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The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue

Report[1]
Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media
Rapporteur: Mr Andries GRYFFROY, Belgium, Members not belonging to a Political Group

Summary

The Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes offers a very practical means of implementing Council of Europe policies on the value of cultural heritage for promoting cohesive, tolerant, culturally diverse, and vibrant democratic societies.

Since the creation of the Cultural Routes Programme in 1987, the number of routes has expanded to 48, covering a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to major figures of European art, music, and literature. The routes bring people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage.

The report makes practical recommendations to reinforce and make wider use of these innovative and collaborative local processes and invites the European Union to co-operate with the Council of Europe to support the Cultural Routes Programme and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of the key principles of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention).

1. Reference to committee: Doc. 15418, Reference 4624 of 24 January 2022.

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A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the importance of cultural heritage for achieving a greater unity among Europeans. At a time when European societies face new and profound challenges, cultural heritage has yet again become a crucial element for the reconstruction of a peaceful and democratic society, and a key element in the processes of sustainable development and promotion of cultural diversity.

2. Through the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18, 1954) adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War, and the four subsequent heritage-related conventions including the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, "Faro Convention", 2005), the Council of Europe has developed and broadened the understanding of cultural heritage and established close links between heritage, human rights, and democracy.

3. The Assembly considers that the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes offers a very practical means of implementing Council of Europe policies on the value of cultural heritage for promoting cohesive societies, intercultural dialogue, and the right to access to culture, extensively among people and across regions in Europe. The 48 certified Cultural Routes connect local heritage with a broader historic exchange of ideas and skills across Europe and encourage collaborative grassroot initiatives which give people a sense of ownership and pride in their local heritage as an element of a broader European common heritage.

4. The Assembly therefore recommends that the member States of the Council of Europe:

4.1. join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe;

4.2. sign and ratify the Faro Convention;

4.3. present cultural heritage as a positive element in forming cohesive yet diverse societies;

4.4. encourage a diversity of views on history with a wide range of heritage sites illustrating ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity;

4.5. put in place national strategies involving all levels of governance, with a view to sharing the knowledge of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme and more specifically to support and promote the certified Cultural Routes;

4.6. support associations of cultural routes to co-operate and expand their work with regional and European networks that are rooted in common causes in order to attract support and encourage diversity by building cross-cutting thematic networks or broader geographical networks that cover macro-regions such as the Mediterranean Basin.

5. Considering that local and regional authorities have a significant role to play in this field to enshrine the principles of the Faro Convention in their policies and actively promote their implementation, the Assembly recommends that local and regional authorities:

5.1. adopt a strategic approach to local sustainable development, economy, and tourism, and in particular:

5.1.1. recognise, and actively seek to raise awareness of, the close link between cultural routes and the values of sustainability, democracy and human rights;

5.1.2. integrate cultural routes in a wider strategy for local tourism and sustainable economic policies, covering also rural areas outside the main tourist attractions as an alternative to mass tourism;

5.1.3. create a platform for discussion to engage local partners from the education, research, tourism and local economy sectors in the promotion of cultural routes and of their associated values;

5.1.4. involve local partners including associations of cultural routes to develop a common strategy and determine local tourism offers;

5.1.5. foster local community involvement in the work of cultural routes and in that respect provide training to local people, volunteers, travel operators, and those in the private sector concerned with tourism to explain the principles of the Faro Convention and build capacity to actively engage in projects based on these principles;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 5 December 2022.

5.1.6. develop partnerships with associations of cultural routes, providing them with administrative and financial support, and uphold grassroot initiatives, to ensure viability and continuity of existing cultural routes and their established partnerships;

5.1.7. develop international partnerships with local and regional authorities abroad that share the same routes and themes;

5.1.8. financially support and take part in annual exchanges organised by cultural routes;

5.2. pay more attention to the positive interconnections between cultural routes, intercultural dialogue and education, that mutually reinforce each other, and in this respect:

5.2.1. emphasise that heritage is not just monumental, but also uncomfortable, dissonant, humble;

5.2.2. ensure continuity of their political engagement to support heritage and cultural routes projects namely when dealing with controversial heritage and dissonance, also to cultivate a nuanced and constructive public debate and understanding of this heritage locally, and to alleviate taboos, prejudice and division;

5.2.3. in co-operation with State authorities, encourage universities and schools in exploration and analysis of the historical context of dissonant heritage; and support educational exchanges in this field;

5.2.4. promote artistic projects to create links between cultural heritage and contemporary culture, as a creative means to address sensitivities and emotions that are associated with dissonant heritage;

5.3. tap into the potential of innovation and digitalisation, to promote local heritage and increase the outreach, visibility and sustainability of cultural routes, and in this respect:

5.3.1. encourage partnerships to document and explain local heritage through multi-media, repositories and museums; share and ensure visibility of information on local platforms including those of local authorities, tourism boards, museums and other partners in the private sector;

5.3.2. provide targeted support to associations of cultural routes to develop interactive visits of dissonant heritage in a digital format, which could help to remove prejudices, and be an incentive to physically visit, spurring visitors' understanding and curiosity;

5.3.3. introduce Smart Ways (pathways bringing together heritage, communities, and services to provide a territorial sustainable tourist offer) and Interpretation Centres, in which service providers meet visitors in hubs along the route where the tourist offer can be explained and understood.

