

*Cultural
Routes as
Investments
for Growth
and Jobs*

2018 
EUROPEAN YEAR
OF CULTURAL
HERITAGE
#EuropeForCulture



VIDZEME TOURISM
ASSOCIATION

Cult-RInG
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

Action Plan for Vidzeme Region



December 2018



© Cult-RInG Project Partnership and Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia

This publication may be reproduced in whole or in part and in any form for educational or non-profit purposes without special permission from the copyright holder, provided acknowledgement of the source is made.

No use of this publication may be made for resale or for any other commercial purpose whatsoever without prior permission in writing from the Cult-RInG Project Communication and the respective partner: Vidzeme Tourism Association.

Citation: Interreg Europe Project Cult-RInG Action Plan, Vidzeme Tourism Association, Latvia

Cult-RInG project communication unit would appreciate receiving a copy of any publication that uses this publication as a source on e-mail: cult-ring@culturaltourism-net.eu

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared with the financial support of Interreg Europe 2014-2020 interregional cooperation programme. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of Vidzeme Tourism Association and in no way reflect the views of the European Union institutions, nor the Managing Authority of the Programme.

Any reliance or action taken based on the information, materials and techniques described within this document are the responsibility of the user. The Cult-RInG project partnership assumes no responsibility for any consequences arising from use of the information described within this document.

December 2018

Interreg Europe Programme

Interreg Europe Programme of interregional cooperation helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. By creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions, the aim is to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place.

By building on its forerunner, INTERREG IVC (2007-2013), Interreg Europe aims to get maximum return from the EUR 359 million financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for 2014-2020.

Solutions exist that can help European regions become the best that they can be. Today, the EU's emphasis is very much on paving the way for regions to realise their full potential – by helping them to capitalise on their innate strengths while tapping into opportunities that offer possibilities for economic, social and environmental progress.

To achieve this goal, Interreg Europe offers opportunities for regional and local public authorities across Europe to share ideas and experience on public policy in practice, therefore improving strategies for their citizens and communities.

Cult-RInG Project

Cultural Routes (CRs) of the Council of Europe (CoE) have been established since 1987, stressing the importance of European identities. The CoE's Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on CRs currently comprises 33 routes contributing to protection and development of natural and cultural heritage. CRs are used as powerful tools to promote and preserve EU's shared and diverse cultural identities. CRs provide a better understanding of the history of Europe through interregional exchanges of people, ideas and cultures.

The impacts of CRs on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness have showed that CRs are at the heart of cultural tourism development; they have achieved a noteworthy impact and progress, and shown remarkable potential for SME generation, networking, social cohesion, intercultural dialogue, and for promoting the image of Europe. CRs represent a source of innovation, creativity, small-business creation, and cultural tourism products and services development. There is a common challenge, in terms of evaluating and exploiting the benefits of existing CRs and deploy them in the development of new CRs, so that Growth & Jobs targets can be met faster.

The overall objective of the Cult-RInG project is to highlight the value of investments in European Cultural Routes, in terms of their contribution to Growth & Jobs, with capitalization of good practices, policy learning, policy implementation, development of new Cultural Routes, monitoring and capacity building.

Main outputs are action plans on CR development and upgrading, with implementation and monitoring of improved policy instruments in 6 regions, communication and dissemination tools for policy learning and capacity building, contribution to EU policies and EU2020 targets. The beneficiaries are regional authorities looking for capturing the benefits of CRs, both existing ones with greater visibility and new ones, NGOs, European Networks, EU institutions, international organizations and stakeholders.

Cult-RInG Project Partnership



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

www.interregeurope.eu/cult-ring

FOREWORD

Various hiking routes, short and long-distance, are getting more and more popular in Latvia. Sometimes we can notice different marking signs at these routes, such as clams, crosses, sticks. Various local hiking routes have already been established in Latvia, and the longest hiking route – 560 km along the coastline of Latvia is currently under development with the support of INTERREG EUROPE Programme. In addition, there are on-going works on the non-motorized routes called „Greenways” using old narrow-gauge railway lines. Greenways will be available for hiking, cycling, cross-country skiing, and in the future accessible also to people with disabilities.

It is possible to meet Latvian cyclists and hikers all over the Europe, especially in Spain, Portugal and France. The main reason for visiting these countries is the famous and one of the oldest officially certified "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe"– The Way of Saint James (The Santiago de Compostela). Even though it is a Pilgrim Route, people are visiting it for the cultural heritage and natural diversity.

In Europe, the demand for high-quality and new cultural routes is growing rapidly. Although cultural routes have long existed in Europe, during the last twenty years they have been recognised as an important driver of European tourism. The routes provide a possibility to attract new solvent cultural tourists from different countries.

In Vidzeme, we can be proud of the Hansa Route that has been successfully developed and promoted in recent years. Thus, cultural pathways not only help to discover the local culture and traditions, but also encourage travelling slowly.

