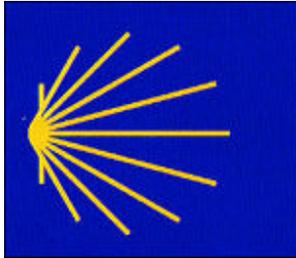


THE CULTURAL ROUTES PROGRAMME OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



A framework for cultural co-operation

A political framework

In 1960 a working group of the Council of Europe presented a report on "raising collective awareness about the top cultural places of Europe and their incorporation in the civilization of leisure". The conclusions of this report were directed from the very start towards the idea of rediscovering the common European heritage through travels.

In this direction, Recommendation 987 (January 28, 1984) of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Mandate of the corresponding Ministers Committee invite all Member States to encourage the launching of European cultural routes likely to highlight concretely the European cultural community, including Central and Eastern European countries.



In 1987 the program of the first European cultural route was launched with "The Pathways to Santiago de Compostella ", which has since then been extended to the ensemble of the Pilgrimage Ways in Europe.

Other themes were proposed and supported by Member States for enhancing co-operation: "Architecture without Borders", "Textiles-Silk", "The Baroque", "Monastic Influence", "The Celts", "Parks and Gardens", "The Vikings" ... In 2002 there are twenty-two elected topics.

Since the origin of the program, the Council of Europe has kept insisting on the necessity of making Europeans aware of their common heritage, on exchanging persons and ideas, on inter-religious dialogue, protection of minorities, and protection of landscape, in order to develop and consolidate cultural co-operation, the source of better democratic security.

This need is even stronger today to make it possible to succeed in integrating the new Member States.

The cultural routes programme indeed constitutes an essential answer ensuring this "repair" work in Europe through projects of

trans-border cultural co-operation. It also constitutes a practical tool to make Conventions, Resolutions and Recommendations more visible and help Europeans in their practical implementation. It is a programme aimed at European citizenship and an exercise of "cultural and landscape democracy".

This is the reason why in 1998 the Committee of Ministers adopted the Resolution (98) 4 on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, to which Regulations were attached. They primarily note that "such routes lend themselves to European projects of long-term co-operation in the fields of research, heritage and culture valorisation, practice of arts, cultural and educational exchanges among young people, cultural tourism in Europe and sustainable cultural development."

A pan- European programme

The promotion by the Council of Europe of the Program of the Cultural Routes for Member States answers a triple finality:

- to make more visible, to valorise more and to put into everyday practice the common cultural identity of European citizens;
- to safeguard and emphasise European cultural heritage as factor for improving living conditions and as source of social, economic and cultural development;
- to give citizens new possibilities to find plenitude in their spare time by granting special status to cultural tourism and related practices.

The cultural routes of European impact were considered as:

- transnational (several countries concerned)
- trans-regional (transborder or not)
- regional (routes located on the ground of one region only, but whose historical, artistic and social interest exceeds the borders of that region or of the state concerned).





The European quality of a route should entail a significance and a cultural dimension other than purely local: the routes must be articulated around a certain number of key points, places with a significant historical background, representative of European cultural entity and of its memory. With this intention, a definition was proposed by the Cultural Co-operation Council:

"By European cultural route one understands a trajectory covering one or more countries or regions, organised around topics whose historical, artistic or social interest proves to be European, either because of the geographical layout of the route, or due to its contents and significance".

The effective development of the routes depends much on concrete initiatives that connect national, regional and local authorities, as well as the private operators from each country, with the initiatives of their counterparts from other European countries. A joint action of these various actors can be established on the ground by developing routes, signposting ways, implementing infrastructures devoted to that purpose, when necessary, arising the awareness of the public at large through publications, advertising and promotion by the media, and last but not least by preparing encounters of young people.



