

Cult-RInG
Interreg Europe



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Chronicle



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Cultural Routes as Investment for Growth and Jobs, 2017 - 2020



*Cult-RInG is an interregional cooperation project for improving natural and cultural heritage policies through Cultural Routes in the **Interreg Europe** Programme, which helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy by integrated and sustainable impact for people and place.*

Cult-RInG highlights the value of investment in European Cultural Routes in terms of their contribution to growth and jobs and the development of new cultural routes

“For almost half a century, Europe was divided into East and West by the "Iron Curtain", a border stretching from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea. The **Iron Curtain Trail** invites people to retrace and experience the former division of the continent on a 6,800 km cycle track along the length of the former border, combining European culture, history and sustainable tourism. The **Iron Curtain Trail** thereby contributes in a lively and very practical way to the creation of a genuine European identity.”

Michal Cramer MEP

Addressing the 1st Workshop of **Cult-RInG** project in Riga, Latvia, 16 November 2017, organised by project partner Vidzeme Tourism Association

In 2005, following the initiative of Green member Michael Cramer, the European Parliament recognised the "Iron Curtain Trail" as a model project for sustainable tourism and called upon the Member States for support.

In Cult-RInG project the aim is to upgrade it to a cultural route.

The **Cult-RInG** project is co-funded by the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** and made possible by the **Interreg Europe** programme

Cult-RInG budget: 1.33 M EUR
ERDF co-funding: 1.13 M EUR

Specific Themes related to Cultural Routes:

- 1. Assessment of six existing Cultural Routes (ex-post), in terms of socio-economic development, direct and indirect benefits for Growth & Jobs, policy learning**
- 2. Capitalisation of established best practices from INTERREG IVC completed projects CHARTS and CERTESS**
- 3. Development of new cultural routes, based on the above assessment and capitalisation of good practices**

Assessment of the benefits of existing cultural routes and lessons for the development of new routes, improvements and extensions



The direct & indirect benefits of existing cultural routes for Growth & Jobs have been highlighted by the **Cult-RInG project (Cultural Routes as Investment for Growth & Jobs)**, in the **Interreg Europe** programme of interregional cooperation. The assessment of these benefits in terms of socio-economic development has been based on a 'Study on the Cultural Routes' Impact on SMEs Innovation, Competitiveness and Clustering', jointly launched by the European Commission and the Council of Europe. This Study aimed to:

- examine the potential of the CoE Cultural Routes for European **cultural tourism development**
- provide insights on the effects produced by the Cultural Routes on SMEs creation, their performance, innovation, network and clustering
- analyse how much Cultural Routes networks - national & transnational- can benefit SMEs, especially in less-known destinations, and
- how SMEs' involvement can create a solid basis for promoting Europe as "the world's No 1 tourist destination"

The findings of this Study are as follows:

- Cultural Routes have achieved a noteworthy impact and progress: they encourage widespread community participation in cultural activities raising awareness of a common cultural heritage

- Established on the cultural and social principles, the CoE Cultural Routes represent a source for innovation, creativity, small business generation (tourism SMEs), and cultural tourism products and services development
- They represent a great potential for networking, intercultural dialogue, and promoting the image Europe and its values
- Cultural Routes vary by themes, target groups, time of existence, progress made, network & management structures, & capacities
- Most visible within the Routes are the issues of low trans-national connectivity of the CR networks, such as:
 - lack of coordination at trans-national level in the CRs development and promotion strategies
 - weak brand image and marketing strategies
 - limited human and financial resources
 - lack of expertise in networks management
 - low degree of good practice exchange
 - unavailability of network management & performance evaluation tools
- For information intensive field like tourism, use of ICT is crucial for sustaining its competitiveness.

Benefits of ICT include:

- increase in the supply and quality of culture and tourism information
- access to knowledge and information at low cost
- reduction of the production and transaction costs
- removal of geography constraints for service suppliers and customers, and
- increased openness and transparency of business process

Several Cultural Routes have already integrated ICT tools in their network management, marketing, and communication strategies using social media, mobile, GIS system, blogs, etc.

The assessment of benefits has been enriched with evidence of success from existing cultural routes in the **Cult-RInG** partner regions, including Council of Europe certified Cultural Routes, such as:

- 'The Hansa' in north Latvia (in the cities of Valmiera and Limbazi, members of 'The Hansa Cultural Route' as well as Vidzeme Tourism Association, Cult-RInG project partner),
- 'Via Francigena' in Lazio Region, Italy (northern and southern parts)
- 'Santiago de Compostela' in north Portugal (Alto Minho, coastal route)
- St Olav Ways in West Sweden (Vastra Gotaland region),
- 'The Phoenicians Route' proposals for itineraries in Cyprus (Pafos region),
- Other routes, such as the 'Wine roads' in northern Greece (Central Macedonia Region), and
- Mythology-based and intangible heritage related proposed routes (Aphrodite in Cyprus, Greece and Italy; 'Argonautica' from ancient Iolkos, present day Volos in central Greece to ancient Kolchis, present day Georgia and return via the Black Sea, Eastern and Central Europe, Mediterranean Sea to Greece).

