



Cultural Routes as Investments for Growth and Jobs Declaration

This Declaration is launched by Cult-RInG Interreg Europe project partners, based on the results of interregional cooperation, exchange of experience and action plans implementation.

The **Cult-RInG Interreg Europe project** (January 2017 – March 2021) has carried out actions on European Cultural Routes upgrading and promotion, including existing Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe as well as development of new Cultural Routes. The value of the above in the development of **sustainable cultural tourism** for growth and jobs has been demonstrated by the project results.

On the basis of the Cult-RInG project results, further achievements and related initiatives, the Cult-RInG partnership hereby declares its determination to:

- Continue to upgrade, develop and promote European Cultural Routes for growth and jobs through sustainable cultural tourism, as an important legacy of the Cult-RInG project in the partner destination regions.
- Ensure capitalisation the results and outputs of the Cult-RInG project, as a contribution for important improvements in relevant policy instruments, also related to EU co-funding programmes in the period 2021-2027 (Interreg Europe, Horizon Europe, Creative Europe).
- Make the stakeholder engagement procedures established in the frame of Cult-RInG project a permanent feature in the Cultural Routes of the partner tourist destinations.
- Continue to cooperate with the respective Associations of the selected Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, following the successful participation during the CULT-RING project.
- Introduce further enhancements for the Cultural Routes and the related visitors' experience in the partner tourist destinations.
- Maintain the Cult-RInG partnership as a specialized Network of authorities, tourist boards, associations and institutes for European Cultural Routes, with sustainable cultural tourism development innovations, facilitated by the Cult-RInG advisory partner ECTN.
- Support the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, of which the Cult-RInG project was a selected Interreg Europe project.
- Adopt the definition of **sustainable cultural tourism** by the Open Method of Coordination Working Group – European Agenda for Culture (report published by the European Commission in November 2019), viz:

***Sustainable cultural tourism** is the integrated management of cultural heritage and tourism activities in conjunction with the local community, creating social, environmental and economic benefits for all stakeholders in order to achieve tangible and intangible cultural heritage conservation and sustainable tourism development.*

The Cult-RInG Partnership, strongly calls upon cultural, heritage and tourist destination authorities in Europe and beyond:

- To work together towards the development, implementation and operation of **sustainable cultural tourism** initiatives, based on **European Cultural Routes** with further related themes and initiatives.
- To raise awareness regarding the above to national authorities, EU institutions, relevant European networks, competent pan-European and international organisations (such as European Travel Commission, UNESCO and UN World Tourism Organisation - UNWTO).
- To coordinate and advance integrated cultural and tourism development policies that facilitate the introduction and operation of sustainable and smart tourism solutions, based on Cultural Routes.
- To organize sustainable cultural tourism offers along Cultural Routes, so as to maximise social inclusion and to provide the majority visitors with integrated options, advanced information and smart services.
- To give sustainable cultural tourism priority, as a means to promote lesser-known destinations and attract visitors to European destinations from the rest of the World, by developing and promoting Cultural Routes.

Furthermore, the Cult-RInG Partnership, strongly calls upon European Union Institutions:

- To continue to propose, formulate, promote, upgrade, implement and support policies on **sustainable cultural tourism development** and related actions with adequate EU funding, including actions on **European Cultural Routes**.
- To incorporate **European Cultural Routes** in EU relevant initiatives, such as the European Capital of Culture, European Heritage Label, European Heritage Days, European Capital of Smart Tourism, Culture Forum, Tourism Forum, Green Deal, Digital Agenda.
- To promote the advantages of **European Cultural Routes** towards smart and sustainable cultural tourism in social and economic development and cohesion, for growth and jobs.
- To facilitate the co-funding of interregional cultural tourism initiatives, infrastructures, products and services with quality and smart options along Cultural Routes, on the basis of their sustainability, innovation, efficiency, cohesion and competitiveness benefits.

We encourage other local and regional authorities, tourist boards and associations, cultural and heritage organisations, universities and research institutes throughout Europe to adopt this Declaration and to join us in future, related initiatives for **European Cultural Routes** with sustainable cultural tourism development and promotion, in the European Union and beyond.

Cult-RInG Partnership