Protection of cultural values

Today the priority of the routes remains exclusively cultural. Its variations: research, education, heritage, creation and cultural tourism, are among the aims, but respect of the Other and exchange remain paramount. The cultural routes are particularly suitable for reinforcing values such as tolerance and solidarity; they can fight against unemployment, the exclusion and resurgence of xenophobic nationalism. The transborder and European dimensions of this program can contribute to interdisciplinarity and can make Europeans more conscious of their multiple cultural identities. Finally, conservation and development of architectural and cultural heritage represent a significant aspect of this programme. The cultural routes are not restricted only to launching cultural or tourist products, but are founded on a process of cultural co-operation which answers three functions:

- the function of protection of the cultural values of Europe;
- the function of dynamic observatory that enables exchange of information and experience;
- the experimental function, which makes it possible to emphasise new programmes of co-operation between different and complementary fields of research, new forms of encounters between young Europeans, valorisation of lesser known heritage based on networks which put in synergy competence ranging from the design to the realisation of a project or competence working in a transversal way, through interdisciplinary research.

The cultural routes programme is one of a kind, due to its integrative character and its capacity to gather cultures. But **in order for it to continue strengthening cultural co-operation in Europe, it needs the permanent support of the Member States of the Council of Europe and of all the States party to the European Cultural Convention.**

In 1997 the Program of the cultural routes entered a new phase in benefiting from a political agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, which proposed the creation of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, an institution intended to put together all the programme's files and documents, to guide the promoters of already elected cultural routes, to help the carriers of new projects in the implementation of their actions, and to disseminate complete information about the entire program. By the end of 2002, a web portal entitled "Cultural Routes and Landscapes, a Common Heritage" will and prepared by the Institute make available information on the programme all over Europe.

Already in 2002 the idea of widening the Bilateral Political Agreement to a Partial Agreement to comprise routes and cultural landscape was launched. It should enable the creation of resource centres to spread the Institute's action to the main regions of Europe: Balkans, Caucasus, Transylvania and Baltic countries, among others...



A list of elected themes

1987

The Pilgrim Pathways

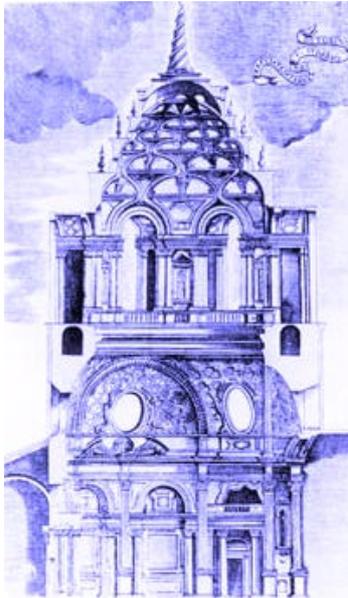
(The Santiago de Compostela pilgrim routes, The Via Francigena)

Rural habitat - Architecture without borders

1988

Silk and Textile Routes

The Baroque Routes



1990

The Monastic Influence Routes

The Celts Routes

1991

Mozart Route



1992

Schickhardt itineraries

Vikings and Normands, European heritage

Hanseatic sites, routes and monuments

Parks and Gardens - Landscape

European Cities of Discoveries Route

Living arts, European identity (Transversales, Theatre for the youth, Art centres in Europe)



1994

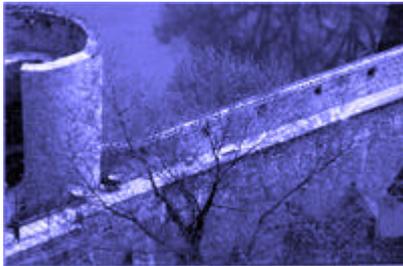
The Phoenicians routes

Gipsy Route

The Routes of Humanism

1995

Fortified military architectures
in Europe
(Wenzel itinerary, Vauban
itinerary)



1997

The "legacy of Al-Andalus"
routes

The Northern Lights route

Popular festivals and rites in
Europe

2000

Book and writing
(Book itinerary)

2002

The itinerary of Castilian
language and its expansion in
Mediterranean areas : the roads
of Sefardic People

