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## Conferment of the Council of Europe Cultural Route label on the Cistercian sites route across Greater Europe

### Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Josette DURRIEU and other members of the Assembly

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This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

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In 1991 the Council of Europe certified the “Monastic Influence Route”.

Since then, several cultural routes such as the “Baroque Routes”, or just lately in 2006 the “Cluniac Sites” route, have been certified in this framework.

Accordingly, the signatories to this motion ask that their request be examined by the Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg, with a view to certifying a “Cistercian Sites Route”. For the purposes of this examination, the Institute will have regard to the structured networks already in existence, first of all the European Charter of Cistercian Abbeys and Sites, as well as to the consent of the owners and managers of the sites concerned and the opinions of the responsible local elected representatives.

This approach is altogether in keeping with the goals and principles that determine the recognition of the Council of Europe cultural routes:

- the movement must have a significance of European breadth, which is obviously true of the Cistercian establishments (founded in 1098, the first Cistercian monastery was very quickly followed by many foundations from Italy to Norway, from Spain to Denmark, from Portugal to Poland and Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Germany and even as far away as Russia; links have already been cemented between some of these sites, for example the abbey of Escaladieu en Bigorre, south-western France);
- the material expressions of the movement must display not only affinities, of an architectural nature for example, but also cultural links between the different areas of the Council of Europe: Cistercian monuments bear clear witness to this common aspiration to learning which was to triumph during the Renaissance;
- the Council of Europe is attentive to “sustainable” heritage management. The Cistercians sites embody to the utmost this quality of sustainable area development. Usually being sited in remote places, out in the countryside, near streams, monasteries comprised in addition to the religious edifices farm buildings, barns, fish ponds – a whole built complex designed to ensure the community’s self-sufficiency;
- finally, the Cistercian order was responsible for a renewal of study of biblical texts, then, more generally, for promoting education and learning: many of the extant sites confirm their commitment in this direction, take in young people, and make it their business to further the progress of learning and dialogue – suffice it to recall the transformation of the Collège des Bernardins, Paris, or that many buildings housing training institutes.



The new route should encourage the use of computer technology, firstly for visiting the sites ("virtual tours") but also for optimum dissemination of information on the route, the location of the sites, the surrounding area and the programme of activities. The route should seek to create a "digital pathway" conducive not only to the enhancement of the sites through imaging and electronic communication technologies but also to proficiency in the use of these techniques for managing the sites and the training offer to the advantage of the populations dwelling nearby, that is often in rural areas (on the model of what is offered by the "Centre européen des technologies de l'information en milieu rural", sited in the small municipality of Saint-Laurent de Neste).

Promotion of the Cistercian sites route as a Council of Europe Cultural Route is expected to foster not only a type of tourism harmoniously spread over the broadest area of Europe, illustrating the existence of material evidence of a common heritage, but above all the urgent need to promote East-West as well as North-South links in a resolutely future-oriented spirit.

*Signed (see overleaf)*

*Signed<sup>1</sup>:*

DURRIEU Josette, France, SOC  
ABURTO BASELGA Fátima, Spain, SOC  
AGRAMUNT Pedro, Spain, EPP/CD  
BADRE Denis, France, ALDE  
BERGAMINI Deborah, Italy, EPP/CD  
BLUM Roland, France, EPP/CD  
BRASSEUR Anne, Luxembourg  
COLOMBIER Georges, France, EPP/CD  
CORTAJARENA ITURRIOZ Elvira, Spain  
COUSIN Alain, France, EPP/CD  
DOZZO Gianpaolo, Italy, EDG  
FARINA Renato, Italy, EPP/CD  
GALATI Giuseppe, Italy, EPP/CD  
GARDETTO Jean-Charles, Monaco, EPP/CD  
GAUTIER Gisèle, France, EPP/CD  
GLESENER Marcel, Luxembourg  
GREFF Claude, France, EPP/CD  
GROSSKOST Arlette, France, EPP/CD  
HUNAULT Michel, France  
JENSEN Mogens, Denmark, SOC  
KARAMANLI Marietta, France, SOC  
LECOQ Jean-Paul, France, UEL  
MALGIERI Gennaro, Italy, EPP/CD  
MARLAND-MILITELLO Muriel, France, EPP/CD  
MARQUET Bernard, Monaco, ALDE  
MIGNON Jean-Claude, France, EPP/CD  
NACHBAR Philippe, France, EPP/CD  
ROUQUET René, France  
SANTINI Giacomo, Italy, EPP/CD  
VITALI Luigi, Italy, EPP/CD

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
EDG: European Democrat Group  
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party  
SOC: Socialist Group  
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left