6. The Assembly invites the European Union to co-operate with the Council of Europe to support the Cultural Routes Programme in particular within the framework of the European Heritage Label initiative and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of the key principles of the Faro Convention.

7. The Assembly invites countries, having observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly, to join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

B. Draft recommendation[3]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution … (2023) "The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue", underlines the importance of heritage as a resource for human development, and a tool to enhance cultural diversity and promote intercultural dialogue.

2. Moreover, the Assembly considers that the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme offers an excellent platform to promote open exchanges based on mutual understanding between individuals and groups of different origins, cultures, religions, and languages; and that it is an effective means to promote conflict prevention and strengthen democratic values and democratic practices in Europe.

3. The significant rise in the number of certified cultural routes (there are now 48) is a clear success of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme. However, the accomplishment lies also in the capacity of each route to sustain its activity, partnerships, and relevance in the long term, as well as to ensure quality and share experience, strategies and tools through regular exchanges and development of joint projects within the route itself and in co-operation with other thematically or geographically related cultural routes.

4. The Assembly considers that the Council of Europe and the European Commission should enhance their co-operation to support this activity and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of democratic values and the implementation of the key principles of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, Faro Convention) at both local and European levels.

5. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers together with the member States that are parties to the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and in co-operation with the European Union:

5.1. increase the resources and reinforce the capacity of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes and provide more support to cultural routes in their development and co-ordination of activities;

5.2. undertake a strategic reflection concerning the overall aims and framework of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme to ensure that quality standards accompany the rapid increase in the number of certified cultural routes;

5.3. consider reviewing the certification process and extending the certification cycle to five years in order to guarantee quality and at the same time reduce the administrative burden related to the process of certification;

5.4. develop a common, quality-based label for cultural routes, similar to the UNESCO heritage label, to visually accompany the transformation of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme into a strong, collective and dynamic network, easily recognisable to visitors throughout Europe;

5.5. develop targeted joint programmes with the European Union for certified cultural routes that promote sustainable development, democracy, and human rights and enhance co-operation with the European Commission and its European Heritage Label initiative.

3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 5 December 2022.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Andries Gryffroy, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. The motion for a resolution[4] which has initiated the present report recalls that: "Since its establishment, the Council of Europe has been aware of the importance of cultural heritage for achieving a greater unity among Europeans. Through its activities, it illustrates the importance of heritage as a tool to facilitate intercultural dialogue, a peaceful co-existence and conflict prevention. At a time when our societies face new and profound challenges, cultural heritage has become a crucial element for the construction of a peaceful and democratic society, and a key element in the processes of sustainable development and promotion of cultural diversity."

2. The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and conflicts in the countries of former Yugoslavia in the 1990s sadly demonstrate that alongside humanitarian and economic devastation, cultural identity and cultural heritage remain a clear target of destruction; with museums, libraries, theatres, and churches destroyed and looted. In follow-up to the Assembly Resolution 2057 (2015) "Cultural heritage in crisis and post-crisis situations" which was prepared in our committee by Ms Ismeta Dervoz (Bosnia and Herzegovina, EPP) in 2014, I would propose to explore the relevance of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to the promotion of peace and intercultural dialogue, as a practical and in my opinion effective means towards conflict prevention.

3. In my report I present some significant experiences at local, regional, national and international levels in which the Cultural Routes promote open exchanges based on mutual understanding between individuals and groups of different origins, cultures, religions and languages and how these initiatives contribute to the prevention of religious, linguistic, political and cultural tensions.

4. I wish to warmly thank the many enthusiastic men and women who stand behind the six Cultural Routes that we have interviewed online – ATRIUM Route, Liberation Route Europe, European Route of Jewish Heritage, Saint Martin of Tours Route, Phoenicians' Route and Routes of El Legado Andalusí – for sharing their knowledge, experience, and thoughts around questions that we have raised with them[5]. I also wish to thank Dr John Bold, a heritage expert from the United Kingdom, who has assisted me in preparing this report.

2. The Cultural Routes Programme and the main related conventions

5. The Cultural Routes Programme is a very practical means of implementing Council of Europe policies on the value of cultural heritage for promoting cohesive societies, intercultural dialogue and the right of access to culture, extensively among people and across regions in Europe. The Cultural Routes link local heritage to a broader historic exchange of ideas and skills across Europe and encourage collaborative grassroots initiatives which give people a sense of ownership and pride in their heritage as an element of "common European heritage".

6. In 1984, the Assembly adopted Recommendation 987 (1984) "European pilgrim routes", calling on the Committee of Ministers to revive these ways, beginning with the routes converging towards Santiago de Compostela. This recommendation was followed up by the establishment of the first Council of Europe Cultural Route with the Santiago de Compostela Declaration in October 1987.[6] Today, pilgrimage remains a dominant theme for Cultural Routes, since it carries the potential for shared experiences and intercultural dialogue and attracts mixed social groups and cultures.

7. Since the creation of the Cultural Routes Programme in 1987, the number of routes has expanded to 48 routes,[7] covering a range of different themes, from architecture and landscape to religious influences, from gastronomy and intangible heritage to major figures of European art, music and literature. The routes bring people and places together in networks of shared history and heritage.

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4. Motion tabled by the Committee in December 2021 (Doc. 15418), The Cultural Routes: a platform for intercultural dialogue (coe.int).
5. A model questionnaire is attached in the Appendix.
6. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/reference-texts-and-conventions.
7. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme.