In 2018, Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences and the European Cyclists’ Federation have prepared and submitted an application for a new European cultural route called "Iron Curtain route"; it is approximately 10400km long and involves 20 countries. Vidzeme Tourism Association has been the coordinating body for the international Iron Curtain cycling route in Latvia for 8 years. The application for the cultural route certification shows how the international experience, successful cooperation and knowledge helps in the successful development of new tourism offers and cultural tourism products in Vidzeme region.

As a result of the action plan of the project „Cult-RInG”, which is based on the analysis of cultural tourism trends, the European Parliament Culture Road Programme and Vidzeme cultural tourism resources, further actions for cultural route development opportunities in Vidzeme from 2019 to 2025 have been evaluated. The action plan focuses on the thematic tourism specialisation, which will contribute to the variety of offers with high added value for the years 2019-2025. The actions have been inspired by the "Cult-RInG" project partners who have shared their experience in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Lazio Region, Italy, May 21-23, 2018 (study tour), Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018.

The strength of Vidzeme region is successful cooperation and readiness for new challenges. The success depends on whether the opportunities will be used to develop Vidzeme as even more recognizable, interesting and competitive cultural tourism destination.

Raitis Sijāts,

Vidzeme Tourism Association, Chairman of the Board



Acknowledgements

This Action Plan forms a part of the Cult-RInG interregional cooperation project. It is developed with co-funding support from European Regional Development Fund and made possible by the Interreg Europe programme.

Authored by:

Agita Liviņa, Dr.oec.

Director, Senior Researcher, Institute of Social, Economic and Humanitarian Research of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia

Linda Veliverronena, PhD

Researcher, Institute of Social, Economic and Humanitarian Research of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia

Zane Kudure, Mg.admin.

Guest Researcher, Institute of Social, Economic and Humanitarian Research of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, Latvia

We are grateful to the representatives of Vidzeme Tourism Association Mr. Raitis Sijats, Mr. Janis Sijats, Ms. Alise Plaude, as well as members of the Association who involved in the Cult-RInG project and whose representatives participated in the Action Plan workshops on November 1, December 3, and December 13, 2018:

Amata Municipality,
Burtnieki Municipality,
Carnikava Municipality,
Kocēni Municipality,
Krimulda Municipality,
Lielvārde Municipality,
Limbaži Municipality,
Līgatne Municipality,
Mazsalaca Municipality,
Meža Salas, leisure complex at Limbaži Municipality,
Olaine Municipality,
Rauna Municipality,
Rūjiena Municipality,
Salaspils Municipality,
Saulkrasti Municipality,
Smiltene Municipality,
The Ethnographic Open-Air museum of Latvia,
Turaida Museum Reserve.

Special thanks for contribution to the evaluation of the Hansa Cultural Route to:

Inger Harlevi, Manager of the Hansa Cultural Route, Vice-President of *DIE HANSE* Association
Inita Nerātne, Tourism Project Manager, Valmiera Municipality
Rudīte Vasile, Tourism Coordinator, Straupe Municipality

Special thanks for contribution to the evaluation of the Viking Cultural Routes to:

Ea Stevns Matzon, Coordinator of the Viking Routes, Project Manager of the Destination Viking Association
Ilze Kārklīņa, Project Manager, Curonian Viking Settlement at Grobiņa

Special thanks to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia and the National Cultural Heritage Administration of Latvia.

This document is a summarising translation into English from its' original in Latvian. All the information sources used for elaboration of the Action Plan are indicated in the original document.

Contents

CONTENTS.....	7
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	8
ACTION PLAN	12
ACTION 1 THE HANSA – THE CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTE IN VIDZEME	13
ACTION 2 ASSESMENT OF ACCESSION TO CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: VIKING ROUTES, EUROPEAN CEMETERIES ROUTE	15
ACTION 3 NEW APPLICATIONS FOR THE CULTURAL ROUTE CERTIFICATE: THE IRON CURTAIN TRAIL	17
ACTION 4 ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTIVE THEMES OF CULTURAL ROUTES	19

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Action Plan for Cultural Route Development in Vidzeme for 2019-2025 is divided in four parts: (1) development of the existing certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe (CoE) in the region; (2) assessment of joining new certified Cultural Routes of the CoE; (3) development and certification of a new Cultural Route; (4) assessing development of prospective themes of cultural routes.

Cultural Routes General Description and Requirements

Cultural Routes of the CoE put into practice the values of the CoE: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual exchanges across borders. Within the Cultural Routes Programme five main priority fields of action are: cooperation in research and development; enhancement of memory, history and European heritage; cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic practice; cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. Latvia is yet to sign Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes to fully embrace the potential of cultural routes on a political level. The support of the government (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economy and other related institutions) is needed to extend Latvia's presence on the map of the Cultural Routes of CoE. Only two (out of 33) of routes involve Latvian partners - *Réseau Art Nouveau* and the Hansa, therefore awareness should be raised in Latvia and Vidzeme to inform about the positive impacts of CoE Cultural Routes on strengthening the knowledge of Europe's common heritage, tourism, experience exchange and development in many areas. From the tourism perspective, the stakeholders in Vidzeme should more actively engage in partner networks of cultural routes to increase their role and visibility in European cultural tourism and on the map of cultural networks.

