

22 October 2025

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## MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Hotel Marriott Cappadocia, Türkiye - **Wednesday 22 October 2025** (09:30 - 12:30)

Meeting at the occasion of the 14<sup>th</sup> Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

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### DRAFT REPORT

Document prepared by the EICR Secretariat

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## **1. OPENING AND INTRODUCTION OF THE ROUTES PRESENT**

Rui GOMES, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes and Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, opened the meeting and introduced Dzhafer Saatcha, a consultant invited to facilitate the meeting. Rui Gomes apologised for not being able to fully be present as he had to attend also the meetings of the University Network and of the informal Governing Board of the EPA.

Dzhafer SAATCHA took over the facilitation of the meeting and invited the routes present to introduce themselves.

## **2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda of the meeting was introduced and adopted.

## **3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME**

Rui GOMES presented an overview of the recent developments of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, highlighting some recent achievements and upcoming initiatives:

- As part of the 2024–2025 certification cycle, 3 Cultural Routes were newly certified, bringing the total to 49 certified Routes.
- The Netherlands and Ireland joined the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in 2025, bringing the total to 43 member states.
- The 13<sup>th</sup> edition of the Training Academy will be organised in 2026 by the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route in the city of Pécs (Hungary) and Osijek (Croatia).
- The European Institute of Cultural Routes was honoured with the XXIX International Prize Grupo Compostela–Xunta de Galicia in September 2025.
- The 2025-2026 Certification cycle is underway with 8 Cultural Routes under regular evaluation and 6 new candidate routes to certification.
- Seminars in connection with the Presidencies of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe are being organised (Malta, Republic of Moldova); they should be important for routes interested in contacts in those countries.
- The Reflection Group on the Thematic Representativity of the Cultural Routes activities will start its work in November 2025.
- Support for Ukraine's participation in the programme will be strengthened.
- Strengthening youth participation in the programme will continue to be a priority.
- The development of the University Network should also be consolidated.
- Enhanced cooperation with and among the Cultural Routes is to be continued.

Rui invited participants for evaluations and feedback, encouraging members to share ideas on how to work better together.

Gordana PLAMENAC, President of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, remarked on the further development with too many layers, and raised the question of how this should be correctly addressed. She emphasized the importance of working closely with universities to ensure a clearer and more sustainable framework for future development. She also underlined the need to collect more data from visitors' centres and through tourist feedback,

stressing that greater attention should be given to tourism aspects, even if some routes are not primarily tourism oriented.

Claudia CASTELLUCCI, Director of the ATRIUM, shared information about a joint project conducted with Destination Napoléon and participants from Ukraine, focusing on the promotion of democracy.

Rui GOMES concluded by presenting the outcomes of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Training Academy which was held in June 2025, Portugal. He summarized the conclusions and strategic recommendations for the future development of the cultural routes programme.

#### **4. PROPOSAL OF A PILOT INFORMAL CONTACT GROUP OF CULTURAL ROUTES**

A pilot project establishing an Informal Contact Group of Cultural Routes was presented. The project was scheduled to be launched within the same week. The proposal was prepared on the basis of the outcomes and expectations of the working groups identified during the 2025 Training Academy, held in Portugal.

#### **5. COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS**

Sergei BAZARYA, Programme Manager of the European Heritage Days at the Council of Europe, presented the results of the 2025 Call for Projects of cultural routes. Two Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe were selected: [European Route of Jewish Heritage](#)–Incubator (Reframing architectural heritage as a platform for dialogue against hate speech, transforming cultural tourism into a civic experience) and [Alvar Aalto Route](#)–Open Route Day (Synchronizing access to modernist heritage across countries, blending physical visits with digital participation). Sergei also highlighted the strong points and weak points of a project proposal based on its relevance, communication and dissemination, quality of partnership, young audiences, European dimension.

Anni ALHO, EPA Representative of Finland, Senior advisor at the Finnish Heritage Agency presented the Cross-Border Cooperation Toolkit. Developed with National Coordinators from Finland, Norway, and Poland and supported by European Heritage Days, this toolkit provides practical ideas to help communities celebrate Europe’s rich cultural and architectural heritage through engaging events and through cross-border cooperation. Cross-border cooperation is more than a logistical challenge—it represents a strategic opportunity to enhance the role of heritage in European unity. These initiatives highlight shared European heritage, promote intercultural dialogue, and engage multiple sites at once, boosting both visibility and impact.

#### **6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> ADVISORY FORUM**

Aysegül YILMAZ, independent expert, presented an introduction on the role of Cultural Routes in relation to landscape protection and sustainable development. She also shared an overview of the Forum’s programme’s structure and the sessions.