8. The significant rise in the number of certified routes is a clear sign of the success of the Programme. However, the accomplishment lies also in the capacity of each route to sustain its activity and relevance in the long term. I therefore wish to outline the main policy instruments of the Council of Europe that lay the foundation for the activities and management of the Cultural Routes.[8]

2.1. European Cultural Convention: a political platform for co-operation

9. The European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18),[9] which was adopted in 1954 in the aftermath of the Second World War, is the foundation for European co-operation in the fields of culture, education and particularly history education, youth, and sport. Its aim is to encourage cultural co-operation in all its forms, to foster understanding and knowledge among European countries, and to preserve their cultural heritage and treat it as an integral part of a broader "European" common, shared heritage. The Convention recognises the intangible heritage of language, literature and civilisation. Given its historic context, an early educational task was to undo the nationalist appropriation and distortion of history. Guidelines on history education[10] and teacher training became crucial parts of assistance to post-communist countries, especially in the conflict regions of the Balkans and the Caucasus. It is important to mention that the European Cultural Convention offers a political platform for co-operation also to non-member States of the Council of Europe, including today Belarus and the Russian Federation (since its exclusion from the organisation in March 2022).

2.2. European Landscape Convention: a wider context for heritage protection

10. In its preamble, the European Landscape Convention mentions three other fundamental conventions of the Council of Europe on which it is based and for which it constitutes a fundamental implementation: the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (ETS No. 104, Bern, 1979); the Convention for the protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (ETS No. 121, Granada, 1985); and the European Convention on the protection of Archaeological Heritage (revised) (ETS No. 143, Valetta, 1992). Together they underline the necessity to preserve cultural and natural heritage as an essential part of local and regional identity and they form a new and broader definition of common European heritage which encompasses not only a particular item or place to be protected by also its wider context.

2.3. Faro Convention and Faro Action Plan: links between heritage, human rights and democracy

11. The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, Faro Convention, 2005)[11] broadens the understanding of cultural heritage even further by establishing close links between heritage, human rights and democracy. It considers heritage both as a resource for human development, and for enhancement of cultural diversity and promotion of intercultural dialogue. Heritage becomes a key part of a local economic development model based on sustainability. The Faro Action Plan[12] promotes the innovating principles of the Convention through diverse activities in the member States. There is an opportunity to reinforce the links between the Cultural Routes Programme and the implementation activities promoting the key principles of the Faro Convention (heritage seen from a human rights perspective; participation of local communities in developing a common vision for local development; and principles of sustainable development which bring together economic, social, cultural and environmental concerns into a coherent strategy).

2.4. UNESCO Convention on intangible heritage: cultural heritage and identity

12. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) provides a definition of intangible cultural heritage in Article 2 referring to "practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity." The importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself, but rather the wealth of

8. https://rm.coe.int/gestion-des-itineraires-culturels-de-la-theorie-a-la-pratique/168098b061.
9. www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/european-cultural-convention.
10. www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching/.
11. www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=199#main-content.
12. www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-action-plan.

knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it from one generation to the next. The social and economic value of this transmission is relevant for both minority groups and for mainstream society. The Cultural Routes promote through each specific theme traditions, knowledge, rituals and tastes which are an essential part of European and local culture and identity, and which are often linked with each other across different regions of Europe.

2.5. Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property: relevance for conflict zones

13. In the framework of the Council of Europe's action to fight terrorism and organised crime, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Convention on offences relating to cultural property (CETS No. 221, Nicosia Convention) in May 2017.[13] This Convention is complementary to the existing international legal framework and seeks to stop the looting of antiquities and their trafficking through art markets. It makes their unlawful excavation, importation and exportation, acquisition and placing on the market, including the falsification of documents in this context, a criminal offence. By bringing national legislations up to the same standards, the treaty will close the existing loopholes and enable much more effective cross-border co-operation in investigating, prosecuting and sentencing persons suspected of the offences listed in the Convention. Crucially, the Convention protects the cultural property of any State, be it party or not to the treaty. Following the required number of ratifications by the member States, the Convention entered into force on 1 April 2022.[14] The Nicosia Convention will be relevant to countering trafficking and looting of cultural heritage in conflict zones and it provides a more stringent basis for restitution.

2.6. Certification of Cultural Routes based on policy guidelines

14. The certification procedure[15] and criteria were established by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2013 (revised criteria),[16] to guarantee that any proposal to establish a new Cultural Route is clearly embedded in the Council of Europe and UNESCO policy guidelines and principles, as outlined above. The proposals must define a theme representative of European values common to several Council of Europe countries; identify heritage elements, whether tangible and/or intangible; create a network with legal status, involving at least three member States; co-ordinate common activities in the main field of actions according to certification criteria; ensure a common visibility strategy and coherence of the project across involved countries.

15. For the Cultural Routes to evolve from a concept to an initiative which brings together a range of different stakeholders (local authorities, enterprises, cultural organisations, research institutes and universities, NGOs, etc.), it was necessary to provide solid support in terms of expertise, counselling, training, and capacity building. The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR, technical agency of the Cultural Routes programme) based in Luxemburg, houses an extensive documentation resource and specialised library on the routes and provides advice and expertise on the organisational, technical, and logistical aspects of the conception, development, and promotion of Cultural Routes. Annual fora and training seminars are organised to exchange practices and experiences both among certified cultural routes and with other programme stakeholders.

