
Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the 30th anniversary of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (1987-2017)

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 27 September 2017
at the 1295th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

Reaffirming the ideals solemnly stated in the Declaration of Santiago de Compostela 30 years ago, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recalls its determination to fully develop the potential of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

The Cultural Routes are an original model for promoting the principles of the Council of Europe, stimulating trans-border cooperation, encouraging innovative approaches in the fields of cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue and sustainable local development.

The programme of the Cultural Routes was created by the Council of Europe with a focus on themes of symbolic importance for European unity, history and culture and with the aim to strengthen civil society and the cohesion of European society.

Three decades after their creation, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe continue to be remarkable instruments contributing to illustrate the multiple elements of European cultural identity, history and heritage and to ensure a better understanding of Europe. They preserve and enhance European natural and cultural heritage.

Acknowledging the achievements of the Cultural Routes programme, over the years, the Committee of Ministers has equipped the programme with new instruments and resources: the establishment of the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg, the setting-up of an Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) and the adoption of clear criteria and rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification.

The Committee of Ministers would welcome all member States of the Council of Europe to join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and encourages the latter to strengthen synergies with all other relevant Council of Europe institutions and programmes, as well as co-operation with the European Union and with international and European organisations active in the field of culture, heritage and sustainable tourism.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe states its conviction that Cultural Routes continue to be an inspiration for a more united Europe based on deeper knowledge of diversity, respect for others, defence of freedoms and solidarity.

GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE WORK:

The Committee of Ministers reaffirms Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe as tools:

- 1. to promote a closer unity based on the values of the Council of Europe through better knowledge of European cultural heritage and the management of Cultural Routes by civil society**

Cultural Routes, as elements of cultural heritage, can thrive at its best through activities shared among partners within civil society and on the basis of the Council of Europe standards.

- 2. for the development of innovative approaches and international co-operation in the field of cultural heritage, sustainable tourism and local development**

Cultural Routes are “*shared public spaces*” and represent platforms to implement the conventions and recommendations of the Council of Europe on cultural heritage, landscape and spatial planning. Cultural Routes work actively to create connections between diverse regions of Europe, paying special attention to the inclusion of those less known.

The Committee of Ministers invites member States, regional and local authorities, as well as the Cultural Routes to develop further the potential of Cultural Routes through, *inter alia*:

- encouraging innovative actions implementing the main principles promoted by the conventions related with the Cultural Routes (i.e. European Cultural Convention, European Landscape Convention, Faro Framework Convention, UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression 2005) along each Cultural Route;
- increasing local communities’ awareness of the value of their cultural heritage and encouraging them to promote their own culture;
- promoting creative platforms which include local businesses, cultural and creative industries, media, tourism stakeholders and educational organisations, aiming to devise cultural products and to promote sustainable tourism;
- encouraging synergies with other programmes and activities of the Council of Europe, in particular in the fields of cultural heritage, education and youth policies;
- ensuring participation of young people as well as the development of active education programmes, communication channels and tourism products that specifically target young audiences;
- reinforcing European and international co-operation with organisations such as UNESCO, UNWTO and the EU.

- 3. to encourage intercultural dialogue among member States of the Council of Europe and beyond**

Cultural Routes have increasingly become an instrument of cultural diplomacy.

One of the aims of the Cultural Routes is to “*promote dialogue between urban and rural cultures, between regions in the south, north, east and west of Europe, and between developed and disadvantaged regions*” and “*promote dialogue and understanding between majority and minority, native and immigrant cultures*” (CM/Res(2013)67).

As stated in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, “*Cultural Routes [...] naturally cross borders and connect cultures. Art and culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, and can act as mediators*”.

The Committee of Ministers invites member States, regional and local authorities, as well as the Cultural Routes to develop further the potential of Cultural Routes through, *inter alia*:

- ensuring participation of local communities in the activities organised along the Cultural Routes;
- stimulating exchanges between regions and sites part of each Cultural Route, and among Cultural Routes;
- reinforcing the process of expanding Cultural Routes initiatives to include neighbours and third countries, according to the theme of each Route.

4. to strengthen multilevel governance, co-operation and relationships at the international, European, national and local levels

The development of Cultural Routes relies greatly on policies and practices at national and regional level. Local communities are also fundamental to plan, implement and manage Cultural Routes, guaranteeing their success and impacting cultural tourism.

The Committee of Ministers invites member States, regional and local authorities, as well as the Cultural Routes to develop further the potential of Cultural routes through, *inter alia*:

- proposing joint innovative actions with national representatives of international and European organisations, networks and NGOs;
- enhancing synergies between tourism, cultural and creative industries, through developing the cross cutting policies and establishing a governance framework for sustainable cultural tourism, which contributes to the socio-economic development of the local communities, promotes cross cultural exchanges, and generates resources for heritage conservation;
- encouraging the adoption of sustainable policies, aimed at heritage rehabilitation, local regeneration along the Cultural Routes in national, regional, local development strategies;
- reinforcing the exchange of practices between Cultural Route networks, local and regional authorities.

5. for the development of innovative approaches in the fields of research and development

Cultural Routes offer the opportunity to develop multidisciplinary researches and stimulate cross-border co-operation. Research reinforces the work and the narrative of the Cultural Routes.

The Committee of Ministers invites member States, regional and local authorities, as well as the Cultural Routes to develop further the potential of Cultural routes through, *inter alia*:

- promoting the creation of platforms associating universities, professionals and citizens in the fields of cultural and creative industries, tourism and media;
- stimulating creative and innovative research activities on each Cultural Route and on the Cultural Routes programme;
- increasing the impacts of research and development activities on the daily actions of the Cultural Routes.