New proposals

New proposals can be sent to the Council of Europe, or directly to the Institute. Firstly, they are analysed according to the criteria stipulated in the Regulations. Meetings and missions are then organised with the project carriers in order to explore the partnerships and territories concerned. The instruction work that follows is often complex and lengthy. Consequently, the European values carried by the project are researched and reinforced through the constitution of an accompanying Scientific Committee. In general, it is necessary to seek new partners allowing for the European widening of the networks. But it is especially a question of examining the possibility of organisation of pilot schemes linked to the theme likely to be used as models and concrete examples for conventions, resolutions, recommendations and programmes of the Council of Europe. Lastly, the Institute must make sure that project carriers wish to develop their long-term actions and thus have the possibilities to finance them, because the Institute will be able to intervene financially only on the work of analysis and networking and not by investing in projects.

Once the file is complete, it is presented to the Advisory Committee, which expresses a recommendation. It can result in total rejection, a request for expansion, or a positive opinion. A report is transmitted to the qualified Committees of the Council of Europe, which proceed to the final election of a new topic. The Advisory Committee also asks the Institute to pursue, on the basis of its recommendations, a classification depending on the proposals' state of progress in four categories:
1 – Routes ready for election – 2 – Priority routes for election in the coming two years (these first two categories are the object of a more detailed analysis, of distribution during meetings of complementary documents and sometimes of the intervention of their promoters) – 3 – Routes in preparation – 4 - Routes on standby.

THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL ROUTES

The European Institute of Cultural Routes was set up in 1997, following the signature of a Political Agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research). From the start, the main goal of this institution was that of implementing the cultural routes programme of the Council of Europe. To this end, the Luxembourg Ministry of Culture placed at its disposal the necessary equipment and working tools. Thus the National Sites and Monuments Service of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg conducted the restoration of Jacob Tower, a fifteenth century built heritage, in order to host the Institute, which since 1997 has been accommodating a Research and Resource Centre, a conference room and offices, all within the cultural route "The Route of Fortified Military Architecture: Wenzel Route". Since its settlement in Luxembourg, the European Institute of Cultural Routes has received significant help from the Luxembourg Government. This help was renewed and increased year after year, confirming the Government's interest in continuing its collaboration with the Council of Europe. Since the year 2000, the Ministry of Culture has also decided to entrust the Institute with missions of reflection and representation, while planning its move to a new settlement (Cultural Centre in Neumünster Abbey).

It is undoubtedly needless to repeat that the integration of Central and Eastern European countries within the working framework of the cultural routes continues to deepen and to diversify, and that the Institute plays a very significant role in new Member States (the Caucasus, the Balkans, etc.). But this work must also result in statements of intention on behalf of the governments concerned, so that the programme can continue to act on their territories. To maintain its role and to develop its missions, the European Institute of the Cultural Routes needs the support of interested countries and this support must be expressed through letters of intent addressed directly to the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe or to the Permanent Representatives of Member States in the Council of Europe.

The year 2002 was very significant for the evolution of the Institute in continuing to develop its task for disseminating results and experiences, through its electronic newsletters and the setup of a very rich and powerful database making it possible to consult on-line all documentation available.

The Institute is thus at the same time:

A European public service:

- which helps project carriers to seek European partnerships, to analyse actions...;
- which grants political and cultural missions in order to make more concrete the priority policy axes implemented by the Council of Europe (European identity, multiculturalism, protection of minorities, inter-religious dialogue, democratic safety, prevention of conflicts...);
- which works to make more readable and more visible the ruling framework of the Council of Europe while applying in the form of pilot actions and good practice: the Regulations of the Cultural Routes, the Conventions and Charters concerning culture, heritage, tourism, landscape...;
- which carries out a work of cultural observatory and follow-up to better inform project carriers about the evolution of pan-European co-operation and of cultural tourism;

But also a technical agency:

- which establishes partnership and objective conventions aiming at the implementation of projects based on multidisciplinary, involvement of public and private actors, as well as patrons and sponsors...;
- which prepares studies and reports;
- which prepares, installs and produces exhibitions, which publishes and co-publishes books, as well as multimedia works and products.

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