3. Intercultural dialogue

16. The notion of intercultural dialogue is fundamental in the policies and conduct of the Council of Europe; it should be understood as "a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect" (White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Strasbourg, 2008)[17]. It is nested within the overriding objective of the Council of Europe to promote full respect for universal and indivisible human rights, democracy and the rule of law as essential features of inclusive societies. It is a necessary enabling process for us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world, and a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

13. www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/convention-on-offences-relating-to-cultural-property.
14. www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/cets-number-/-abridged-title-known?module=treaty-detail&treatynum=221.
15. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/becoming-a-cultural-route.
16. https://rm.coe.int/16807b7d5b.
17. White paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

17. Encouraging intercultural dialogue and facilitating conflict prevention and reconciliation are key objectives of the Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe. Each route may be interpreted as a network, going beyond the notion of individual monuments seen as isolated artefacts. It is based on a theme representative of European values and concerns and common to at least three countries. It is designed to enable co-operation and research, cultural tourism and sustainable social, economic, and cultural development, educational opportunities and exchanges of expertise, enhancing the understanding of history and heritage for all, thereby making European citizens aware of a European cultural identity and enhancing with tangible benefits their living environment.

18. Intercultural dialogue does not just happen; it needs to be encouraged since it is always easier to take the line of least resistance and speak only to those with whom agreement is anticipated. The Cultural Routes broaden the scope of discussions by bringing together disparate voices; they involve schools, universities and cultural institutions in research and the dissemination of a wide range of ideas, some of which may be conflicting; they involve people of different backgrounds, beliefs, and expectations with the ambition of creating a climate of respectful understanding and they deal constructively with the negative feelings of those who regard the heritage of the "other" as alien and dissonant.

19. The potential risks of one-sidedness in post-war educational practice have been highlighted in recent years by the Assembly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Cyprus. In this respect, the Liberation Route Europe[18] (certified since 2019) deals with sensitive political issues, starting from the vexed question of the use of the contested word "Liberation" on the Eastern front; the problem with some World War II museums in their reluctance to acknowledge different points of view; the risk of distorting the past through failing to reflect nuances and varying interpretations: histories are not clear-cut. The Route presents different aspects of war, not just "liberation" and seeks to address diametrically opposed views non-judgmentally and with respect, though this might be difficult when such emotive subjects are discussed, in an age when the risk of manipulation is always present. The Route endeavours to create a platform for discussion, underlining the point that the history of war is to be found everywhere. It is a complex subject, subject to different interpretations which must be acknowledged. Visiting sites, seeing cemeteries and the dates of death of those who were killed, brings home to people the reality of war and its legacy.

20. It is particularly important to engage students since it is otherwise hard for young people to grasp the significance and extent of what has occurred in the not-so-distant past, and the potentially divergent legacies, particularly as the older generations are diminishing. This history needs to be made relevant and accessible and close consideration must be given to how such relatively recent history is interpreted, taught, and communicated in a balanced manner. The participants in the Council of Europe's Baku Cultural Routes Declaration (2014)[19] stressed the importance of intercultural dialogue between young generations in order to anticipate and negotiate conflict, recommending formal and informal education and the promotion of new channels for exchanges between young people from different countries, inviting their active participation in the understanding and sharing of European memories. It is significant in this context that the Saint Martin of Tours Route[20] (certified since 2005) organised a meeting of children and young people from France, Germany and Belgium on 11 November 2018, the centenary of the armistice, at the church of Saint Martin at Dom-le-Mesnil in the Ardennes. This meeting illuminated a profound paradox since the feast of Saint Martin on 11 November in Germany is an occasion for celebration whereas in France it is the occasion for the sad commemoration of the deceased of all wars.[21]

21. The Liberation Route Europe is also seeking to provide additional resources such as providing training in the historical context of the Route to travel trade operators as well as to volunteers and local people. The organisers of the Route are working on the design of its educational strategy which includes specific projects and activities, for example a touring "History through their Eyes" project which is also available online,[22] telling the history of World War II. Other activities include long distance hiking trails, linking existing trails, World War II locations and tourism sites which may be accompanied by online presentations and packages as well as more traditional publications. The Rough Guides in 2019 published a substantial guidebook: *Travel the Liberation Route Europe: Sites and Experiences along the Path of the World War II Allied Advance.*[23]

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18. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/liberation-route-europe.
19. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/2014-baku-forum#"70940598":[1].
20. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/-/european-network-of-saint-martin-cultural-centers.
21. https://fr.aleteia.org/2018/11/10/dans-ce-petite-village-des-ardennes-saint-martin-et-armistice-font-bon-menage/?utm_campaign=NL_fr&utm_source=daily_newsletter&utm_medium=mail&utm_content=NL_fr.
22. www.liberationroute.com.
23. www.roughguides.com/liberation-route-europe/.

22. The ATRIUM and the European Route of Jewish Heritage share with the Liberation Route Europe the political difficulties inherent in its contested subject.