Recommendations

In order to address the existing issue, the Study recommended that focused action is needed in 5 main areas:

- **Capacity building**
- **Network Governance**
- **Performance evaluation**
- **Brand image and marketing**
- **Cooperation**

Capacity Building and Governance

- Link all Cultural Routes together in a common collaborative -noncompeting -strategy
- **Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the value of tourism for culture**
 - **the mechanisms for sustainable cultural tourism development (Growth & Jobs)**
 - **the role of local communities in such development**
 - the way in which technology could support this development.
- Apply clear network **governance** models (**Links with regional authorities and tourism boards/associations**)

- Earmark **funding** for key training, networking and cross-marketing activities
- Engage more experts & trained professionals in Cultural Routes **governance** and management
- Link all Cultural Routes together in a common collaborative -noncompeting -strategy
- **Develop a more comprehensive understanding of the value of tourism for culture**
 - **the mechanisms for sustainable cultural tourism development (Growth & Jobs)**
 - **the role of local communities in such development**
 - the way in which technology could support this development
- Apply clear network **governance** models (**Links with regional authorities and tourism boards/associations**)
- Earmark **funding** for key training, networking and cross-marketing activities (**Investment**)
- Engage more experts & trained professionals in Cultural Routes **governance** and management (**Links with authorities etc.**).

Cooperation with Stakeholders

- The CoE Cultural Routes have increasingly become an instrument of **cultural diplomacy** offering a huge potential for collaboration at all levels – local, national, European, and international
- It is thus important to develop a roadmap for cooperation between the CoE Cultural Routes, the **Routes created with European Union funds**, the **UNESCO labelled European sites**, and **other international initiatives**, in order to establish a strategy for the **promotion of joint cultural tourism product**
- launch a coordinated action for the development of related educational, **cultural and tourism networks**, management models, expertise, R&D, training and capacity-building programs
- **expand Cultural Routes initiatives to include non-EU countries (Iron Curtain Trail, Argonautica).**

Conclusions of the assessment

The following conclusions are drawn by **Cult-RInG Interreg Europe** project regarding the independent assessment of existing cultural routes:

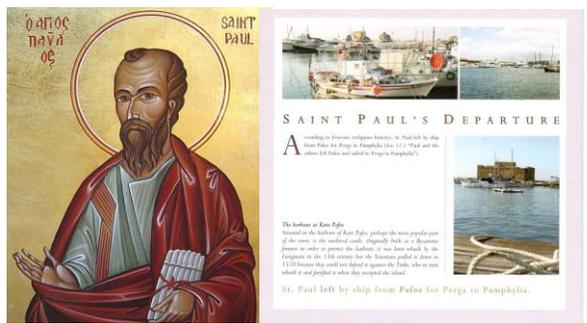
- Cultural Routes are instrumental in promoting common European identity, deploying heritage and traversing borders for **cultural tourism**, as well as **contributing to regional development by creating new jobs and new businesses**, mainly SMEs and microenterprises.
- **Cultural Routes can offer unique, attractive and viable investment opportunities for Growth & Jobs.**
- The **assessment of existing Cultural Routes in this respect is of high relevance to improving policy instruments, with mainstreaming to Operational Programmes & European Structural and Investment Funds** (specifically in: Lazio Region, Italy; Norte, Portugal; Central Macedonia, Greece) and to regional tourism and cultural strategies (Vastra Gotaland, Sweden; Vidzeme, Latvia; Pafos, Cyprus).

Lessons for the development of proposed new Cultural Routes and improvements in existing routes are very important (eg: 'St Paul's footsteps' through Cyprus, Greece and Italy; 'Iron Curtain Trail' – EuroVelo 13 Cycling route to be upgraded to a cultural route from Finland through Latvia to the Greek/Bulgarian border; Argonauts' return route, Aphrodite route; extensions to Santiago de Compostela in north Portugal and improvements to St Olav Ways in west Sweden).

www.interregeurope.eu/cult-ring



In the footsteps of St Paul, the Apostle



St Olav Ways in west Sweden



The Phoenicians Route in Cyprus





CULTURAL ROUTE THEMES

- Vine & Wine Routes
- Religious & Pilgrimage Routes
- Seafaring & Maritime Routes
- Trade Routes
- Ancient World Routes
- Mythology Routes
- Cycling Routes
- European History Routes

Cult-RInG partnership

Lead Partner

Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia on behalf of
Region of Central Macedonia



Advisory partner & Communication management



Synergies with EYCH2018 & IYSTD2017

Region of Central Macedonia, Greece (Lead Partner)
www.pkm.gov.gr
Lazio Region, Italy <http://www.regione.lazio.it>
Region Vastra Gotaland, Sweden www.vastarvet.se
Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia www.vidzeme.com
Intermunicipal Community of Alto Minho
www.cim-altominho.pt
Pafos Regional Board of Tourism, Cyprus
www.visitpafos.org.cy
European Cultural Tourism Network, Belgium
www.culturaltourism-network.eu