Vision and Goals

Vidzeme Tourism Development Strategy for 2018-2020 defines cultural heritage among the most competitive tourism resources in the region. Meanwhile, the tourism vision for 2030 included in the Vidzeme Region Sustainable Development Strategy emphasizes the diverse services with high added value, therefore this action plan focuses on the thematic tourism specialization, which promotes the diversity of offers. The action plan aims to increase Vidzeme's potential to establish and strengthen cultural routes by explaining the benefits and criteria of the Cultural Routes of the CoE as a quality standard in line with high added value principles, by engaging a higher number of partners and indicating to the potential themes according to the regional resources and following the best partner practices.

Actions

The actions are aimed to improving policy instruments - change in the management of the policy instrument (action 1, 2, 4), as well as implementing new projects (Action 3) Improved governance instruments in the action plan are related to introduction of new methodologies for evaluating social and economical impacts of recently introduced cultural routes on the basis of experience transfer, as well as it suggest methodology how to evaluate prospects to develop new cultural routes on the basis of partner experience.

Action 1. The Hansa – the Certified Cultural Route in Vidzeme – a focus on the change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance) - by introducing partners` experience in new methodologies how Hansa route partners assess the performance of cultural route (indicators related to engagement of local community, purposeful cooperation in the framework of already existing structures, economical impact).

Action 2. Assessment of accession to Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe - a focus on the change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance) - by introducing partners` experience in new methodologies how to evaluate prospects to develop new cultural routes on the basis of partners experience and CoE guidelines. (indicators related to theme related resources, international partnership, local community activity, resources, previous theme related activities in research, education etc.)

Action 3. New Application for the Cultural Route Certificate - The Iron Curtain Trail – introduction of new cultural route has draw attention on the importance of Cultural Routes of the CoE for Latvia. Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Latvia has made the decision to join the programme and consequently improved governance will result in implementation of new projects as official participation in CoE and recognition of the role of cultural routes will open new funding possibilities on national level.

Action 4. Assessment of prospective themes of cultural routes – a focus on the change in the management of the policy instrument (improved governance) - by introducing partners` experience in new methodologies how to evaluate prospects to develop new cultural routes on the basis of partners experience and CoE guidelines. (indicators related to theme related resources, international partnership, local community activity, resources, previous theme related activities in research, education etc.)

Specific indicators for monitoring the action plan implementation are defined in respect of the general indicator stated in the approved "Cult-RInG" project Application Form, i.e. - **the number of cultural and natural heritage assets included in sustainable tourism initiatives through the promotion of existing and development of new Cultural Routes.**

Experience Transfer from the Project Partners

The action plan as such is inspired by partners`s experience that is adapted to local context. Partners have shared their experience in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Lacio Region, Italy, May 21-23, 2018 (study tour), Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018. In the table below experience transfer from the project partners is specified for each action.

Table 1. Experience transfer from project partners

Action 1. The Hansa – the Certified Cultural Route in Vidzeme
In the framework of the Cult-RInG project, it is planned to become a member in St. Olav way (Västra Götaland, Sweden), "Via Francigena" (Lacio region, Italy), Phoenician culture route (Paphos, Cyprus). Hanseatic Culture Route in Vidzeme folloes the practice of partnershow to overcome the challenges to be partner in international cultural route. Exchanges of experience took place at several Cult-RInG workshops: Thessaloniki Greece, 20-21 June 2017; November 16-17, 2017 in Riga, Latvia; April 18-19, 2018 in Västra Götaland, Sweden; September 18-19, 2018 Viana do Castelo, Portugal; October 25-26, 2018 in Paphos, Cyprus. Specifically, important for Hanseatic Cultural Route partners in Vidzeme has been the presentation given by the project partner ECTN (European Cultural Tourism Network) on November 16, 2017 in Riga on the evaluation of the existing cultural routes and the development of new routes. Both

Cult-RInG project workshops and a training tour in Lacio region on May 21-28, 2018, have made it possible to get acquainted with organizational challenges and solutions for the St. Olava, Via Francigena, and Phoenician cultural routes. In November 2018, Hanseatic League submitted an application for the "Cult-RInG" pilot activity. It was based on experience of cooperation to the Central Macedonia Regional Development Fund (Greece) and association "Interpret Europe". The Cult-RInG project partner from Macedonia presented this experience in the 11th International Conference on Cultural Tourism in Europe (11th International Conference on Cultural Tourism) on 25th-27th October 2018 in Cyprus.

