Cultural Routes as Investments for Growth and Jobs

Action Plan

December 2018
Cultural Routes as Investment for Growth and Jobs

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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
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 the Baltic countries, a good example of developing cultural routes is Lithuania. Lithuania is involved in establishing 5 cultural routes including the St. James Way that was mentioned earlier.

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 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
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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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .................................................................................................................. 8

ACTION PLAN ............................................................................................................................... 11

ACTION I THE HANSA – THE CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTE IN VIDZEME ...................................................... 12

ACTION II.1 ACCESSION TO CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: VIKING ROUTES, EUROPEAN CEMETERIES ROUTE, SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA PILGRIM ROUTES ......................... 15

ACTION II.2 ACCESSION TO CANDIDATE ROUTES AFTER THEIR CERTIFICATION: THE EUROPEAN ROUTE OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE, REFORMATION ROUTE AND OTHER FUTURE APPLICATIONS IN THE CULTURAL ROUTES PROGRAMME OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ...... 17

ACTION III NEW APPLICATIONS FOR THE CULTURAL ROUTE CERTIFICATE: THE IRON CURTAIN TRAIL .......................................................... 19

ACTION IV.1 PROSPECTIVE THEMES OF CULTURAL ROUTES: THE ROUTE TO INDEPENDENCE ................................................................................................................................. 21

ACTION IV.2 PROSPECTIVE THEMES OF CULTURAL ROUTES WITH INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL IMPORTANCE ......................... 23
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) joining new certified Cultural Routes of the CoE; (3) development and certification of a new Cultural Route; (4) development of prospective themes of cultural routes.

(1) In Vidzeme there is a strong, yet not fully exploited presence of the Hansa Cultural Route. Experience related to the development of the existing certified Cultural Routes of the CoE has been gained from the following Cult-RInG partners: Västra Götaland (Sweden) - Route of Saint Olav Ways; Lazio (Italy) - Via Francigena; Pafos (Cyprus) - Phoenicians’ Route. Also the expertise of the European Cultural Tourism Network has been regarded. The experience of Central Macedonia (Greece) has inspired the pilot project submitted to the call for Cult-RInG Pilot Actions.

(2) Three main themes have been chosen in Vidzeme for joining the certified Cultural Routes of the CoE: Viking Routes, European Cemeteries Route, Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes. Two candidate routes are considered: Industrial Heritage Route and Routes of Reformation. Within the Cult-RInG project, experience was gained from Alto Minho (Portugal) in relation to the development of Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes. Also the experience of Central Macedonia (Greece) regarding the plan of joining the Iter Vitis Route has been valuable.

(3) The application for the certification of the Iron Curtain Trail has been submitted to the European Institute of Cultural Routes by Vidzeme Tourism Association. During the elaboration stage of the application, experience was shared with other project partners who were also proposing a new cultural route, i.e. - Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (Greece), Pafos in Cyprus and Lazio in Italy. Also the expertise of the European Cultural Tourism Network has been taken into account.

(4) Prospective themes have been identified in Vidzeme, among which the Route to Independence has an especially high interest among the regional stakeholders. Experience related to the development of regional cultural tourism themes has been gained from the following Cult-RInG partners: Pafos (Cyprus) - Route of Aphrodite; Central Macedonia (Greece) - Wine Routes of Northern Greece. In Lazio (Italy) ideas about involving youth in cultural route development were gained. The discussions about the experience of CHARTS and CERTESS projects during the workshop in Västra Götaland on April 18, 2018, have also contributed to actions related to the development of themes for new cultural routes.

Other meetings to learn partners’ experience: Thessaloniki, Greece, June 20-21, 2017; Riga, Latvia, November 16-17, 2017; Västra Götaland, Sweden, April 18-19, 2018; Lazio, Italy, May 21-23, 2018 (study tour); Viana do Castelo, Portugal, September 18-19, 2018; Pafos, Cyprus, October 25-26, 2018.

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 2018-2025 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.

Actions

The actions and their relation to new projects, improved governance or structural change are briefly described below.