23. The ATRIUM Route[24] (certified since 2014) acknowledges these difficulties through the use of an acronym to designate its subject: **A**rchitecture of **T**otalitarian **R**egimes of the XX Century **i**n Europe's **U**rban **M**emory and announces its rejection of any revisionist standpoint in Article 2 of its Statute. The routes extend from formerly fascist Italy to formerly communist Eastern Europe. The towns and cities of this route display an architectural and urban material heritage of considerable richness and value, often conspicuously aesthetically stylish and photogenic, yet essentially dissonant therefore hampered by the disinclination of public authorities to support it. The principal challenge of the route is to promote a critical historical involvement with a difficult past, to establish a common democratic vision which includes the promotion of cultural tourism, and to foster an articulate and critical appreciation of the complexities of architectural heritage. Through involving citizens in the creation of local heritage communities and explaining history, the intention is to strengthen the resilience of civil society, enabling it to resist any potential renewal of political repression and the violation of human rights. This is particularly important with sites such as Mussolini's birthplace Predappio in the province of Forli which is a site of neo-Fascist nostalgic tourism.

24. The ATRIUM Route encourages the participation of universities and secondary schools to allow students both physically and digitally to explore the complexities of dissonant heritage and enable them critically to analyse fascism and the communist and socialist regimes of Eastern Europe and to understand how architecture became an instrument of education and propaganda as well as state-fostered local development. The various programmes of student exchanges, events, activities and photographic exhibitions are aimed to re-evaluate the architectural heritage, in order to enhance remembrance and understanding. However, it is not easy to depoliticise a fundamentally politicised heritage. Although ATRIUM enjoys very good relations with cultural associations, maintaining links with the responsible local authorities remains a challenging task which requires constant attention. When there has been on occasions insufficient institutional buy-in to something which is perceived as difficult and dissonant, too much depends on individuals; consequently, changes in personnel disrupt project continuity and oblige to restart the dialogue with newly elected mayors and members of municipal or regional councils. Further problems arise in attempting to preserve and promote the architecture of a challenging past, finding new uses and funding for buildings without forgetting their original functions, and dealing with problematic issues of the conservation of property involving both private and public subjects.

25. The European Route of Jewish Heritage[25] (certified since 2004) has the primary objective of promoting a better knowledge and understanding of European history and changing the mentality of society about the importance of Jewish heritage. This is a challenging heritage which is surprisingly little understood by the general public. The route seeks to combat the all too prevalent antisemitism, which continues as a blight on many societies: national report cards have been prepared with specific questions for States to test the effectiveness of the approach.

26. However, the work of the route is not solely devoted to Jewish heritage: it encourages both Jewish and non-Jewish collaboration, giving visibility to the positive elements, rather than concentrating on the profound negativity of antisemitism. For example, *the Parallel Traces* project – which is collaborative, inter-disciplinary and pan-European – encourages artistic projects that connect cultural heritage and contemporary culture, promote intercultural dialogue and multi-disciplinary exchanges and collaborations. The project emphasises the positive contribution of culture and education to human rights and democracy, a link which is not always well understood in all countries.

27. The European Route of Jewish Heritage also promotes cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans, involving schools and universities in the exploration of Jewish heritage as European heritage, to support the social integration of young people, both Jewish and non-Jewish, from different social backgrounds and regions. In line with the Faro Convention, the route looks at heritage as plural and diverse; the question that follows is how the route might work in an open and inclusive manner, creating bridges between worlds. These are complex concepts with many difficulties in their realisation, not least the fact that funding for the routes must be found on a project-by-project basis and funding bodies tend to require proof of previous

24. www.atriumroute.eu.
25. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-european-route-of-jewish-heritage; it comprises a network of public and private institutions and federations, advised by a scientific board of scholars and specialists in tourism, cultural heritage and preservation.

success, which in the heritage world is notoriously difficult to measure. The way forward appears to be to think in terms of bottom-up projects – small "incubator projects" which may be more readily fundable, and which have the potential to feed into the routes and so enrich them.

4. Cultural heritage: a means to re-connect communities and open a broader perspective

28. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals tend to be more introvert and disconnected. Also, nationalism and populism are rising in Europe, with more focus on national borders. Cultural Routes are predicated on principles of collaboration and co-operation and therefore offer opportunities to counter these negative trends. Within the routes, cultural heritage may potentially provide the glue which binds together communities and societies in a common cause, enabling connections to be made across cultural, ethnic, religious, and generational divides. Arguing for the preservation and enhancement of a traditional, recognisable environment or the maintenance or reconstruction of an historic building brings stakeholders together, reviving former connections and forging new ones.

29. The Routes are collaborative transnational networks which are managed by institutions and municipalities rather than by governments so projects may be developed through a bottom-up approach which proceeds from the local to the national to the global, rather than being imposed from above. The networks enable participants to come together in collaboration, empowering communities in pursuit of a common cause or interest which will then attract further participation, ideally encouraging greater diversity among participants as the networks grow.

30. However, networks may also be used as politicised vehicles for propaganda and misinformation, joining people together in a common cause which is directed towards undermining other individuals and institutions. Recent political experience in both Europe and the USA has shown how difficult it is to counter deliberate misinformation. It is particularly difficult to introduce alternative interpretations and nuanced positions in situations where there are clear and strongly supported diametrically opposed positions, equally firmly maintained and often heavily funded by those pursuing a political agenda.

31. Cultural heritage is clearly not always passive; it may be weaponised and politicised, used to identify and stigmatise the "other", fomenting discord and encouraging division in the undermining and even destruction of social cohesion. Targeting the built heritage of those who are perceived as different or alien to an indigenous (majority) population has long been a feature of warfare; the rebuilding of iconic monuments and sites by the victors after destruction might also be interpreted by others as an act of overly assertive aggression.