Action 2. Assessment of accession to Certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe: Viking Routes, European Cemeteries Route

Cult-RInG project partner in Central Macedonia Regional Development Fund (Greece) has assessed the possibilities to join Iter Vitis route. Useful experience by partners was delivered in several Cult-RInG workshops: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; November 16-17, 2017 in Riga, Latvia; April 18-19, 2018 in Västra Götaland, Sweden; October 25-26, 2018 in Paphos, Cyprus. Experience by Alto Minho in Portugal were inspiring for better understanding of criteria of culture route performance – in terms of evaluating resources, social and economic impact, stakeholders. This experience was shared during presentations and discussion seminars in Riga. Central Macedonia Regional Development Fund (Greece) has prepared action plan suggesting an increasing number of cultural routes in the region. The objective of the partner is to diversify tourism products and to develop thematic tourism specialties, and focusing to the cooperation between different stakeholders in the development of new tourism products. On the basis of this experience, Vidzeme Action Plan includes recommendations to strengthen thematic specialization in product development and branding.

Action 3. New Applications for the Cultural Route Certificate: The Iron Curtain Trail

Within the framework of the Cult-RInG, a new cultural route for CoE Cultural Routes program has been developed by the project's leading partner - Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (Greece) in cooperation with the Paphos Region (Cyprus) and the Lacio Region (Italy). Exchange of experience took place at several Cult-RInG workshops: Thessaloniki, Greece, 20-21 June 2017; November 16-17, 2017, Riga, Latvia; April 18-19, 2018 in Västra Götaland, Sweden; October 25-26, 2018 in Paphos, Cyprus. The experience shared by project partner ECTN (European Cultural Tourism Network) on November 16, 2017 in Riga has been valuable to understand the processes of evaluation and development of new cultural routes.

Action 4. Assessment of prospective themes of cultural routes

In the framework of Cult-RInG project, the Paphos region in Cyprus, as a perspective (initially - regional) theme defined Aphrodite route. The partner's experience how to develop a new cultural theme at regional level has been introduced at several Cult-RInG workshops: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; November 16-17, 2017 in Riga, Latvia; April 18-19, 2018 in Västra Götaland, Sweden; October 25-26, 2018 in Paphos, Cyprus. Meanwhile, the Central Macedonia Regional Development Fund (Greece), both in Thessaloniki and in Riga, presented another regional initiative, the North Greek Wine Routes, which is a good example how to develop the theme step-by-step at regional level to the point where the tourism offer is enough developed to qualify for accession to certified CoE Cultural Route (in the case of Iter Vitis). Similarly, project partners experience in CHARTS and CERTESS projects has increased awareness of the important activities in the process of developing new themes for routes. Presentations and discussions on 18 April 2018 in Västerjö, Sweden shared useful experience from CHARTS and CERTESS projects.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The criteria for the Cultural Routes of the CoE maintain a close link between culture and tourism. Attention is paid to the research-based interpretation of history and culture, improvement of the standard of living of local communities, purposeful involvement of young people and promotion of important European values through cultural and tourism activities. Thus, the Action Plan includes complex activities that integrate tourism with culture, research, etc.
2. Scientific and memory institutions should be involved in consulting to explore the potential on development of the cultural routes in the future.
3. Awareness of heritage should be increased, specifically among school age youngsters.
4. The experience of the certified Cultural Routes of the CoE shows that the involvement of local communities is a prerequisite for successful cultural route development, and that activities aimed at engaging different groups of society should be envisaged.
5. The engagement of the private sector should be encouraged by explaining them the benefits of joining cultural routes, including the CoE Cultural Routes.
6. The involvement of tourism information centres in the development of cultural routes' activities is essential for developing the tourism offer.
7. Political support on national level would have a positive influence on the development of new CoE certified Cultural Routes, most significantly by arranging the participation of the Republic of Latvia in the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes.
8. The accession to cultural routes and development of prospective cultural tourism themes depend on various factors, therefore, the trends in the thematic tourism specialization in Europe and Vidzeme should be constantly monitored.

Action Plan

Produced by each region, the **action plan** is a document providing details on **how** the lessons learnt from the cooperation will be exploited in order to improve the policy instrument tackled within that region. It specifies the nature of the actions to be implemented, their timeframe, the players involved, the costs (if any) and funding sources (if any). If the same policy instrument is addressed by several partners, only one action plan is required.

Part I – General Information

<p>Project: Cult-RInG</p> <p>Partner organisation: Vidzeme Tourism Association</p> <p>Other partner organisations involved (if relevant): n/a</p> <p>Country: Latvia</p> <p>NUTS2 region: LV00</p> <p>Contact person: Mr. Raitis Sijats</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">email address: raitis.sijats@gmail.com</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">phone number: +371 29175314</p>
--

Part II – Policy Context

<p>The Action Plan aims to impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Investment for Growth and Jobs programme <input type="checkbox"/> European Territorial Cooperation programme <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other regional development policy instrument <p>Name of the policy instrument addressed: Vidzeme Tourism Development Strategy 2018-2025</p>
--

Part III – Details of the Actions Envisaged

ACTION 1 The Hansa – the Certified Cultural Route in Vidzeme

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The Hansa has been a Certified Cultural Route since 1991. It is managed by *DIE HANSE* association, which aims to maintain the spirit of the Hansa as a social and cultural alliance. With the aim of maintaining economic, cultural and national ties, the Hanseatic Days are held, which is an annual international event in one of the Hanseatic cities.