**Action 1. The Hansa – the Certified Cultural Route in Vidzeme** – a focus on the implementation of new projects. Improved governance is related to the engagement of local community and purposeful cooperation in the framework of already existing structures.

**Action 2.1. Accession to Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe & Action 2.2. Accession to Candidate Routes** – initial activities focus on improved governance; however, it is expected that in future it will also boost new projects.

**Action 3. New Application for the Cultural Route Certificate - The Iron Curtain Trail** – a focus on improved governance by gaining the status of a certified Cultural Route of the CoE; however, it is expected that in future it will also boost new projects.

**Action 4.1. Prospective themes of cultural routes - The Route to Independence & Action 4.2. Prospective themes of cultural routes with international, national and local importance** – a focus on improved governance, understanding the potential of the thematic route and building a network.

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: objects with improved infrastructure; projects initiated and accomplished; tourism products developed; scientific and informative articles and presentations; participants in the events; young people in the cultural and educational events.

**Action 2.1. Accession to Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe & Action 2.2. Accession to Candidate Routes** is monitored by the number of: objects with improved infrastructure; number of tourism products developed; scientific and informative articles and presentations; involved institutions; participants in the events.

**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 4.1. Prospective themes of cultural routes - The Route to Independence:** establishment of a coordinating organisation for the cultural route; number of national partners; number of international partners; research on the resources involved in the development of the cultural route; number of meetings related to the cultural route
development; number of participants in the meetings; number of involved representatives / participants of the historic events.

**Action 4.2. Prospective themes of cultural routes with international, national and local importance** is monitored by the number of: cultural tourism themes discussed within reports, workshops, conferences and other related events; scientific and informative articles and presentations related to the thematic cultural routes; publicity events; training events; participants in the events.

**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 institutions should be involved to research the theme, also in measuring and assessing the socio-economic impact and development planning of the cultural routes.

3. Activities for school age youngsters should be planned to teach them the appreciation of heritage. Their involvement would also be valuable in the development of cultural routes when planning the tourism products for young people.

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

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<td>NUTS2 region: LV00</td>
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Part II – Policy Context

The Action Plan aims to impact:

- Investment for Growth and Jobs programme
- European Territorial Cooperation programme
- Other regional development policy instrument

Name of the policy instrument addressed: Vidzeme Tourism Development Strategy 2018-2025
Part III – Details of the Actions Envisaged

ACTION I 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 Lacio 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.

   In November 2018, DIE HANSA submitted an application for the Cult-RiNG pilot action based on the experience presented by the Cult-RiNG project partner Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia (Greece) at the 11th International Conference for Cultural Tourism in Europe held in Cyprus from 25 to 27 October 2018, based on which the Hanseatic cities in Vidzeme would use the expertise by the European Interpretation Association – Interpret Europe.

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

   - 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 - Cult-RiNG pilot action, “Routes4U“ grant programme);
- Maintenance and development 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;
  - evaluation of the socio-economic impact of the Cultural Route.

Most activities are planned within specific projects. For example, in November 2018 the Cult-RInG pilot action application was submitted, which includes the following activities:
- Research about social life in medieval times in Latvia (Vidzeme);
- Course for Certified Interpretive Guides;
- Coordination of the medieval events (testing phase in Limbaži, Cēsis, Valmiera, Straupe);
- Research about the Straupe (Lielstraupe) castle and exhibition on the results of the research;
- Interpret Medieval History – offers for tour operators/journalists (printed and digital) in English, German, Russian, Latvian;
- Medieval history interpretation workshops;
- Purchase of tourist flow counter as a tool for evaluation of the socio-economic impact of the cultural route;
- Coordination & publicity 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: Cult-RInG pilot action, Routes4U grant programme;
- New project opportunities in 2021–2027 programming period for the EU Funds;
- Regular evaluation of the Hansa Cultural Route in 2019, 2022 & 2025;
- 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 and development of the infrastructure;
- Marketing costs;
- Staff costs;
- Travel costs.
Most costs are planned within specific projects. For example, in November 2018 the Cult-RInG pilot action application was submitted.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):
- Cult-RInG pilot action (depending on the evaluation);
- Routes4U grant programme;
- EU funds (programming period 2021-2027);
- Other grant programmes (for example, State Culture Capital Foundation);
- Self-financing.
ACTION II.1 Accession to Certified Cultural Route of the Council of Europe: Viking Routes, European Cemeteries Route, Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes

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.

