

## *European Cultural Routes and ICOMOS*

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (Comité international des itinéraires culturels - CIIC) is one of 28 International scientific committees of ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

ICOMOS was established in Venice during the Second Congress of Architects, Conservationists and Technicians of Historical Monuments in May 1964. However the idea was conceived a long time before by UNESCO and it was developed on the model of other nongovernmental organisations, especially ICOM the International Council on Museums. Its doctrinal basis is found in the Venice Charter accepted during the aforementioned congress. The Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites is a set of guidelines, that provides an international framework for the **conservation** and **restoration** of historic buildings. The constitutional General Assembly of ICOMOS took place in Krakow in 1965.

Today ICOMOS has 10.100 Individual Members in 153 countries, 320 Institutional Members, 110 National Committees and 28 International Scientific Committees.

In 1972, ICOMOS was named by the UNESCO **World Heritage Convention** as one of the three formal advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee, along with the **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (IUCN) and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). As the professional and scientific adviser to the committee on all aspects of the cultural heritage, ICOMOS is responsible for the evaluation of all nominations of cultural

properties made to the **World Heritage List** with the criteria laid down by the **World Heritage Committee**. In addition to the basic criterion of “outstanding universal value,” ICOMOS evaluates nominations for aspects related to authenticity, management, and conservation as specified in the World Heritage Convention.

**Basis for these evaluations are the numerous studies, conferences, symposia and discussions led by its National Committees and International Scientific Committees during the last fifty years. ICOMOS has gradually built the philosophical and doctrinal framework of heritage on an international level. Besides numerous resolutions and declarations the General Assembly which takes place every three years has adopted 14 charters which lay down principles of protection, conservation, restoration and management for different types of cultural heritage.**

**One of these is the ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes which was conceived by the CIIC and approved by the General Assembly in 2008. The basic ideas of the ICOMOS Charter can be summarised like this:**

**The concept of cultural route or itinerary:**

- **refers to a value set whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts and that give it its meaning;**
  - **illustrates exchange and dialogue among countries or regions;**
    - **reveals a multiplicity of dimensions that extends and enriches its primary function .**
- Thus the definition of a cultural route in the ICOMOS Charter runs as follows:**

**“Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterised by having its own specific**

**dynamic and historic functionality to serve a specific and well-determined purpose, which must fulfil the following conditions :**

**a) It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions or continents over significant periods of time;**

**b) It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilisation of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage;**

**c) It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence.“**

**This definition is narrower than the concept of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe as it excludes pure touristic or thematic routes.**

**However the fact that the Way of Saint James (Camino de Santiago) was declared the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe and was also the first cultural route supported by ICOMOS to be named one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites shows that the two concepts are closely related. And the concepts and the advice on preservation, sustainability, public participation and management etc. of cultural routes given by the Council of Europe and ICOMOS are similar.**

**These are also the subjects the CIIC discusses in its annual meetings . Ideas are exchanged and examples of good practice**

**presented . As the CIIC has members from all continents interesting comparisons can be made in its meetings. This will also be of interest for the managers and stakeholders of the European Cultural Routes . It will be possible at the next meeting of the Advisory Forum which will take place in Germany in 2019 as Germany plans to invite the CIIC to have its annual meeting jointly with the Advisory Forum.**

**Hopefully this will lead to a substantial cooperation between ICOMOS and the European Institute of Cultural Routes.**