DIE HANSE association currently involves 192 cities in 16 countries. Only the municipalities of the historic Hanseatic cities can join the association. In Vidzeme the Hansa is represented by Cesis, Koknese, Limbazi, Riga, Straupe, and Valmiera.

The Hanseatic cities in Vidzeme have been actively involved in projects related to the Hansa: Interreg Central Baltic project "Explore HANSA", Interreg Estonia Latvia - Russia project "Via Hanseatica", and some others.

As recognized by the Route Manager of the Hansa Cultural Route, Vice-President of *DIE HANSE* association Inger Harlevi, the Cultural Route Certificate has promoted the international recognition of the Hanseatic brand; that requires maintaining quality and protecting the brand, avoiding inappropriate use. In future projects, one of the priorities will be the further involvement of the local community as well as the promotion of international awareness.

Within the Cult-RInG project several partners have planned to develop the existing Certified Cultural Routes: Route of Saint Olav Ways in Västra Götaland, Sweden; Via Francigena in Lazio, Italy; Phoenicians' Route in Pafos, Cyprus. Like the Hansa in Vidzeme, also the Saint Olav Ways in Västra Götaland, Via Francigena in Lazio and Phoenicians' Route in Pafos meet both opportunities and challenges related to the status of the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. Partners have shared their experience in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018. When planning the development of the Hansa Cultural Route in Vidzeme, the presentation about the assessment of the existing cultural routes and lessons for the development of new routes by the project partner European Cultural Tourism Network in Riga on November 16, 2017 has been of great value. Cult-RInG workshops as well as the study tour to the Lazio Region on May 21-23, 2018, have given opportunity of on-site learning about the management challenges and opportunities of the Saint Olav Ways, Via Francigena and Phoenicians' Route.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)
 - Valorisation of Hansa Cultural Route, informing & involving the local society (general public, entrepreneurs, NGOs);
 - Product development for various target groups in cooperation of the Hanseatic cities in Vidzeme;
 - Project elaboration and implementation (current opportunities - "Routes4U" grant programme);
 - Maintenance of related infrastructure;
 - Ongoing achievement of the Cultural Route Criteria:
 - research, publications, cooperation with scientific institutions;

- cultural and educational exchange for youth;
- tourism product development in cooperation with tour operators;
- marketing activities.

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The members of *DIE HANSE* association are only the cities of the historic Hanseatic League (in Vidzeme – Cesis, Koknese, Limbazi, Riga, Straupe, Valmiera), but there is a wider range of actors involved in the implementation and support of activities. This includes tourism and cultural organizations (in the public, non-governmental, private sector) in Hanseatic cities and their areas of cooperation. The involvement of tourist information centres and local communities is of great importance.

Considering that the Cultural Routes criteria includes research on the topic as well as cultural and educational exchange of youth, important parties are: educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums.

Also, according to the Cultural Routes criteria, cooperation with tour operators should be implemented.

The project experience confirms the role of the Vidzeme Planning Region and Vidzeme Tourism Association in promoting the Hanseatic brand.

In the context of an international cultural route, cooperation with partners from other countries – *DIE HANSE* association and the Hanseatic cities outside of Latvia is important.

Finally, the status of the certified Cultural Route establishes close cooperation with the European Institute of the Cultural Routes.

4. **Timeframe**

- Interreg Central Baltic project "Explore HANSA" concludes in 2018;
- New project opportunities in 2019-2020: Routes4U grant programme;
- Ongoing activities according to the Cultural Routes criteria.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

The main costs in relation to the Cultural Route management and projects are:

- Co-financing for *DIE HANSE* association operational activities (such as the website and salary of the secretary general);
- Maintenance of the infrastructure;
- Marketing costs;
- Staff costs;
- Travel costs.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):

- Routes4U grant programme;
- Self-financing.

ACTION 2 Assessment of accession to Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: Viking Routes, European Cemeteries Route

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The thematic tourism is currently an increasing trend in Europe and has become a strategic approach to destination marketing. It provides the basis to form a destination identity – themes highlight the main features, characteristics or uniqueness of the destination, thus attributing the character and identity to tourism resources or activities. This action is directed to explore and assess the opportunities to access cultural routes of CoE.

The development and certification of a new Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is a time consuming and costly activity; therefore, the possibilities to join already certified cultural routes should be considered in the first place.

Two out of the 33 Cultural Routes potentially could be extended in Vidzeme in nearest future as there are theme related resources available in the region, or historical evidence related to the theme, or the geographical conditions are favourable for the involvement of Vidzeme region. These routes are - the Viking Routes and the European Cemeteries Route Routes.

To join a cultural route, one needs to join the coordinating association (Destination Viking, Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe) and meet the entry criteria. A prerequisite for joining the certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is scientifically confirmed connection with the theme of the cultural route.

The argumentation for the entry in the Viking Routes is the historical fact that the Daugava River was part of the historical *Trade route from the Varangians to the Greeks*. Nowadays, imitations of Viking ships operate on the Daugava for recreational purposes.