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.

Three out of the 33 Cultural Routes potentially could be extended in Vidzeme 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, the European Cemeteries Route and the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes.

To join a cultural route, one need to join the coordinating association (Destination Viking, Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe, European Federation of the St. James Way) 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 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.

Regarding the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, the fact that the neighbouring country Lithuania has joined the network is taken into consideration. Currently the Routes of the St. James Way end on the Latvian-Lithuanian border.

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. The Cult-RInG workshop in Viana do Castelo has been an opportunity of on-site learning about the development of the Santjago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes.

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 2.1 recommends increasing the role of general thematic specialization in the product development and branding of Vidzeme.

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 implement an extended study on how the cultural route theme is historically rooted within the region and the prospective socio-economic benefits from its development;
   - To identify and research potential theme-based resources and stakeholders in Vidzeme;
   - To strengthen theme-based tourism products in Vidzeme and develop related infrastructure;
   - To increase the possibilities of joining the cultural route by expanding theme-related networking.

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 and planning activities, infrastructure development;
   - Theme-related tourism and cultural organizations (public, non-governmental, private);
   - Educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums – theme-related studies, exchange and mobility of youth in accordance with the Cultural Route criteria;
   - Tour operators – tourism product development in accordance with the Cultural Route criteria;
   - Regional planning and tourism organisations – Vidzeme Planning Region, Riga Planning Region, Vidzeme Tourism Association – coordinating and planning activities, infrastructure development;
   - International associations that represent the Cultural Routes: Destination Viking Association, Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe, European Federation of the St. James Way;
   - European Institute of the Cultural Routes;
   - In the case of St. James Route – Catholic Church of Latvia, Latvian Evangelic Lutheran Church, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Economics, Latvian Investment and Development Agency.

4. **Timeframe**
   Joining certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe according to the situation.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)
The main costs in relation to the cultural route management and projects are:
   - Annual membership fee for the coordinating associations:
     - Destination Viking Association – EUR 100 to 500;
     - Association of Significant Cemeteries of Europe – EUR 150;
   - Maintenance and development of the infrastructure;
   - Marketing costs;
- Staff costs;
- Travel costs.

Most costs are planned within specific projects.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):
- EU funds (programming period 2021-2027);
- Other grant programmes (for example, State Culture Capital Foundation);
- Self-financing.

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**ACTION II.2 Accession to candidate routes after their certification: The European Route of Industrial Heritage, Reformation Route and other future applications in the Cultural Routes Programme of the Council of Europe**

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 for forming 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.

The development and certification of a new Cultural Route of the Council of Europe is a time consuming and costly activity. As cultural routes expand, and new cultural routes are introduced, it is recommendable to keep up with the new applications and to evaluate the opportunities to join a particular route after it is certified. In 2018, the Council of Europe considered applications for 12 new cultural routes. The history and resources of Vidzeme are mostly related to two themes of the candidate routes – the European Route of Industrial Heritage and the Routes of Reformation.

The Industrial Heritage Route is coordinated and the conditions for joining are defined by the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH). Nowadays, ERIH represents over 1,700 industrial heritage sites in Europe, including two in Vidzeme – Ligatne paper mill and factory workers’ village, and Gulbene – Aluksne narrow gauge railway.

In addition to the above mentioned landmark sites, the industrial heritage is widely represented in Vidzeme, although many sites need future developments to be used in tourism. Several other sites are currently in the process of improvement for involvement in tourism. These sites are – Ķopi Mills, Vjciems Cone Drying Facility, industrial sites in Limbaži (LtD “Tīne”, historical felt factory buildings and contemporary exposition, the old fire department), Zilaiskalns water-tower and the workers’ village of the peat factory “Zilaiskalns”, Baloži peat railway, water-tower of the Birini Manor.

