council of Europe present on all communication materials ?	1	
	Is the CoE logo used in accordance to the guidelines for its use (size and position,...)?	1	
	Are the logos (Cultural Route + CoE) provided for all the members of the Route?	1	
	Does the Council of Europe logo appears on road signs/ boards indicating the cultural route?	0	1
	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>9</b>