32. It is vital therefore to present cultural heritage as a positive element in the formation of cohesive, yet diverse societies, respecting the idea of a shared European heritage for which we all have a responsibility, an idea which is embedded in the Faro Convention. It is particularly important to educate young people in the notion of a shared heritage, bringing positive outcomes through countering the notion of the alien "other". Through cultural and educational exchanges, site visits, in-person and on-line participatory projects, cultural heritage and its associated histories might be made comprehensible and relevant to the concerns of young people today.

33. Much may now be learned remotely on-line, but it remains vital to our understanding and appreciation to visit sites. In the context of cultural routes, these sites need not be restricted simply to the items on the route; rather, there may be potential to use the route as a starting point. This is the approach which has been adopted in the EU Horizon 2020-funded "rurAllure" four-year research project which seeks to promote rural museums and heritage sites in the vicinity of pilgrimage routes, showing that the impact of the route may be seen in the surroundings as well as in specific places on the route. The rurAllure project[26] is related to the EU-funded Ruritage project[27] which uses natural and cultural heritage as an engine for the regeneration of rural areas and the sustainable enhancement of local heritage for regional and community development. This strategy of highlighting rural heritage and sites off the beaten track has been employed also on the Saint Martin of Tours Route since the Saint Martin's ways, frequently experienced as slow tourism through walking, highlight a local heritage far from major centres and tourist currents, in the Massif Central and in Flanders, in the Dauphiné and in Friuli, in Puglia or in Croatia, and so on.

26. https://rurallure.eu/project/about/.
27. www.ruritage.eu/project/.

34. It is seeing things in their wider context, not only physically but also conceptually, making tangible links, which helps make the heritage relevant and accessible, especially for younger generations who are coming to an appreciation of it for the first time. Greater contextualisation and a more relativist approach to historical questions makes it possible to bring different perspectives on situations and artefacts forward, to advance different interpretations and to counter totalitarian, absolutist tendencies. On the St Martin of Tours Route for example it has been recognised that the Friuli border between Italy and Slovenia was in the twentieth century a place of major confrontation in both world wars and a site of frequently difficult contact between Latins, Germans, and Slavs, as well as between the western and communist worlds: divergences of interpretation fuel conflicting ideological positions which it is the task of the Route to reconcile and overcome.

35. There is no single standard or authorised version of history so it is crucial to accommodate a diversity of views in its teaching, and in the present context, utilise a wide range of sites as examples, not just the well-known museums and battlefields but also the under-exploited and humble sites which might tell us more about the past and raise awareness of how people lived. In considering the Jewish built heritage for example, for a better understanding of the circumstances of people's lives we need to look beyond the obviously major sites such as synagogues and cemeteries towards philanthropic housing for the poor, free schools, public baths, and soup kitchens. Consideration of this specifically Jewish heritage enriches our knowledge and understanding of European history, which is a fundamental aim of the European Route of Jewish Heritage, underlining the notion of a common European heritage, not delimited by race, religion, or ethnicity.

36. A difficulty inherent in approaches to the humble heritage, which can tell us so much about how people lived, is that unlike the monumental heritage, it may not survive. Hence there is the need to maintain documentation and to make it accessible to all through multi-media as well as in repositories and museums. And it must also be noted that documents do not speak for themselves but require well-informed interpretation and presentation if they are to be properly understood and communicated.

5. Innovation, digitalisation, education, and sustainable development

37. We must encourage the use of new technologies and innovative techniques to increase knowledge and understanding of heritage, enabling more collaboration and better communication, reaching wider audiences and crossing generations. Heritage may often be perceived incorrectly as something which has simply to do with the past and is concerned solely with the care and presentation of historic buildings and sites. But it is more than that: built heritage covers all types and all ages of buildings, right up to the present day; it is all around us and helps to define the ways in which we navigate our societies, geographically, economically and socially.

38. Heritage and its interpretations and management differs from the study of history in relating to our present concerns and future expectations: history is what has happened, and we make attempts to describe and understand it and learn from it; heritage is a product shaped by history and used for current purposes, which may not all be sympathetic. This goes beyond the obviously attractive and non-contentious heritage to include dissonant heritage which may be controversial, unsettling or even undesirable but is nevertheless vital in educating, commemorating, prompting memory and encouraging reflection. As such it can be a means of bringing people together. This might be a slow process since dissonance arouses strong, often oppositional feelings with people holding diametrically opposed views which may only be overcome gradually over time.

39. Dissonant heritage is a fundamental part of European history and heritage, often displaying striking architecture but also often neglected and threatened, a victim of negative associations so under-funded and under-used. But with well-informed management, dissonant heritage may play an important role in sustainable tourism, even in circumstances in which local populations might need to be persuaded of the benefits before becoming involved. Certain of the cultural routes, particularly the Liberation Route Europe (the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of World War II) and the ATRIUM Route (the architecture of totalitarian regimes), are developing new approaches to tourism and education, particularly involving school children, and encouraging online discussions and sharing of experiences with which we have become familiar during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as site visits. For the European Route of Jewish Heritage, online tours have been created, applying heritage data to such pan-European (and topical) topics as multiculturalism, persecution, and migration. Such a transversal approach could possibly be applied to other potentially challenging and divisive routes, providing a more accessible starting point for those who consider the notions of "liberation" and "totalitarian" to be so politically and culturally contested that they become difficult to sell to the wider audience in which one person's reason for condemnation might be another person's reason for celebration.

