

## Cultural Routes State of the Art

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**Ieva Treija**  
Communication Manager, CHARTS MCU

# Definitions

- **Cultural route:** a road/trajectory covering one or more countries, connecting several cities, villages, rural communities across continent, organised around topics with significant historical and artistic background
- **European Cultural Routes:** a title awarded to cultural routes recognised as significant throughout Europe by the Council of Europe (*representing Europe as a single tourism destination*)
- **European Institute of Cultural Routes:** the body established to help the Council of Europe co-ordinate the development of cultural routes
- **The "cultural routes of the Council of Europe:** tools of the European cultural cooperation implemented by the Council of Europe with the „European cultural convention“ (1954)

# The importance of European Cultural Routes

- Strong tourism potential, still mostly unexplored
- Transnational and representative of European common heritage and values
- Sustainable, ethical and social model – build on local knowledge, skills and heritage assets
- Promotes lesser known European destinations
- 90% of their trails are in rural areas
- CoE, the European Travel Commission, UN WTO with other international partners contributing to further develop Pan-European Thematic Tourism Routes

## IMPACTS

- transnational (several countries concerned)
- trans-regional (transborder or not)
- regional (routes located on the ground of one region only, but whose historical, artistic and social interest exceeds the borders of that region or of the state concerned).

# Mission and function

The cultural routes are launching **cultural or tourist products & founded on a process of cultural co-operation**

## 3 functions of Cultural Routes:

- To protect cultural values of Europe
- Enables dynamic exchange of information an experience
- Experimental: emphasise new programmes of cooperation between different and complementary fields of research, new forms of encounters between young Europeans & valorises lesser known places



## 29 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

- **Pilgrim** routes
- **Historical** and **Legendary Figures** of Europe
- Influence of the **monasteries**
- **Vikings and Normans** - European Heritage
- **Hanseatic Places, Routes** and **Memorials**
- **Parks** and **Gardens, Landscapes**
- The Legacy of **Al-Andalus**
- European Routes of the **Jewish Heritage**
- The Routes of the **Olive Tree**
- The Via Regia - **medieval** routes
- **Rural** Habitat
- **Military Architecture** in Europe
- The **Sephardic Routes** - The Route of the Castilian Language and its Expansion in the Mediterranean
- **Industrial Heritage** in Europe



# THE ARGONAUTICA

AFTER APOLLONIUS OF RHODES



● Outward journey ● Return journey

**CLEAR project**  
**“The Return of the Argonauts”**

Map © Jason Colavito. Satellite composite from NASA



# Challenges and Opportunities

- The CR of the CoE are in line with the key trends of cultural tourism development in Europe today
- Encourage widespread community participation in cultural activities and raising awareness of a common cultural heritage

the Cultural Routes represent a resource for innovation, creativity, small business creation, and cultural tourism products and services development

- this type of tourism builds on the uniqueness and authenticity of remote destinations, local knowledge, skills, heritage and traditions

CR networks benefit SMEs by providing markets for SMEs' products and contribute to tourism revenue generation in remote destinations

# Concluding remarks

- The role of local communities have to be taken into consideration
- Tourism growth, leading to increased business and employment opportunities (investment in renovating important cultural assets)
- Increasing property prices
- Increasing levels of employment
- Reducing social isolation and crime (*musical events, cultural markets, children`s activities*)
- Local economic growth through new business and employment opportunities
- Increasing tourism in area boosts local economy, creating new business opportunities (new web design-Increased information-more visitors)
- Increasing tourism in area boosts local economy
- Unintended negative environmental impact and costs