

The Santiago de Compostela Declaration
23 October 1987

The human dimension of society, the ideals of freedom and justice, and confidence in progress are the principles which, throughout history, have forged the different cultures that go to make up the specifically European identity.

That cultural identity has been and still is made possible by the existence of a European space bearing a collective memory and criss-crossed by roads and paths which overcome distances, frontiers and language barriers.

Today the Council of Europe is proposing the revitalisation of one of those roads, the one that led to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela. That route, highly symbolic in the process of European unification, will serve as a reference and example for future projects.

Accordingly, we appeal to public authorities, institutions and individual citizens to:

1. continue the work of identifying the roads to Compostela throughout the continent of Europe;
2. establish a system of signposting for the principal points on the itinerary, using the emblem suggested by the Council of Europe;
3. develop a co-ordinated plan to restore and rehabilitate the architectural and natural heritage which lies in the vicinity of these routes;
4. launch programmes of cultural activities in order to rediscover the historical, literary, musical and artistic heritage created by the pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela;
5. promote the establishment of on-going exchanges between the towns and regions situated along these routes;
6. in the framework of these exchanges, foster contemporary artistic and cultural expression in order to renew this tradition and bear witness to the timeless values of Europe's cultural identity.

May the faith which has inspired pilgrims throughout history, uniting them in a common aspiration and transcending national differences and interests, inspire us today, and young people in particular, to travel along these routes in order to build a society founded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity.