

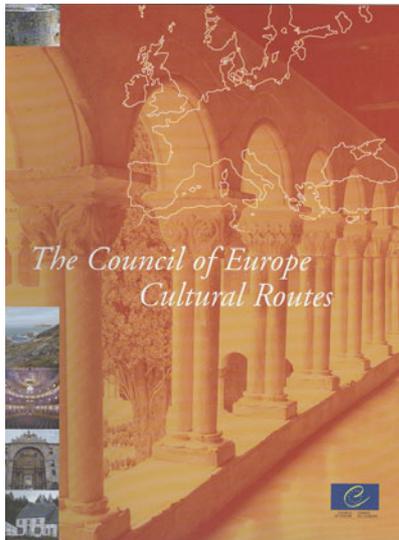
## The Cultural Routes Programme of the Council of Europe



*Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela*

Launched in 1987 with the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, which served initially as a source of inspiration and became the reference point for the development of future activities, the *Cultural Routes Programme* aims at demonstrating in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries of Europe represents a shared cultural heritage. The Cultural Routes also provide a concrete demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, European cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries.

The promotion of this programme answers a triple finality:



- to intensify the attention paid to the European cultural pluralism based on common values expressed through cultural routes tracing the history of influences, exchange and developments that have formed the European cultures;
- to promote inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue through better understanding of the European history;
- to protect and highlight cultural and natural heritage as an instrument for improving the quality of life and as a source of sustainable social, economic and cultural development.

*Cover of the brochure published by the Council of Europe*

The Programme is thus a framework for cooperation for the 48 signatories of the European Cultural Convention; its rules are defined in the *Resolution 98(4)*. The eligibility criterions of a theme are the following:



*Ceremony of awarding of the certification "Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" to Saint-Martin de Tours, Great European figure, Symbol of sharing, Tours, September 2005*

- The topic must be representative of European values and be common to several countries of Europe.
- The theme must be the subject of a research and a development carried out by multidisciplinary groups of experts, coming from various areas of Europe, in order to illustrate it by actions and projects based on common argumentation.
- The theme must be meaningful in terms of European memory, history and cultural heritage, must refer to at least one of the three large fields suggested by the programme (People, migrations, important movements of civilisation) and must



*Ceremony of awarding of the certification "Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" to the European Routes of Jewish Heritage, Strasbourg, December 2005*

contribute to the diversity of Europe today.

- The theme must be meaningful in terms of European memory, history and cultural heritage, must refer to at least one of the three large fields suggested by the programme (People, migrations, important movements of civilisation) and must contribute to the diversity of Europe today.
- The theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for the young people and thus answer the thoughts and concerns of the Council of Europe in these fields.
- The theme must allow for the rise of exemplary and innovating initiatives and projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable development.
- The theme must enable the implementation of projects of multilateral co-operation in the long run in various spheres of activity through the constitution of multidisciplinary networks established in several member states of the Council of Europe.

The European Institute of cultural Routes, which has been created in 1997 in Luxembourg, is in charge of examining the new proposals of cultural routes, monitoring field activities and coordinating the partner organisations and disseminating and archiving information documents.

The Council of Europe adopts new themes and routes, approves networks, awards "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" or "Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification depending on the project's pan-European scale.



In 2004, the Cultural Routes in South Eastern Europe have been integrated by the Council of Europe as a new theme to the programme of Cultural Routes.

Indeed, South Eastern Europe possesses exceptional cultural values with a vivid identity and great variety - 57 among them being World heritage and 5 Intangible Heritage Masterpieces. The region has an outstanding cultural integrity, reflecting common cultural roots, inter-relations and influence. As a real crossroad of civilisations it has played throughout the centuries the role of a powerful mediator between East and West, South and North – and the cultural corridors crossing this region gives a chance to strengthen regional cooperation, to valorise its cultural and natural heritage and to promote a sustainable cultural development.

The Council of Europe will certainly consider in the next years the close relations between the Cultural Routes, their partners and initiatives and the pilot Corridors in South Eastern Europe in order to give to all of them a certification as a “Major Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.”

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