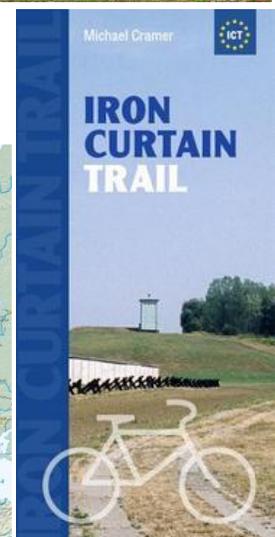
1st Interregional Thematic Workshop on Assessment of existing cultural routes held in Riga, Latvia

Europe 2020 growth strategy aims for the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. The Cult-Ring project has clear and strong synergies with the EU2020 strategy, in terms of cultural tourism sustainability and it addresses four of the EU2020 objectives, on employment (policy instruments on Growth & Jobs), innovation (new forms of communicating heritage along cultural routes), social inclusion (through accessibility to heritage along cultural routes) and education (through education and training programmes involved in CRs).

Interreg Europe programme Priority Axis 4, Investment priority 6(c) is about 'conserving, protecting, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage', which are strong features of CRs in practice and on the ground. Specific Objective 4.1 is about 'Improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular Investment for Growth and Jobs and, where relevant, EU Territorial Cooperation programmes, in the field of the protection and development of natural and cultural heritage'. CRs address this SO 4.1, as a means of promoting investments that lead to job creation through development and promotion of European heritage, with appropriate policies.

Interregional cooperation can greatly contribute to the above important issues on investments in CRs for Growth & Jobs, on related policy learning and implementation. CRs are mostly interregional by design. There is a need for sharing best CR practices, exchange of experience and developing CRs in improving policy instruments and preparing action plans for implementation with monitoring, with CR policy learning and capacity building activities.

The 1st Interregional Thematic Workshop assessed the performance of existing CRs, including those certified by the Council of Europe, ex-post in terms of their potential contribution to socio-economic development, direct & indirect benefits for Growth & Jobs.



Cult-RInG Project represented at high-level Culture Forum in Saint Petersburg, Russia

On November 18, 2017 Cult-Ring project was presented at the IV International Forum in the Framework of 'Northern Dimension' Partnership on Culture 'Culture as a Factor of Growth' in St. Petersburg, Russia. This year's forum focus was exclusively on new cultural routes and their sustainable development.

Mr. Jānis Sijāts from Vidzeme Tourism Association (Cult-Ring project partner and member of ECTN, Latvia) presented the possible development of new CoE routes within Cult-Ring project during the *New Routes* session, followed by a panel discussion of experts from various Nordic countries.

The high-level Annual International Forum was organized by the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture. The main objectives of the Forum was to discuss development prospects of creative economy, analyze projects in the "creative industries", as well as cultural tourism in the "Northern Dimension" Region.



European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

The **European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN)** applied to the Call for Stakeholders for the '**European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018**' (EYCH) by the European Commission DG EAC through the 'Voices of Culture' programme and has been selected as one of 30 European associations out of 310 applications.

The first meeting took place in Brussels on 28 April 2017 where ECTN presented inter alia its role as advisory partner and communication manager of **CHRISTA** and **Cult-RInG Interreg Europe** projects. The second meeting was held in Brussels on 7 September 2017 and on 8 September in a joint meeting with National Coordinators of EYCH 2018. ECTN established cooperation arrangements with other stakeholders such as **Europa Nostra**, **Interpret Europe**, **European Historic Houses Association**, **European Landscape Convention (Civilscape)**, **International Council of Museums**, in the frame of EYCH2018 and for communication of the Cult-RInG project results. ECTN with the Cult-RInG project is the only selected stakeholder of EYCH with a direct remit in sustainable cultural tourism and through **CHRISTA** and **Cult-RInG** projects will facilitate the 5th initiative of EYCH regarding 'Tourism and heritage: promotion of sustainable cultural tourism'. All Cult-RInG project events in 2018 will be in the frame of EYCH.

2018 
EUROPEAN YEAR
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE
#EuropeForCulture

Next events and meetings

2 nd Inter-regional Workshop Capitalisation of Good Practices (INTERREG IVC CERTESS and CHARTS projects), with study visit to St Olav Ways route in west Sweden	18-19 April 2017 Vastra Gotaland Sweden
Study Tour dedicated to the exchange of experience on all 3 themes of the project for policy makers from partners regions	Mid May/early June 2018 Lazio region Italy
3 rd Inter-regional Workshop Development of new Cultural Routes with technical study visits for the project partners and their stakeholders, experts	25-27 October 2018 Pafos region Cyprus
1 st Regional Dissemination event	January – February 2018 Central Macedonia, Greece Lazio region, Italy Vastra Gotaland, Sweden Alto Minho region, Portugal Pafos region, Cyprus
Special event dedicated to cultural routes in the framework European Week of Regions and Cities	October 2018 Brussels
2 nd Regional Dissemination event	November-December 2018 Central Macedonia, Greece Lazio region, Italy Vastra Gotaland, Sweden Alto Minho region, Portugal Pafos region, Cyprus
Final high-level event, conference	March 2020 <i>Place TBC</i>

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www.lever.gr

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