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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: a platform for intercultural dialogue

Reply to Recommendation[1]: Recommendation 2249 (2023)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has carefully examined Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2249 (2023) "The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: a platform for intercultural dialogue". The recommendation has been brought to the attention of the governments of the member States and forwarded to the relevant committees for information and possible comments.[2]

2. The importance of cultural heritage for achieving a greater unity among Europeans is a cornerstone to implementing on the ground fundamental Council of Europe values. 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, promoting sustainable growth through cultural tourism recognised as a key element in the processes of sustainable development, also supporting the member States' efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the promotion of cultural diversity.

3. With this in mind, the Committee of Ministers is committed to promoting intercultural dialogue and access to culture across regions in Europe. The current 47 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe 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 Committee of Ministers takes note of the specific invitation by the Assembly, in paragraph 4.1 of Resolution 2488 (2023), that the member States of the Council of Europe that have not yet done so join the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

5. In line with paragraph 5.4 of the recommendation, the Committee underlines that an adequate information campaign could contribute to increase the general public's knowledge of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, notably by making their label more recognisable to visitors throughout Europe and more used by the EPA members.

6. The Committee of Ministers also takes note of the specific invitation by the Assembly, in paragraph 6 of Resolution 2488 (2023), that the European Union 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 the EU Macro-Regional Strategies (EUSAIR, EUSALR, EUSBSR, EUSDR), and develop targeted EU funding programmes for cultural routes that would be based on clearly established criteria, including the promotion of key principles, such as the development of democratic participation and social responsibility, the improvement of the living environment and quality of life, the management of cultural diversity and the enhancement of social cohesion through a community and inclusive approach to cultural heritage.

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1. Adopted at the 1476th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (27 September 2023).
2. The Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) and the Governing Board of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA).

7. The Committee of Ministers further invites the European Union to join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, as foreseen in Resolution CM/Res(2013)66.

8. The Committee of Ministers finally takes note of the specific invitation by the Assembly, in paragraph 7 of Resolution 2488 (2023), that the countries having observer or partner for democracy status with the Assembly join the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.