40. In line with the Council of Europe Faro Convention, the enabling of successful sustainable tourism (meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs) demands local involvement and local management. It also requires the active participation of residents in defining what may be considered and promoted as heritage, so determining the nature of the tourist offer and avoiding the top-down approach in which residents are told by "experts" what is important. This approach is very different in its procedures and effects from traditional mass tourism. It is particularly valuable in bringing a wider, potentially appreciative audience to the road less travelled and the destination hitherto unknown, so extending sustainable development to previously less frequented locations.

41. Mass-market tourism tends to be orchestrated from above with large travel companies working in concert with airlines, hotels, and shops with the aim of maximising footfall at well-known destinations. At the opposite end of the tourist scale, a bottom-up approach in determining the visitor offer and providing a welcoming and informing environment, centred on particular sites, displays or activities is intended to encourage a more thoughtful tourism. Such has been the experience in the Liberation and ATRIUM routes, with the encouragement of such green activities as hiking and biking, often following trails through customarily less well visited areas, so bringing many of the social and financial benefits of tourism to places which hitherto had been off the tourist map.

42. On the European Route of Jewish Heritage, remarkably, in Girona (Spain) the physical reconstruction of a Jewish quarter has brought back a lost Jewish community, and fostered tourism. This recalls one of the intentions of post-war reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina, notably in Stolac: rebuild the destroyed town in order to encourage the return of those who were forcibly removed during the conflict in the 1990s, making the place once more look familiarly like home.

43. Among the most strikingly innovative approaches to sustainable tourism, the Phoenicians' Route,[28] certified since 2003 – covering essential routes, by land and water, for trade and cultural communication throughout the Mediterranean civilisations – has introduced Smart Ways[29] (pathways bringing together heritages, communities and services to provide a territorial sustainable tourist offer) and Interpretation Centres, in which service providers meet visitors in hubs along the route where the tourist offer can be explained and understood.

44. The Smart Ways approach is designed to enhance territorial co-operation and cohesion, enabling some less developed destinations to build their economy. The approach is predicated on the understanding that tourism has a very fast multiplier effect with a high return on investment and great resilience in recovering rapidly from crisis, particularly important in post-Covid economic recovery programmes.[30]

45. The emphasis in Smart Ways is laid upon collaboration between experts and local partners: cultural and tourism operators, representatives of associations and institutions, private companies and municipalities: it is the view of the organisers of the Phoenicians' Route that cultural routes offer the best future for tourism in being sustainable, responsible and collaborative, with the full engagement of local communities. This collaborative, capacity building approach, bringing public and private actors together in workshops to develop new approaches to heritage, while not always explicitly acknowledged, has been fundamental to the most successful Council of Europe heritage initiatives in recent years, notably in the Regional Programme in South-East Europe.

46. For the routes of El Legado Andalusí[31] (certified since 1997), which celebrate the centuries of Spanish-Muslim civilisation (linking the Arab world with the Mediterranean basin) through its heritage, arts, sciences, and historical and social relationships, cultural tourism enables the establishment of bonds of solidarity between civilisations. These bonds are not only made manifest through traversing a physical route but also through the elements of the route which are representative of an idea and a process of cultural co-operation, enabled in part in this case by digital innovation: their QR codes of heritage sites are shared with others as an innovative model. The methodologies of this route might provide a way forward in confronting the difficulties inherent in dissonant heritage since El Legado Andalusí represents an historic model of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding between Muslims, Christians, and Jews.

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28. www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-phoenicians-route.
29. https://fenici.net/en/.
30. A.Mariotti, "Concepts and Methods for Understanding Smart Ways and Capacity Building Activity Aims and Outcomes", paper included in the Phoenicians' Route "Operational Guidelines for the creation of Smart Ways and Interpretation Centers".
31. www.legadoandalusi.es/cultural-routes-of-the-council-of-europe/?lang=en and www.legadoandalusi.es.

6. Conclusions

47. The significant rise in the number of certified routes is a clear sign of the success of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme. However, the accomplishment lies also in the capacity of each route to sustain its activity and relevance in the long term. I therefore wish to outline some ideas that we have discussed with representatives of six cultural routes[32] that seem relevant to pursue with a view to promote further intercultural dialogue and cultural diplomacy; to reconnect communities and broaden perspectives; to innovate and to make local economic and tourist initiatives more sustainable.

48. One of the aims of cultural routes is the celebration of diversity which should be respected by all, as expressed in the Faro Convention: "everyone alone or collectively, has the responsibility to respect the cultural heritage of others as much as their own heritage, and consequently the common heritage of Europe" (Article 4). This shared responsibility towards the places where people live is vital in the reinforcement of social cohesion (Article 8), a particularly significant ambition in a period which frequently has been characterised by divisiveness and discord, and especially important in routes with a high proportion of dissonant, contestable heritage on which opinions may be too-strongly expressed. Notably it is among the recommendations of the European Commission's "Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life" (2021)[33] that there should be co-operation with the Council of Europe to support and enhance cultural routes, and that guidance and financial incentives should be developed for the protection and preservation of Jewish heritage sites, supporting the implementation of the Faro Convention.

