



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL ROUTES

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## 1. Introduction

According to the Global Report on Cultural Routes and Itineraries of UNWTO, international tourism has seen rapid growth and diversification over recent decades and it is now one of the leading economic sectors in the global economy. In 2020, international arrivals are expected to reach 1.6 billion and even 1.8 billion in 2030. Within the expansion of tourism, cultural routes have been gaining increasing importance in recent years. These routes are some of the most diverse cultural destinations, building upon unique local heritage and traditions, while encouraging the close participation of local communities.

Since 1987, the Council of Europe awarded more than thirty routes with the certification of Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, recognising their role in the promotion of cultural common heritage and values. Particularly, the Council of Europe considers Cultural Routes as an effective tool to promote human rights, cultural democracy and diversity and mutual understanding and exchanges across boundaries.

The project "European Cultural Route of Reformation" (ECRR) aims at identifying, selecting and linking together existing Reformation-themed cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, around Europe and establishing a European Cultural Route of Reformation. The project involves 12 partners coming from 7 different countries (AT, CZ, DE, HU, IT, PL, SI) and other 13 associated partners. In order to finally submit an application for the recognition as a European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe, the project applies an empowering bottom-up approach, in which local and regional stakeholders are actively engaged throughout the project's running time. The first part of the project, under the WP1, aims at the definition of a Transnational Action Plan (TAP), outlining activities to preserve the cultural heritage of the Reformation, to link it on a transnational level, and to exploit it for regional development and low-carbon tourism.

The Higher Institute on Territorial Systems for Innovation (SiTI), as partner responsible of the WP1, is in charge of the coordination of all activities that lead to the adoption of the TAP and thereafter the monitoring of its implementation. An important task in the action plan's preparation is a study on the shared reformation heritage in Central Europe and a pre-assessment of its touristic potential. Particularly, the preliminary study consists of three work papers that will be presented during the Transnational Workshop in Wroclaw, on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Along with two papers about the status of preservation and economic development, the present work paper will focus on the engagement of local communities in

order to implement and promote a thematic cultural route. This study will then serve as a basis for the content-related development of the route network and for the planned capacity building trainings.

After a brief introduction about cultural routes and the project European Cultural Route of Reformation (ECRR), we start with a brief introduction about the Cultural Routes program of the Council of Europe, highlighting the values inherent to a cultural route, which extend far beyond the touristic and economic aspects. Due to the transnational character, cultural routes contribute to create a common European identity, strengthen cooperation between international, national and local stakeholders both vertically and horizontally, and promote exchanges between boundaries.

In the third chapter, we will summarize the building process for the creation of a cultural route, identifying five main phases: definition of the theme, identification of heritage elements, creation of a European network, planning of coordinated actions and creation of common visibility. The creation of a Cultural Route does not include specific moments for the engagement of local stakeholders, as it should be done all along the building process, from the very beginning and even after the end of the project. Therefore, it follows a description of the possible steps for the engagement of local communities, namely: definition of the role of the community with respect to the cultural route, identification of potential conflicts, identification of local stakeholders, definition of goals through a participative process, planning based on common goals and finally the operational development of the route. Then, the main methods and techniques for the involvement of stakeholders are presented, classifying them between information, consultation and active participation techniques.

The fourth chapter reports some examples of community engagement in already existing and recognized Cultural Routes. In particular, the Via Francigena, which is one of the oldest and most famous Cultural Routes, involved local community through the participation to two European projects (Per Viam and CERTO) and has paid great attention to the development communication tools, such as the web site, the magazine and the radio. Then, we will describe the seven meetings organized in the project SOURCE about various aspects of the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns. Eventually, we will mention the survey conducted in Forlì within the Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements (ATRIUM) project.

Finally, we conclude the report with three interviews about the Cultural Routes presented in Chapter 4. In particular, we report the interview with Mr. Luca Bruschi, the director of the

European Association of Vie Francigene (AEVF), Ms. Alessia Mariotti and Ms. Claudia Castellucci, who work for the ATRIUM Cultural Route, and the interview with Raffaella Caria, the secretary of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA).

## Methodology

The decision to focus on the engagement of local communities in the building process of a Cultural Route is the result of several meetings between the researchers of SiTI and the other international partners involved in the WP1. The choice has been taken considering the increasing importance that the involvement of local stakeholders plays in tourism product development and especially in Cultural Routes. For the European Cultural Route of Reformation (ECRR), due to the fact that it regards not only cultural but also religious heritage, it will be necessary to consider a great participatory process, in order to minimize possible conflicts and respect the sensitiveness of the various involved stakeholders. Moreover, SiTI has a long experience in the definition of a methodology for tourism-related projects, which always includes participatory processes as a key aspect for a successful implementation.

