

The European Silk Route: from cultural diversity to unity of purpose. T study case of the project “SERINNOVATION”

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Why a European Cultural Route? Advantages of the Cultural Routes Program of the Council of Europe

In January 2018, on the occasion of the opening of the EU-China Tourism Year and of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the **Municipality of Venice** launched the idea of establishing an association to manage the creation of a European Silk Route and its application to the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg.

The hope is that the European Silk Route will become a certified cultural route, under the programme launched by the Council of Europe in 1987.

Today, there are 33 certified cultural routes spread throughout all 47 Member States of the Council of Europe and supported and promoted by more than 1000 members of various networks. Along with promoting culture, the aim is to support participatory and sustainable cultural tourism that could generate both a local economy and international cooperation.

CITTA' DI VENEZIA





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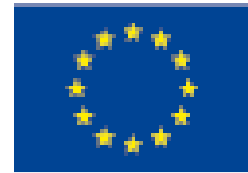


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What is the Council of Europe?

Set up in 1949, it is the oldest international organisation in Europe and covers the whole continent. Its 47 member states have come together for the purpose of “safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress” (1949 Statute).



The Council of Europe defines the policies to be implemented by the programme of the Cultural Routes. The Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) on Cultural Routes established in 2010 follows the Council of Europe’s policy guidelines, decides the programme strategy and awards “Council of Europe Cultural Route” certification. It is open to Member and non-Member states of the Council of Europe aiming at providing political support for national, regional and local initiatives to promote culture and tourism.

Joint programmes between the Council of Europe and the European Union establish cooperation between the EPA on Cultural Routes and the European Commissions for the establishment of sustainable projects favouring cultural, social and environmental development in Europe

The European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), located in Neumünster Abbey in Luxembourg, is the technical agency set up in 1998 under an agreement between the Council of Europe and the government of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The Institute advises Cultural Routes already certified, provides assistance to new projects, organizes training and visibility activities for route managers and coordinates a university network.



LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère de la Culture

As of September 2018, there are 33 certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, covering varied themes of European memory, history and heritage.

Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes (1987)	Iter Vitis Route (2009)	Via Habsburg (2014)
The Hansa (1991)	European Route of Cistercian abbeys (2010)	Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (2015)
Viking Routes (1993)	European Cemeteries Route (2010)	European Routes of Emperor Charles V (2015)
Via Francigena (1994)	Prehistoric Rock Art Trails (2010)	Destination Napoleon (2015)
Routes of El legado andalusí (1997)	European Route of Historic Thermal Towns (2010)	In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson (2015)
Phoenicians' Route (2003)	Route of Saint Olav Ways (2010)	Fortified towns of the Grande Region (2016)
Pyrenean Iron Route (2004)	European Route of Ceramics (2012)	Impressionisms Routes (2018)
European Mozart Ways (2004)	European Route of Megalithic Culture (2013)	Via Charlemagne (2018)
European Route of Jewish Heritage (2004)	Huguenot and Waldensian trail (2013)	
Saint Martin of Tours Route (2005)	ATRILIUM (2014)	
Cluniac Sites in Europe (2005)	Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014)	
Routes of the Olive Tree (2005)		
Via Regia (2005)		
TRANSROMANICA (2007)		

Cultural route
of the Council of Europe





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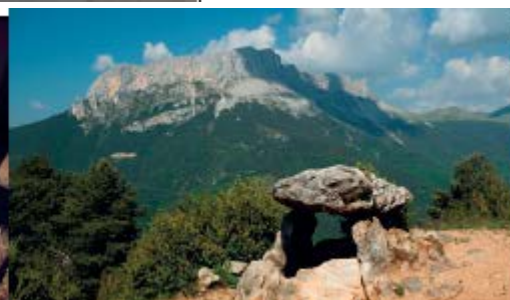
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32 Member States of the Enlarged Partial Agreement (year of accession):

- Andorra (2012)
- Armenia (2015)
- Austria (2011)
- Azerbaijan (2011)
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016)
- Bulgaria (2011)
- Croatia (2016)
- Cyprus (2011)
- Finland (2018)
- France (2011)
- Georgia (2016)
- Germany (2013)
- Greece (2011)
- Holy See (2018)
- Hungary (2013)

- Italy (2011)
- Lithuania (2012)
- Luxembourg (2011)
- Monaco (2013)
- Montenegro (2011)
- Norway (2011)
- Poland (2017)
- Portugal (2011)
- Romania (2013)
- Russian Federation (2011)
- San Marino (2017)
- Serbia (2012)
- Slovak Republic (2014)
- Slovenia (2011)
- Spain (2011)
- Switzerland (2013)
- Turkey (2018)





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Cultural routes can be grouped into three main categories: linear routes (e.g. Via Francigena), territorial routes (e.g. Iter Vitis Route) and virtual routes (e.g. European Mozart Ways).