The opportunities of joining the European Cemeteries Route are related to the well-developed cemetery culture in Vidzeme.

Being part of an internationally recognizable cultural route may increase the region's visibility in international tourism, help to attract more visitors and expand partnership networks.

Within the Cult-RInG project, further development of the Santjago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes is planned in Alto Minho, Portugal. The opportunities of joining the Iter Vitis Route have been evaluated by the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia, Greece. The partners have shared their experience in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018. Experience exchange with Alto Minho has been of great importance, resulting in the introduction of several ideas in Vidzeme action plan related to the evaluation of resources, stakeholders and socio-economic impact. Especially the presentations and discussions in Riga and Viana do Castelo have been significant.

Regarding the extension of the cultural routes in the region, the action plan of Central Macedonia (presented at Viana do Castelo on September 18, 2018) should be especially highlighted, where one of the aims is the development of diversified tourism products and thematic tourism specializations; the importance of cooperation in tourism product development is also stressed. Based on this, the Action 2 recommends to increase the role of general thematic specialization in the product development and branding of Vidzeme by exploring the potential to become a part of certified international cultural route in the future.

2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

- To clarify the terms of admission in the most appropriate certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe;
- To raise awareness on cultural heritage and cultural routes potential among tourism stakeholders in the region;
- To assess if cultural route theme is historically rooted within the region and the prospective socio-economic benefits from its development;
- To increase the possibilities of joining the cultural route by expanding theme-related networking.
- To establish a stakeholder group as advisory forum meeting to discuss and promote cultural routes development in region.

3. **Players involved** (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- Theme-related municipalities in Vidzeme – coordinating activities, initiating assessment of potential in their territories;
- Theme-related tourism and cultural organizations (public, non-governmental, private);
- Educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums – theme-related consultations
- Regional planning and tourism organisations – Vidzeme Planning Region, Riga Planning Region, Vidzeme Tourism Association – coordinating and planning activities.

4. **Timeframe**

September 2019 – November 2020

- To clarify the terms of admission in the most appropriate certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe;
- To raise awareness on cultural heritage and cultural routes potential among tourism stakeholders in region;
- To assess how well the cultural route theme is historically rooted within the region and the prospective socio-economic benefits from its development;
- To increase the possibilities of joining the cultural route by expanding theme-related networking.

October 2020

- To establish a stakeholder group as advisory forum meeting to discuss and promote cultural routes development in region.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

- Staff costs (for assessment of potential, communication activities)
- Travel

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):

- Self-financing.

ACTION 3 New Applications for the Cultural Route Certificate: The Iron Curtain Trail

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The Iron Curtain Trail was submitted for the Cultural Route Certification in 2018/2019. The application is based on the long-standing experience and activities of the European Cyclists' Federation and its members with regard to the introduction and maintenance of the EuroVelo 13 - Iron Curtain Trail.

The European Cyclists' Federation promotes cycling as a sustainable and healthy way of traveling. It brings together over 60 members and associate members in nearly 50 countries – both in Europe and beyond. Vidzeme Tourism Association is the national coordinator of the EuroVelo 13 – Iron Curtain Trail in Latvia.

EuroVelo is a project of the European Cyclists' Federation aiming to develop a network of high-quality cycling routes that connect the whole Europe. The routes can be used by long-distance cycle tourists, as well as by local people making daily journeys. The national EuroVelo Coordination Centres and Coordinators are involved in the implementation of EuroVelo.

The 10,400 km long Iron Curtain Trail includes 20 countries: Norway, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece and Turkey. The route in Latvia runs through coastal municipalities, including in Vidzeme region. The purpose of the route is to keep a memory of the "Iron Curtain", which for almost half a century divided Europe's west and east, from Barents to the Black Sea. The route explains the history and maintains the values of peace and solidarity in Europe.

The development of the EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail in Latvia is defined within the State Long-Term Thematic Plan for the Development of Public Infrastructure of the Baltic Sea Coast. Although significant development projects have been implemented in some sections of the route in recent years, wider opportunities for the development of EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail infrastructure in Latvia would be granted by gaining the status of a nationally important object, which would allow attracting funding from the TEN-T programme.

In 2018, a joint project of the Council of Europe and the European Union "Routes4U", aimed at promoting the development of the Cultural Route Program, has elaborated an overview of the operation and development opportunities of the Cultural Route Programme in the Baltic Sea Region, including the recommendations for the Iron Curtain Trail: in addition to the well-developed tourism offers, it is recommended to strengthen other areas in line with the Cultural Routes criteria. It is also recommended to strengthen the organizational structure of the network by defining the role of existing members and the criteria for admitting new members.

The application for certification of a new cultural route within the Cultural Routes Programme of the European Council was also developed by the Cult-RInG Lead Partner – Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (Greece) in cooperation with two other project partners – Pafos in Cyprus and Lacio in Italy. Partners have shared their experience in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018. When planning the development of the Iron Curtain Trail in Vidzeme, the presentation about the assessment of the existing cultural routes and lessons for the development of new routes by the project partner European Cultural Tourism Network in Riga on November 16, 2017, has been of great value.