The chosen methodology is a revision of the official documentation on the Council of Europe Routes and main bibliography about community engagement and participation in the implementation of a Cultural Route. The selection of the three examined Cultural Routes between the 32 recognized by the Council of Europe was based on the aim to present routes with different characteristics and that organized various activities in order to involve local stakeholders and, of course, on the availability of information.

Additionally, we chose to use the methodology of key informant interviews, with semi-structured interviews conducted by telephone. The selected informants have been Mr. Luca Bruschi, from the European Association of Vie Francigene, Ms. Alessia Mariotti and Ms. Claudia Castellucci, for their direct experience in the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, and Ms. Raffaella Caria, from the European Historic Thermal Towns Association.

## 2. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987, with the objective of demonstrating, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage. The first declaration, regarding Santiago de Compostela Pilgrims' Route, well explains the framework of Cultural Routes:

*The human dimension of society, the ideals of freedom and justice, and confidence in progress are the principles, which, throughout history, have forged the different cultures that go to make up the specifically European identity. That cultural identity has been and still is made possible by the existence of a European space bearing a collective memory and criss-crossed by roads and paths which overcome distances, frontiers and language barriers. Today the Council of Europe is proposing the revitalisation of one of those roads, the one that led to the shrine of Santiago de Compostela. That route, highly symbolic in the process of European unification, will serve as a reference and example for future projects. [...] May the faith which has inspired pilgrims throughout history, uniting them in a common aspiration and transcending national differences and interests, inspire us today, and young people in particular, to travel along these routes in order to build a society founded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity<sup>1</sup>.*

After almost three decades, the programme has become an essential tool for raising awareness of the shared European heritage as the basis of a common European identity and a source of socio-economic and cultural development. In this context, cultural routes are the expression of pluralism and diversity of the different European culture based on common values and an effective channel for intercultural dialogue and understanding.

In 1998, a technical body, the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR), was set up for operational purposes. Its role is to examine applications for new projects, to monitor activities in the field and co-ordinate the work of partner organizations and to disseminate and archive information documents. Its mission is to ensure the continuity and the implementation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Santiago de Compostela Declaration, October 1987. Link to [PDF](#).

Cultural Routes programme in the 50 signatory countries of the European Cultural Convention, in close cooperation with the Council of Europe. It provides advice to the cultural routes, both certified and projects, and welcomes project managers, researchers and students, by cooperating with Universities in Europe and beyond. It collaborates in the setting up and operation of the routes and participates in events and exhibitions, promoting a greater awareness of the links between culture, tourism and the environment. The EICR also carries out evaluations of existing routes and new proposals, using the considerable expertise it has accumulated on the methodology of advising, promoting and evaluating Cultural Routes. The staff provides advice and expertise to Cultural Routes managers in relation to the organizational, technical and logistical aspects of the conception, development and promotion of Cultural Routes<sup>2</sup>.

In December 2010, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe established an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) to enable closer cooperation between states particularly interested in the development of Cultural Routes<sup>3</sup>. After the creation of the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes, an agreement was signed between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, establishing the seat of the EPA in Luxembourg, at the EICR. According to Denu (2015), the establishment of the enlarged partial agreement was due to financial previous limits and in particular had the advantage “of freeing the programme from the constraints of the Council of Europe’s capped budget, while giving states the possibility of making focused financial contributions through another channel”.

In 2013, the Council of Europe revised the rules for the award of the “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe” certification, with regard to the list of eligibility criteria for themes, the priority fields of action, the criteria for networks and the characteristics of the certification.

**Revising the rule for the award of the “Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe” certification Resolution CM/Res(2013)67**

**Definition of Cultural Route: a cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project aiming at the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries**

<sup>2</sup> More information about EICR can be found at <http://culture-routes.net/the-institute/mission>.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution CM/Res(2010)53, confirmed in 2013 by the Resolution CM/Res(2013)66.

based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.

I. The **themes** must satisfy all of the following criteria:

1. the theme must be representative of European values and common to at least three countries of Europe;
2. the theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from different regions of Europe so as to ensure that the activities and projects which illustrate it are based on consensus;
3. the theme must be illustrative of European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe;
4. the theme must lend itself to cultural and educational exchanges for young people and hence be in line with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields;
5. the theme must permit the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development;
6. the theme must lend itself to the development of tourist products in partnership with tourist agencies and operators aimed at different publics, including school groups.

II. The list of priority **fields of action** include:

1. Cooperation in research and development
2. Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage
3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans
4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice
5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development

III. Regarding the management of cultural routes, project initiators should create multidisciplinary **networks** involving several Member States and as large a number as possible of stakeholders. Networks should present a conceptual framework based on research carried out into the theme chosen, ensure the sustainability of the project, offer a comprehensive programme describing the overall development of the project in the medium and long term and measure the impact of the activities of cultural routes.

IV. The **certification** “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” is awarded by the Governing Board of the EPA in consultation with the relevant intergovernmental committee. After the award of the certification, all communication material should include the entire mention and the logo of the Council of Europe and the network is evaluated every year on the basis of an annual report.