A membership fee agreed by the members is required and the association must also have legal capacity. Nonetheless, the project's European dimension simplifies obtaining European funds.

The European Institute of Cultural Routes uses three different certification criteria: theme, field of action and network.

The deadline for the call for applications is 30 September and certification will be issued only eight months later. In cases in which the cultural routes is certified, certification is re-evaluated every three years.

The European Silk Route

By enhancing knowledge of a shared European heritage, the European Silk Route aims to contribute to the development of participatory and sustainable cultural tourism and to become a platform of good practices at the international level for all cities and institutions involved.



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General concept

The “European silk route” aims to be a local cultural network and infrastructure linking cities, regions, sites, museums and universities in order to enhance knowledge of a shared European cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, and to promote new relationships within Europe and between Europe and the East through sharing of best practices and cultural tourism activities.

The route would ideally be based on Marco Polo's travels eastward and include silk production and trade itineraries in Europe in the following centuries.





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Detailed aims

- Highlight the tangible and intangible heritage of silk: knowledge, traditions and production techniques that influenced the economic development and social history of the areas involved and contributed to the creation of a strong identity and various communities.
- Enhance the intrinsic link between silk production and sale and trade network between Europe and the East, reflecting a shared heritage.
- Highlight the role of silk as a reflection of changes to artisanal and industrial work and trade, as well as of changes to traditions, customs and tastes in every era.
- Contribute to the development of participatory and sustainable cultural tourism.
- Foster links and shared activities between European cities and regions that have been, and in some cases continue to be, centres of silk production and trade; between museums and research centres as regards the history, safeguarding and modern applications of silk.



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Why it is an important chance



- 1) Because it permits grouping of all the European sericultural countries under one umbrella only and makes the EC focus on this matter that is a common heritage.
- 2) Because it can attract funds and resources for tourism and cultural initiatives that, on turn, can support local development of the sericultural industry
- 3) Because it is probably the only way to start again with sericulture, as the most important textile industries do not appear so much interested in supporting any developmental activity but are looking for an already-created silk chains.
- 4) Because it is a small-scale, more eco-compatible and niche activity of high added value.



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It is a small-scale development for a niche-market the correct way to develop again sericulture in Europe?

The Italian approach to the problem

The premises were:

- From 1990 to 2010 the cocoon production was destroyed by the use of an insecticide (the Insect Growth Regulator Fenoxycarb)
- Almost all the cocoon farmers have disappeared
- The textile industry was no more interested in producing in Italy (or Europe) but it was looking for a foreign country alternative to China
- Very few specialized mulberry fields remained



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Since 2011-2012 CREA tried to collaborate with farmers and companies to re-establish a production chain with the first “laboratory” in the Venetian Region

Technical innovation

Companies:
assistance to develop
new products

Farmers: technical
assistance and
experimental eggs

**New farmers and
technicians:**
Training

**Public/private
stakeholders:**
sensibilization
and information

Research



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Cocoon exploitation: Fair Silk Companies

Companies join together and negotiate the cocoon price with farmers; they establish price on a multi-year basis => social, individual and company development. Multipurpose use of the cocoons according to their quality.

Fair production=> companies engage themselves to respect the man work labour in the/out of the companies

High added-value and technical skills necessary for excellent quality products => young employment opportunities and new start-ups

Research opportunities in the short and medium time in the field of automation, fashion, new materials, novel food, animal feeds

Made in Italy production=> opportunities of growth for Italy and Italian companies

Perspectives

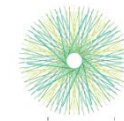


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Silk textile industries are no more interested in the Italian sericulture? Let's look for other industries... The chain starts from the final product on the market