49. It has been noted with respect to the ATRIUM Route that heritage in the Faro Convention is not delimited to material heritage but also lays emphasis upon the immaterial – this has notably been acknowledged in El Legado Andalusí which has contributed to the EU's iHeritage First Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Mediterranean.[34] In Article 3 of the Faro Convention, heritage is concerned with the meaning systems which objects represent, not simply the objects themselves: "all forms of cultural heritage in Europe which together constitute a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion, and creativity; and the ideals, principles, and values … which foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law". This focus on a shared understanding is particularly important with respect to dissonant heritage which requires critical and historical evaluation rather than unthinking celebration.[35]

50. Critical and historical evaluation is often elusive in our current age of instantaneous communication and asserted opinions, in which truths and falsehoods often indistinguishably traverse the globe faster than reflective thought: it may often be difficult to determine where priorities and sympathies lie and whom we can trust when so many seek to mislead. However, viewed positively, the ever-increasing availability of information, coupled with the growth of information and communication technologies, when used with goodwill have created opportunities for strengthening the role of cultural heritage in fostering dialogue within and beyond particular regions.[36] We can experience cultural heritage remotely, through digital technologies. This may not fully replace the experience of physical travel but can substitute for it when necessary or enhance it through providing supplementary information and possibilities for exchange, thus offering new opportunities to recognise the significance of cultural heritage as a vehicle for developing knowledge and understanding, and for enabling dialogue.

51. The cultural routes initiatives emphasise the local and the sustainable, but they cannot guarantee continuity without significant engagement at all levels of involvement from local through regional to national, bringing participation in funding, enabling, publicising, and managing. This has been recognised specifically by the organisers of the Phoenicians' Route which has achieved wider national publicity through being represented on the institutional websites of ministries of tourism in Spain, France, Italy, and Croatia. Initiatives lose momentum when the initiators move on to new projects or new places unless they have reassigned responsibilities to others and embedded strategies and procedures in continuing networks and institutions. In those routes which focus on dissonant heritage, maintaining continuity of personnel and endeavour is

32. Online interviews with representatives of: ATRIUM Route, Liberation Route, European Route of Jewish Heritage, Saint Martin of Tours Route, Phoenicians' Route and Routes of El Legado Andalusí.
33. https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/eu-strategy-combating-antisemitism-and-fostering-jewish-life-2021-2030_en.
34. www.enicbcmed.eu/projects/iheritage.
35. Patrick Leech, "ATRIUM: Heritage, Intercultural Dialogue and the European Cultural Routes", *Almatourism – Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, 20, 2019.
36. Varna Declaration on Cultural Corridors of South-East Europe, 2005: www.seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_21.pdf.

particularly challenging because these are not mass-market subjects with many friends and potential collaborators who would wish to benefit from involvement. They are by definition “niche subjects”, with specialist audiences.

52. In conclusion I would emphasise that each Route is an idea and a process that offers inspiration and guidance to be shared widely across Europe and to be used more systematically as an innovative and collaborative process locally. In my opinion member States are not sufficiently aware of these local processes and their value in building knowledge and understanding between cultures with a view to sustaining cohesive, tolerant, culturally diverse, and vibrant democratic societies.

Appendix - Example of a questionnaire

Questions for the European Route of Jewish Heritage

Introduction

– How is this route structured and what are its statutory activities?

– Which countries are the most active members?

– Can you tell us about concrete and specific initiatives that you have put in place?

– Could you tell us more about the co-operation with the other cultural routes?

History education and remembrance

– Do you promote common European values (human rights, diversity, cultural identity…)? If yes, how? How can the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage provide a better understanding of the concept of European citizenship and encourage exploration of Jewish heritage as a "shared" European heritage?

– For example, the synagogues of Central and Eastern Europe are all that remains from Jewish life in the region, since local Jewish communities disappeared. How can we teach this past when heritage communities no longer exist? Is it easy to associate current local communities in educational activities to raise awareness and discuss the difficult and controversial past?

– How to account for the Jewish cultural contribution in Europe in the fight against anti-Semitism? What relevant examples can you give us?

– Are there exchanges of young people from different regions of Europe thanks to the great diversity of sites and heritage of the route?

– Can you tell us about the project "Parallel Traces: A new lens for Jewish Heritage"? Do you have other examples to illustrate?

– How do you transmit the Jewish intangible cultural heritage? For example, in Spain, there is no longer any physical trace of the presence of Jewish communities in the Middle Ages.

Political issues

– Is it not a European utopia to try to teach this historical period in a positive way?

– To what extent could your cultural route be useful in repairing the existing "weaknesses" in the construction of Europe?

– Why is there not so much dialogue between North and South Institutions?

Innovation, digitalisation, education, and sustainable development

– What links do you make between Cultural Routes and Digital Representations? How do you use digital representations to teach this past?

– To what extent do your sustainable development activities promote dialogue at the European level? Does the cultural route of Jewish heritage also allow a dialogue between rural and urban areas? and between developed and disadvantaged regions?

– How can you strengthen the democratic dimension of cultural exchanges through the involvement of local networks and associations?

– What projects have you developed, such as the Erasmus + DECRA project for example?

– Can you give us concrete examples of actions/projects that reflect innovation, sustainable development and innovative use of new technologies?