The Reformation Routes are coordinated by the association “Routes of Reformation”. Historically Vidzeme has been a place of important reformation related events. Additionally, links to reformation can be emphasized by tangible heritage as more than 10 medieval churches can be related to the reformation period in Vidzeme.

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, which aims at 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 2.2 recommends increasing the role of general
2. **Action** (please list and describe the actions to be implemented)
   - To clarify the terms of admission in the most appropriate candidate-routes: European Route of Industrial Heritage and Routes of Reformation;
   - To implement an extended study on how the cultural route theme is historically rooted in the region and the prospective socio-economic benefits from its development;
   - To identify and research potential theme-based resources and stakeholders in Vidzeme;
   - To strengthen theme-based tourism products in Vidzeme and develop related infrastructure;
   - To increase the possibilities of joining the cultural routes by extending theme-related networking;
   - To follow-up future applications for certification of new Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

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 and planning activities, infrastructure development;
   - Theme-related tourism and cultural organizations (public, non-governmental, private);
   - Educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums – theme-related studies, exchange and mobility of youth in accordance with the Cultural Route criteria;
   - Regional planning and tourism organisations – Vidzeme Planning Region, Riga Planning Region, Vidzeme Tourism Association – coordinating and planning activities, infrastructure development;
   - International associations that represent the Cultural Routes: ERIH and Routes of Reformation;
   - European Institute of the Cultural Routes.

4. **Timeframe**
To follow the information on the certification applications and results for the EC cultural routes continuously.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)
The main costs in relation to joining the Cultural Routes are:
   - Annual membership fee for the coordinating associations:
     - ERIH – EUR 100 to 500;
     - Routes of Reformation – EUR 200-1000 for municipalities depending on the number of inhabitants; EUR 1500 for regional organisations;
   - Maintenance and development of the infrastructure;
   - Marketing costs;
   - Staff costs;
   - Travel costs.
Most costs are planned within specific projects.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):
   - EU funds (programming period 2021-2027);
   - Other grant programmes (for example, State Culture Capital Foundation);
   - Self-financing.

### ACTION III 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 – Paños 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; Paños, 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:
- research, publications, 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.);

2022-2025 – regular evaluations of the Certified Cultural Route every 3 years.

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:
- Maintenance and development of the infrastructure;
- Marketing costs;
- Staff costs;
- Travel costs.
Most costs are planned within specific projects.

6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):
- EU funds (programming period 2021-2027);
- Other grant programmes;
- Self-financing;
- "Rail Baltica" project financing for readjustments of the cycling infrastructure.

**ACTION IV.1 Prospective themes of cultural routes: The Route to Independence**

1. **The background** (please describe the lessons learnt from the project that constitute the basis for the development of the present Action Plan)
During the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Latvia, the support of the people and the involvement of Latvian citizens by non-violent and non-military methods had a crucial importance in the whole process. Great examples of non-violent resistance were the fights on Barricades in 1991, however, the Baltic Way (1989) has received the largest international resonance - it was widely reported in foreign press, and there were support campaigns abroad. The Baltic Way was a campaign where more than 2 million Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians formed the unbroken human chain in the length of 600 kilometres connecting the capital cities of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn.

Latvia's road to independence and the use of political non-violent resistance is not unique and the international character of this phenomenon forms a common theme that is relevant for many countries (Baltic countries, Poland etc.). Additionally, this period of history is reflected mostly through a documentary heritage, and it is significant to transform this heritage in the content that is attractive and understandable to young people – in order to educate them and strengthen their sense of identity. The development of the route is challenging as there is no theme-related tangible heritage, and new ideas are needed to make the story of the history attractive (e.g. an art project).

In the beginning, the theme could be developed as a regional cultural route, and afterwards it can be extended and certified as the EC Cultural Route. One of the first steps to start the implementation process would be to establish the main coordinating organization and identify the stakeholders both in Latvia and abroad in order to jointly agree on the aim of the cultural route, an approach to the interpretation of the heritage and content creation.