2. Action (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

Achievement of the Cultural Route criteria:

- cooperation with scientific institutions;
- cultural and educational exchange for youth;
- tourism product development for various target groups;
- marketing activities;
- project elaboration and implementation, including and especially – infrastructure projects;
- evaluation of the socio-economic impact of the Cultural Route.

Based on the experience of other cultural routes, besides the above mentioned, the involvement of the local community (general public, entrepreneurs, NGOs) is also an important aspect of the activities.

3. Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

- European Cyclists' Federation;
- Vidzeme Tourism Association;
- Coastal municipalities in Latvia, tourism and cultural institutions (in the public, non-governmental, private sector);
- Educational and scientific institutions, museums – research, cultural and educational exchange of youth according to the Cultural Routes Criteria;
- Tour operators – product development according to the Cultural Routes Criteria;
- Local community, including youth;
- European Institute of the Cultural Routes.

4. Timeframe

2018 – preparation and submission of an application for the Certification of the Cultural Route;

January / February 2019 – route evaluation and inspection within the certification process of the Cultural Route;

March 2019 – announcement of the evaluation conclusions;

2019-2020 – certification process of the Cultural Route (clarifications etc.);

Both in the certification process and during the regular evaluations every 3 years, the compliance with the Cultural Routes criteria as well as the organizational capacity should be affirmed, therefore the following are considered to be permanent activities: (1) research of the topic, related scientific publications, cooperation with scientific institutions; (2) cultural and educational exchange of youth; (3) development of tourism products in cooperation with tour operators; (4) marketing activities; (5) attraction of project financing; (6) evaluation of the socio-economic impact of the Cultural Route.

5. Costs (if relevant)

The main costs in relation to the management and projects of the Iron Curtain Trail are:

- Marketing costs;
- Staff costs;
- Travel costs.

6. Funding sources (if relevant):

- Self-financing.

ACTION 4 Assessment of prospective themes of cultural routes

- **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)

The thematic tourism is an increasing trend on the landscape of European tourism, and in the context of changing behaviour of travellers, themes are widely used as an approach in destination marketing - the themes have a potential to highlight the main features, characteristics, or uniqueness of a destination, thus attributing the identity to destination's tourism resources or activities.

Taking into account the trends of tourism development and the potential of cultural routes, Vidzeme region should strengthen the thematic tourism, also in the form of cultural routes.

The CoE themed routes in the Baltic Sea region are represented by religious heritage, prominent personalities, art and architecture, human mobility (Hansa, Viking route, Via Regia). The joint project by the Council of Europe and the European Union "Routes4U" recommends establishing new cultural routes in future on less represented themes such as maritime, industrial and contemporary heritage.

The ideas to assess and reconsider among stakeholders for the further development of regional, national and international cultural routes are based on: (1) Vidzeme Tourism Associations members' perspective to the region's tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources with a development potential in tourism (expressed in workshops on November 1, 2018, and December 3, 2018); (2) previous projects to develop theme related tourist sites; (3) potential of internationalization of a theme. According to these criteria, few themes might have a development potential at the Baltic / international level: Medieval red brick architecture; Struve Geodetic Arc; Old Postal roads; Baltic Way. Routes4U project suggests linking the new cultural routes in the Baltic Sea region with the sea and maritime heritage, therefore themes of shipping heritage and an amber road have an international potential as well.

Within the Cult-RInG project in Pafos (Cyprus), a prospective regional cultural route theme dedicated to Aphrodite has been developed. The partner's experience about the development of this regional theme has been shared in several project meetings: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018. Another regional initiative has been demonstrated by the representatives of Central Macedonia (Greece), where Wine Routes of Northern Greece is a good example of a regional cultural route developed to a stage when joining to a certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, i.e. - Iter Vitis Route can be considered. The presentations and discussions about the experience of CHARTS and CERTESS projects during the workshop in Västra Götaland on April 18, 2018, have also contributed to the elaboration of actions related to the development of new cultural route themes.

- **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)

The actions recommend the exploration and assessment of new culture routes' themes and to raise the overall understanding of the CoE Cultural Routes programme:

- to assess the potential of the prospective cultural routes (resources, interpretation) at the Baltic / international level for any of the themes stakeholders are interested in: Struve Geodetic Arc; Baltic Way; Old postal roads; Medieval red brick architecture; maritime heritage; amber.
- to assess the potential of the prospective local-scale cultural routes (resources, interpretation) for any of the themes stakeholders are interested in: wooden architecture; manors, their parks and alleys; historic gardens; scenic roads of Piebalga; beer and inn culture; pilgrims; traditions of Song Festival; churches and

their organs;

- to raise awareness on cultural heritage and cultural routes potential among tourism stakeholders in region;
- to establish a stakeholder group as advisory forum meeting to discuss and promote cultural routes development in region.