Réka HESZTERÉNYI, of the EPA secretariat, presented an update on the organisation of the “B2B” sessions at the last day of the forum. She gave an overview of the objective and the structure of the session.

#### **7. SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME**

Crina ZUGRAV, European Institute of Cultural Routes, briefly recalled the decisions and actions within the programme to support Ukrainian participation, reaffirming the commitment of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe to solidarity and inclusion.

Mykola MANDZIUK, VIA REGIA in Ukraine, described the severe consequences of the conflict and its disruption to cultural activities in Ukraine.

Stefaniia TOPYLKO, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, noted that despite the challenges, some restoration works were ongoing, though the situation continued to have a significant impact on humans, including difficulties caused by mobilisation.

Other participants exchanged experiences and examples of support initiatives for Cultural Routes in Ukraine:

- Inger HARLEVI, The Hansa, highlighted the challenges of maintaining engagement under the current circumstances;
- Mustafa TOLAY, Leonardo da Vinci Route, mentioned the garden in Uman, Ukraine, which features two types of roses named “Leonardo da Vinci”;
- Ana Rosa MORENO GARCIA, European Route of Historic Gardens, informed that participants from Ukraine were exempted from membership fees;
- Ivana SAMARDZIC, Project Manager of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, informed that they had Ukrainian participants from the Odesa region in one of their festivals;
- Giovanni CAFIERO, President of the Aeneas Route, added that they were actively attempting to re-establish contact with their Ukrainian members to provide support.

## **8. COOPERATION BETWEEN CULTURAL ROUTES AND UN TOURISM**

Jacopo BORDIGNON, Senior Project Specialist, presented ongoing activities of UN Tourism and outlined possible areas of cooperation with the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme, such as capacity-building, marketing and collaborative partnerships.

## **9. RESULTS AND FEEDBACK OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> TRAINING ACADEMY**

Eleonora BERTI, Director of Destination Napoléon, presented an overview of the 12<sup>th</sup> Training Academy, emphasising its success and broad participation. The event, organised by Destination Napoleon and Iter Vitis in Torres Vedras, Arruda dos Vinhos and Vila Franca de Xira, brought together 100 participants representing 36 Cultural Routes from 17 countries and took place across several different locations.

Crina ZUGRAV presented the results of the participant survey, providing feedback and insights about the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Training Academy. The evaluation survey received only 10 responses, a small proportion of the event participants. These replies rated the event as very good and having largely met their expectations.

## **10. 13<sup>TH</sup> TRAINING ACADEMY**

Gordana PLAMENAC and Ivana SAMARDZIC presented the forthcoming plans and objectives for the 13<sup>th</sup> Training Academy, which will be organised by the Roman Emperors and Danube

Wine Route in Pécs (Hungary) and Osijek (Croatia). The event would include two sectors of workshops with a focus on practical aspects, such as panels, site visits, and cultural immersion. The decision of holding the event in two different countries is to highlight the cross-border collaboration which is at the spirit of the organising route. The next edition of the Training Academy will prioritise four areas: heritage interpretation, promotion, cultural tourism, management.

## **11. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

The Working Groups, consisting of representatives of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, have been self-managed and been functioning for some time. They focus on key aspects and challenges of routes management, including sustainability, cooperation, tourism, and visibility.

- a. Working Group on Sustainability, presented by Inger HARLEVI
- b. Working Group on Cooperation, presented by Victor SORENSSEN, European Route of Jewish Heritage,
- c. Working Group on Tourism, presented by Miguel Angel MARTÍN RAMOS, European Routes of Emperor Charles V
- d. Working Group on Visibility, presented by Dorothe RÖMER, Huguenot and Waldensian Trail

Inger HARLEVI mentioned that the recommendations of the Working Group on Sustainability had already been shared with all Cultural Routes' representatives but could be resend them if needed. She mentioned plans to relaunch the working group.

Caroline FISCHER, Manager of the VIA REGIA Route, referred to an Erasmus+ project involving five Cultural Routes.

Miguel Angel MARTÍN RAMOS presented four strategic priorities for the Working Group on Tourism: branding, culinary practices, intercultural dialogue, and digital environment. He highlighted the need to consolidate the Academic Network and emphasised the importance of strengthen the dialogue with the EPA member states in order to improve the support of the Cultural Routes at the national level, as well as promoting cross-border cooperation under Interreg Europe. Lastly, he emphasized the significance of cooperation among the Cultural Routes in order to implement all these recommendations.

Victor SORENSSEN stressed the need to transform ideas into tangible results through a structured plan. He suggested setting clear objectives and assessing potential opportunities, referring in particular to the Working Group on national and micro-regional cooperation. The group had met several times to identify gaps and opportunities and stressed the importance of facilitating intra-route cooperation projects.