Non-violent resistance as a political method to restore the independence is a vivid representation of the democratic values of Europe. The theme reflects the core historical processes in several European countries, and explores and is meaningful in the context of
Cultural Routes as Investment for Growth and Jobs

The Cult-RiNG project has given an opportunity to learn about the development of a new cultural route from the experience of three partners – Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia, Greece, Pafos, Cyprus and Lacio, Italy. Although the theme of the partners’ route differs, the lessons about the main steps in the route development have been of great value. 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.

The justification for the Route to Independence is linked with the need to spread the information of democratic values and the non-violent resistance as apolitical method to the younger generations – the engagement of young people in the project activities would help to create a themed route which is attractive to young people themselves. The ideas for engaging young people in the project’s activities have been gained from Lacio (Italy) representative’s presentation in Riga on November 16, 2017, as well as during the study tour to Lacio on May 21-23, 2018.

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

The idea of the prospective cultural route currently is at a very early stage and only the initial steps can be defined:

- to establish / agree on a coordinating organization;
- to identify international partners interested in the theme and to establish a network for the route planning;
- to identify local partners interested in the theme and to establish a network for the route planning;
- to identify and evaluate the resources necessary to create an attractive cultural route;
- to define the purpose of the cultural route.

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 idea of the prospective cultural route currently is at a very early stage and only initial players can be defined:

- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia;
- Tourism sector stakeholders and non-governmental organizations – interested to participate and establish theme related objects;
- Museums, in particular Latvian National Museum of History and its affiliate Popular Front Museum, Barricades Museum – organizations responsible for the documentary heritage;
- Representatives of the organizations involved in the restoration of independence and contemporaries – to share their stories and ideas on how to develop the route, participate in the development of the concept;
- Municipalities that the Baltic Way crossed – interested to participate and establish theme related objects;
- Educational institutions – interested in the outcome of the themed route and should be consulted in the process;
- Young people – engaged in generating ideas on how to make the themed route attractive to youngsters;
- Other stakeholders in line with the criteria set out in the EC Cultural Routes (e.g. scientific institutions).
ACTION IV.2 Prospective themes of cultural routes with international, national and local importance

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 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 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 have a development potential at the Baltic / international level: Medieval red brick architecture; Struve Geodetic Arc; Old Postal roads. 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.

2. **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) and to identify potential stakeholders at the Baltic / international level for the following themes: Struve Geodetic Arc; old postal roads; Medieval red brick architecture; maritime heritage; amber.

- to assess the potential of the prospective local-scale cultural routes (resources, interpretation) and to identify potential stakeholders for the following themes: wooden architecture; manors, their parks and alleys; historic gardens; scenic roads of Piebalga; beer and inn culture; pilgrims; robbers; traditions of Song Festival; Churches and their organs.

- to raise awareness on the potential of cultural routes in tourism and on the CoE Cultural routes as a label of quality; to foster research on theme routes, publicity and training of the involved actors.

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 interested players are defined by the specifics of the prospective route, but initially the involvement of the following actors is important:

- Municipalities in Vidzeme region, tourism and culture organizations (public, non-governmental, private) according to the theme of the route – are interested to develop new sites, can support the development of infrastructure

- Educational institutions, scientific institutions, museums – engagement of the public and research of 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.

4. **Timeframe**

Continuously.

5. **Costs** (if relevant)

Initial costs of the route development are needed to implement theme related research, training stakeholders, informing and engaging the public, planning the route, building a regional / national / international network. The categories of costs are as follows: administrative, personnel, travel, publicity.
6. **Funding sources** (if relevant):
   - EU funds (programming period 2021-2027);
   - Other grant programmes (for example, State Culture Capital Foundation).

When introducing new themes, initially a significant source of funding is the budget of municipalities / other stakeholders. Although receiving EU funds or other grant programmes for new cultural routes may be complicated, still it is necessary to continuously monitor the possibilities to apply for funding from EU funds (programming period of 2021-2027) and other grant programmes.

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**Date:** _____________________

**Signature:** _____________________

**Stamp of the organisation (if available):** _____________________
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 Ligatne 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:

Back Cover: