



## RESOURCE CENTRE – SOFIA, BULGARIA

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL ROUTES

### PREAMBLE

The Sofia Resource Center of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is launched according to Conventions between the European Institute of Cultural Routes, ICOMOS/Bulgaria and the Association for Cultural Tourism signed on 21 June 2004 in Luxembourg. The Resource Center is a branch office of the European Institute of Cultural Routes and is seated in a governmental building in the Sofia historical center. The building houses also lots of publishing companies and the headquarters of the Bulgarian National Committee of ICOMOS.



Sofia from air

### OBJECTIVES

#### OVERALL OBJECTIVES:

- To implement the Council of Europe Cultural Routes program as a branch office of the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) regarding the **Resolution (98) 4 On The Cultural Routes Of The Council Of Europe** (*Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 17 March 1998, at the 623rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies*).
- To spread in the South East Europe Region information relating to the charters, conventions, recommendations and experience of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, ICOMOS, EICR (and other international or national organizations) relevant to heritage, cultural tourism and cultural routes.
- To work on the formation and the development of the regional co-operation and of an experts network in the South East Europe regarding the cultural routes in the region. To play a unifying role as Headquarters of this Regional Expert Network aiming the revealing, using sustainably and promoting the cultural corridors in SEE.

#### CONCRETE OBJECTIVES:

- To represent significant values shared by all the countries in South East Europe.
- To assist and promote the establishment of acknowledged by Council of Europe cultural routes in the South East Europe.
- To inform the project carries, the operators of the regional and local communities about the Council of Europe Cultural Routes program and the evolution of pan-European co-operation, cultural tourism and cultural routes.
- To help the project carries from the South East Europe to seek



The Archaeological Museum  
in Sofia

- European partnership.
- To contribute in the field of raising awareness among the general public.
- To establish and maintain partnerships with various international and national (governmental and/or nongovernmental, public and/or private) organizations that work in the field of cultural tourism and cultural routes.



Medieval Church Saint George  
inside of the Presidency court

## RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

- Administration and co-ordination of the Regional Expert Network in South East Europe.
- Preparing studies and reports on cultural routes.
- Collecting information on international and regional documents, methodology, experiences and examples.
- Initiation of expert meetings, conferences, seminars and discussions.
- Establishing partnership relations with the media and the educational institutions in order to inform and involve the general public and the after generations in the process of preserving, promoting and sustainable using of the heritage.
- Launching and maintaining a web-site presenting a Virtual Cultural Corridors of South East Europe.
- Opening a public space to serve as an information center.



The Mediaeval Church St. Petka  
and the Statue of Sofia – protector  
of the town

## RULES OF OPERATION

The Sofia Regional Resource Center is a branch office of the European Institute for Cultural Routes. It is a nongovernmental institution providing information and methodology in the South East Europe Region.

The Sofia Resource Center statute is in accordance with the statute of the European Institute for Cultural Routes. It serves as a partner in the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Program. The Resource Center assures the development of the multilateral cooperation for organizing the work and reinforcing the program.

In addition, the Resource Center operation regards the functioning of the European Institute of Cultural Routes specified in Chapter 3 in the Statute for establishing the Institute as a non-profit association, signed on 7 May 1998 in Luxembourg.

## SIGNIFICANCE

### EUROPEAN LEVEL

- The Sofia Resource Center will contribute to the implementation of the aims of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Program by supporting the highlighting and promoting the “*European identity in its unity and its diversity*”.
- The Center will work towards rehabilitating the millennial significance of the Region as a natural link between the East and the West expressed by the distinct Cultural Corridors dating back hundred and thousand of years. Thus the Center will support the enriching of the multicultural Europe of tomorrow.
- The Center will facilitate the correspondence between regional organizations nominating cultural routes in South East Europe and the European organizations.

### REGIONAL LEVEL

- The Sofia Resource Center will strengthen the regional co-operation of joint efforts of the countries in the South East Region for a coordinated protection and effective use of the existing cultural resource, serving as a Headquarters of the Regional Expert Network.
- The Center will serve as a closer source for information and a partner in proposing new and/or developing existing cultural routes.
- The countries in South East Europe will benefit from the Resource Center through promoting their products on an international level.

## LOCATION

The Resource Center is situated at the heart of the Balkan Peninsula - Sofia - the Capital of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The territory of nowadays Sofia is the most important crossroad of the Balkan Peninsula from eight millennia until present days. The town is located at that same place where in ancient times the principal arteries linking the Adriatic and Middle Europe with the Middle East and the Black and Aegean Seas; North Europe with the Mediterranean - a point of intersection of the two major civilization steams from Front Asia towards Europe.

Nowadays, Sofia still preserved the reminiscence of the civilizations past – Thracians, Romans, Slavs, Proto-Bulgarians, Byzantines, Turks, Jewish and Bulgarians left vestiges, interlaced in a composite urban stratification. The Resource Center quarter is extremely lively and is marked by “the street of the theatres” – *G.S.Rakovski*, the *Slaveikov* square – “the square of the books”, the French and the Czech Cultural Centers, the numerous bookstores.



The National Theatre Ivan Vazov



Slaveikov Square – view from the Resource Center terrace

The building housing the Branch Office of the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Sofia is situated on one of the Slaveikov square corners – a key location in the historical and cultural center of the capital.



The building where the Resource Center is seated

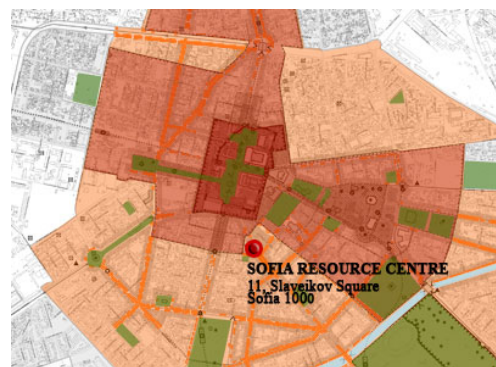
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Map of the Sofia Historic Center with the protected historic areas and the location of the Resource Center