Players involved (please indicate the organisations in the region who are involved in the development and implementation of the action and explain their role)

The players for each of the potential routes are defined by the specifics of the prospective route, but initially the involvement of different actors is important to understand the interest of potential stakeholders and available resources:

- Municipalities in Vidzeme region, tourism and culture organizations (public, non-governmental, private) according to the theme of the route that are interested to assess potential development of new sites
- Educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums – to consult and/or research the topic;
- Development planning organizations and tourism coordination organizations - Vidzeme Planning Region, Riga Planning Region, Vidzeme Tourism Association, other regional organizations according to the theme of a particular route;
- Stakeholders abroad according to the theme of a particular route.

- **Timeframe**

September 2019 – November 2020

- to assess the potential of the prospective cultural routes (resources, interpretation) at the Baltic / international level for any of the themes stakeholders are interested in: Struve Geodetic Arc; Baltic Way; Old postal roads; Medieval red brick architecture; maritime heritage; amber.
- to assess the potential of the prospective local-scale cultural routes (resources, interpretation) for any of the themes stakeholders are interested in: wooden architecture; manors, their parks and alleys; historic gardens; scenic roads of Piebalga; beer and inn culture; pilgrims; traditions of Song Festival; churches and their organs;
- to raise awareness on cultural heritage and cultural routes potential among tourism stakeholders in region;

October 2020

- To establish a stakeholder group as advisory forum meeting to discuss and promote cultural routes development in region.

- **Costs** (if relevant)

The categories of costs related to assessment of available resources and engagement the potential stakeholders are as follows: administrative, personnel, travel, communication and publicity.

- **Funding sources** (if relevant):

- Self-financing provided by stakeholders interested in development of new cultural routes.

Monitoring Process

Specific indicators for monitoring are defined in respect of the general indicator stated in the approved "Cult-RInG" project Application Form, i.e. - **the number of cultural and natural heritage assets included in sustainable tourism initiatives through the promotion of existing and development of new Cultural Routes.** The specific indicators for each action are briefly described below.

Action 1. The Hansa – the Certified Cultural Route in Vidzeme is monitored by the number of: tourism products developed; informative articles and presentations; participants in the events; young people in the cultural and educational events.

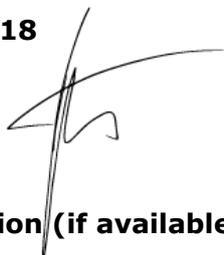
Action 2. Assessment of accession to Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is monitored by the number of: informative articles and presentations; involved institutions; participants in the events rising awareness on cultural routes; advisory forum meetings held.

Action 3. New Applications for the Cultural Route Certificate - The Iron Curtain Trail is monitored by the number of: objects with improved infrastructure; projects initiated and accomplished; tourism products developed; scientific and informative articles and presentations; participants in the events related to the action; young people in the cultural and educational events.

Action 4. Assessment of prospective themes of cultural routes - is monitored by the number of: cultural tourism themes discussed within reports; informative articles and presentations related to the thematic cultural routes; publicity events; participants in the events rising awareness on cultural routes; advisory forum meetings held.

Date: December 28, 2018

Signature:



Stamp of the organisation (if available): _____



www.interregeurope.eu/cult-ring

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



PHOTOS

Front Cover:

1. Hansa Festival in Limbaži
2. Iron Curtain Trail
3. Folk-Song Park at Turaida Museum Reserve

Back Cover:

1. Viking boats in River Daugava
2. St James (St Jacobs) Cathedral in Riga – prospective site of St James Way
3. Village of Līgatne Paper Mill – site of the European Route of Industrial Heritage
4. Āraiši Lutheran Church – prospective site of the Routes of Reformation

PHOTO SOURCES

Front Cover:

1. Limbažu TIC (2018). Hanzas svētki Limbažu viduslaiku pilskaņā. Available: <http://www.visitlimbazi.lv/lv/aktualitates?2450> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)
2. VTA / David Peskens (2018). EuroVelo13. Available: http://www.vidzeme.com/files/content_gallery/396627-vidzeme-cult-ring.jpg (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)
3. Enter Gauja (2018). Turaidas gravas un alas. Pieejams: <https://www.entergauja.com/lv/enter-gauja/routes/turaida-turaidas-gravas-un-alas> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)

Back Cover:

1. "Mežmalas vikings" (2018). Vikingu liellaiva "Nameisis". Available: <http://mezmalasvikings.lv/accommodations/vikingu-liellaiva-nameisis/> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)
2. "LIVE RĪGA" (2018). Rīgas Svētā Jēkaba katedrāle. Available: <https://www.liveriga.com/lv/2976-rigas-sveta-jekaba-katedrale> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)
3. "Visit Līgatne" (2018). Līgatnes papīrfabrikas ciemata vēsturiskais centrs. Available: <http://visitligatne.lv/pub/?id=39> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)
4. Amatas novada Tūrisma informācijas punkts (2018). Āraišu luterāņu baznīca. Available: <http://amata.lv/araisu-baznica-2/> (retrieved on 28.12.2018.)