Dorothe RÖMER, presented updates on the Visibility and CURV project, underlining the need to improve visibility on the Council of Europe's website. She further emphasized the necessity of strengthening the overall visibility and recognition of the certified Cultural Routes.

Miguel Angel MARTÍN RAMOS highlighted the need to identify common points for collaboration between the Working Groups and to develop strategies for the implementation of the recommendations.

## **12. SHARING OF ON-GOING INTER-ROUTES COOPERATION PROJECTS**

Elena DUBININA, European Project Manager of the Via Francigena introduced an Erasmus+ project involving six Cultural Routes, focusing on the practical implementation of the programme, including how visitors can move and explore the routes. She also emphasized aspects of nutrition and inclusivity along the routes.

Ana Rosa MORENO GARCÍA presented a collaborative project with the European Route of Historic Pharmacies and Medicinal Gardens. She announced that for the network's next symposium, they plan to introduce a new theme, differing from that of the route, to broaden perspectives.

Eleonora BERTI informed that the French Federation of Cultural Routes currently includes 22 Cultural Routes. She noted that the Federation operates on a voluntary basis, with strong emphasis on cooperation and visibility. She highlighted that the initiatives and events are organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture. She also mentioned the preparation of a brochure detailing the Federation's programme, the Ministry's role, and information on all member routes, suggesting that this material could be shared with others.

Victor SORENSSEN addressed the need for a clearer framework to facilitate stronger and more effective cooperation among Cultural Routes. He encouraged closer collaboration with the European Institute of Cultural Routes to reinforce joint actions and visibility.

Vitor SA MARQUES, representative of the Portuguese Historic Cafés Association, stated that he was involved in the preparation of a brochure that showcases the 12 Cultural Routes that cross the city of Coimbra from Portugal.

## **CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

Dzhafer thanked all participants for their cooperation and closed the meeting.

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# MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Hotel Marriott Cappadocia, Türkiye, *Wednesday 22 October 2025, 09:30-12:30 CET*

Meeting at the occasion of the 14th Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

## DRAFT AGENDA

- 1. OPENING AND INTRODUCTION OF THE ROUTES PRESENT**
- 2. [09:45] ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**
- 3. [09:50] RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME**, by RUI GOMES, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe
  - Overview of the conclusions of the working groups on strategies for further development held in Arruda dos Vinhos, Portugal in June 2025
- 4. [10:05] PROPOSAL OF A PILOT INFORMAL CONTACT GROUP OF CULTURAL ROUTES**
- 5. [10:20] COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS (EHD)**
  - a. Results of the 2025 Call for projects: presented by SERGEI BAZARYA, programme Manager, EHD.
  - b. Cross border cooperation toolkit: presented by ANNI ALHO, EPA Representative of Finland, Senior Advisor, Finish Heritage Agency
  - c. Prospects for future cooperation and support
- 6. [10:30] INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROGRAMME OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> ADVISORY FORUM**
  - a. The role of Cultural Routes in relation to Landscape protection and sustainable development, introduction by AYSEGUL YILMAZ, programme expert
  - b. Update on the "B2B" sessions, by RÉKA HESZTERÉNYI, EPA Secretariat
- 7. [10:45] SUPPORT FOR UKRAINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAMME**
  - a. Decisions and actions undertaken within the programme
  - b. The impact of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation on cultural routes in Ukraine, testimonies by the Ukrainian participants
  - c. Exchange of experiences of support to the routes in Ukraine, by the participants
- 8. [11:00] COOPERATION BETWEEN CULTURAL ROUTES AND UN TOURISM**, with JACOPO BORDIGNON, UN Tourism

**9. [11:05] FEEDBACK AND RESULTS OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> TRAINING ACADEMY**, by ELEONORA BERTI, Destination Napoléon

- Evaluations of participants, by CRINA ZUGRAV, European Institute of Cultural Routes

BREAK [11:15]

**10. [11:40] 13<sup>TH</sup> TRAINING ACADEMY OF THE CULTURAL ROUTES**

- a. Presentation by GORDANA PLAMENAC, President of the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route
- b. Exchange of views on possible contents and methodology

**11. [11:55] PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUPS**

- a. Working Group on Sustainability, presented by INGER HARLEVI
- b. Working Group on Cooperation, presented by VICTOR SORENSEN
- c. Working Group on Tourism, presented by MIGUEL ANGEL MARTÍN RAMOS
- d. Working Group on Visibility, presented by DOROTHE RÖMER

**12. [12:30] SHARING OF ON-GOING INTER-ROUES COOPERATION PROJECTS**

**CLOSING OF THE MEETING**

## Annex 2- DRAFT List of participants

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SURNAME</b>	<b>CULTURAL ROUTE</b>	<b>POSITION WITHIN THE CULTURAL ROUTE</b>
1	Ana Rosa	Moreno García	European Route of Historic Gardens	Manager
2	Anxo	Varela Centelles	Saint James Way	Assistant to the President
3	Arnold	Klingeis	Historic Cafes Route	President
4	Caroline	Fischer	VIA REGIA	Manager
5	Claudia	Castellucci	ATRIUM Route	Director
6	Coralie	Vitores	Destinations Le Corbusier : architectural promenades	Coordinator
7	Cristina	Vallicelli	ATRIUM Route	Development Officer
8	Dorothe	Römer	Huguenot and Waldensian Trail	Vice President, Germany
9	Elena	Dubinina	Via Francigena	Project manager
10	Eleonora	Berti	Destination Napoleon	Director
11	Elka	Zlateva	Cyril and Methodius Route	National coordinator for Bulgaria
12	Erika	Giuliani	Réseau Art Nouveau Network	Coordinator
13	Esra	Karakoç	Aeneas Route	Member
14	Feridun	Ekmekci	Eurovelo13 ict	National EuroVelo coordinator for Türkiye
15	Gordana	Plamenac	Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	President
16	Gumersindo	Bueno Benito	Saint James Way	Treasurer
17	Inger	Harlevi	The Hansa	Vice President
18	Irem	Gül ece	Iter Vitis Cappadocia Region	Representative
19	Ivana	Samardzic	Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	Project Manager
20	Josette Paule	Durrieu Dufaza	Itinéraires Liberté Pyrenees Europe	Secrétaire Gestionnaire
21	Lidija	Plibersek	European Cemeteries Route	Manager
22	Løvrød	Hans Morten	St Olav Ways	Director

23	Maija	Oinonen	Alvar Aalto Route - 20th Century Architecture and Design	Manager
24	Maja	Jakimovska Toshikj	European Cultural Route of Cyril and Methodius	Member of the Scientific Committee of the European Cultural Route of Cyril and Methodius
25	María Luisa	Vázquez de Ágredos Pascual	European Route of Historic Pharmacies and medicinal gardens	Director
26	Martín Ramos	Miguel Ángel	Routes of Emperor Charles V	President (acting)
27	Mykola	Mandziuk	Via Regia	Head of NGO Association Via Regia Ukraine
28	Polonca	Vodopivec	The Phoenicians' route	Partner
29	Rögnvaldur	Guðmundsson	The Viking Route (Destination Viking Association)	Chairman
30	Şefik Uğur	Bekdemir	Leonardo da Vinci Route	Participant
31	Silvano	Guerrini	Leonardo Da Vinci Route	President
32	Simone	Zagrodnik	European Route of Historic Thermal Towns	Executive Director
33	Sonja	Stojmenska-Elzeser	Cyril and Methodius Route	Researcher - member of several projects
34	Stefaniia	Topylko	LME Heritage Bureau, Réseau Art Nouveau Network	Director
35	Susanne	Binczyk	VIA REGIA	Office Manager
36	Szilvia	Fábián	Iron Age Danube Route	president
37	Tibethan	Memişoğlu	Avanos Ceramic Route	Representative
38	Tilda	Koenka	European Routes of Jewish Heritage	Route Manager
39	Tuğba	Bozkurt	Aeneas Route	stakeholder from Regional Development Agency
40	Ursula	Warnke	Route of Megalithic Culture	Managing Director
41	Viola	Gaudiano	Romea Strata	Project Developer
42	Vítor	Sá marques	Historic Cafés Route	member
43	Yalçın	Güçer	Iter Vitis	Leader of Türkiye (Anatolia Gastro-Tourism Association)
44	Yusuf	Altın	Avrupa Tarihi Termal Kentleri Rotası	Avrupa Tarihi Termal Kentleri Rotası

**SECRETARIAT AND OTHER SPEAKERS**

45	Anni	Alho	EPA Representative of Finland	Senior advisor at the Finnish Heritage Agency
46	Ayşegül	Yilmaz	Independant expert	
47	Beyza	Göçgün	EICR Secretariat	Junior Project Manager
48	Crina	Zugrav	EICR Secretariat	Junior Project Manager
49	Dzhafer	Saatcha	Facilitator/Moderator	
50	Jacopo	Bordignon	Senior Project Specialist	UN Tourism
51	Réka	Heszterényi	Council of Europe, EPA Secretariat	Executive Assistant
52	Rui	Gomes	Council of Europe, EPA Secretariat	Executive Secretary of the EPA and Director of the EICR
53	Sergei	Bazarya	Council of Europe	Programme Manager of the European Heritage Days