In 2016, we count 32 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, with very different themes that illustrate European memory, history and heritage and contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe<sup>4</sup>.

Cultural Routes	Year	Website
The Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Routes	1987	<a href="http://www.saintjamesway.eu/">http://www.saintjamesway.eu/</a>
The Hansa	1991	<a href="http://www.hanse.org/">http://www.hanse.org/</a>
The Viking Routes	1993	<a href="http://www.destinationviking.com/">http://www.destinationviking.com/</a>
The Via Francigena	1994	<a href="http://www.viefrancigene.org/">http://www.viefrancigene.org/</a>
The Routes of El legado andalusí	1997	<a href="http://www.legadoandalusi.es/">http://www.legadoandalusi.es/</a>
European Mozart Ways	2002	<a href="http://www.mozartways.com/">http://www.mozartways.com/</a>
The Phoenicians' Route	2003	<a href="http://fenici.net/">http://fenici.net/</a>
The Pyrenean Iron Route	2004	<a href="http://visitandorra.com/en/summer/what-to-do/the-iron-route/">http://visitandorra.com/en/summer/what-to-do/the-iron-route/</a>
The Saint Martin of Tours Route	2005	<a href="http://www.saintmartindetours.eu/">http://www.saintmartindetours.eu/</a>
The Cluniac Sites in Europe	2005	<a href="http://www.sitesclunisiens.org/">http://www.sitesclunisiens.org/</a>
The Routes of the Olive Tree	2005	<a href="http://olivetreeroute.gr/fr/">http://olivetreeroute.gr/fr/</a>
The Via Regia	2005	<a href="http://www.via-regia.org/">http://www.via-regia.org/</a>
TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage	2007	<a href="http://www.transromanica.com/">http://www.transromanica.com/</a>
The Iter Vitis Route	2009	<a href="http://www.itervitis.eu/">http://www.itervitis.eu/</a>
The European Route of Cistercian abbeys	2010	<a href="http://www.cister.net/">http://www.cister.net/</a>
The European Cemeteries Route	2010	<a href="http://www.cemeteriesroute.eu/">http://www.cemeteriesroute.eu/</a>
Prehistoric Rock Art Trails	2010	<a href="http://www.prehistour.eu/">http://www.prehistour.eu/</a>
European Route of Historic Thermal Towns	2010	<a href="http://www.ehtta.eu/">http://www.ehtta.eu/</a>
The Route of Saint Olav Ways	2010	<a href="http://www.stolavways.com/">http://www.stolavways.com/</a>
The European Route of Jewish Heritage	2004	<a href="http://www.jewishheritage.org/">http://www.jewishheritage.org/</a>
The Casadean Sites	2012	<a href="http://www.reseaucasadeen.eu/">http://www.reseaucasadeen.eu/</a>
The European Route of Ceramics	2012	<a href="http://www.viaceram.eu/">http://www.viaceram.eu/</a>
The European Route of Megalithic Culture	2013	<a href="http://www.megalithicroutes.eu/">http://www.megalithicroutes.eu/</a>
The Huguenot and Waldensian trail	2013	<a href="http://www.surlespashedhuguenots.eu/en/itinerary-follows-huguenots.htm">http://www.surlespashedhuguenots.eu/en/itinerary-follows-huguenots.htm</a>
ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory	2014	<a href="http://www.atriumroute.eu/">http://www.atriumroute.eu/</a>
The Réseau Art Nouveau Network	2014	<a href="http://www.artnouveau-net.eu/">http://www.artnouveau-net.eu/</a>
Via Habsburg	2014	<a href="http://www.via-habsburg.at/">http://www.via-habsburg.at/</a>

<sup>4</sup> <http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes/list>

The Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route	2015	<a href="http://www.danubecc.org/">http://www.danubecc.org/</a>
In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson	2015	<a href="http://www.rlstevenson-europe.org/">http://www.rlstevenson-europe.org/</a>
Destination Napoleon	2015	<a href="http://www.napoleoncities.eu/">http://www.napoleoncities.eu/</a>
The European routes of emperor Charles V	2015	<a href="http://www.itineracarolusv.eu/">http://www.itineracarolusv.eu/</a>
Route of the fortified towns of the Greater Region	2016	

### 3. Cultural Routes building process: the importance of local communities

#### Creation of a Cultural Route

In order to send the application for a Cultural Route to the Council of Europe, all criteria listed in the resolution CM/Res(2013)67 have to be met. These criteria represent the formal framework for the development of a route and can be translated into concrete steps for the implementation of the route. Following Berti (2015), there are five priority fields of action, summarized in the following scheme:



The first step is the definition of the theme, which must be representative of European values and illustrative of European history and heritage. It has to allow the development of tourist products aimed at different publics, school groups included, and lend to cultural and educational exchanges for young people. Moreover, the definition of the theme must be based on consensus and so must be developed by a transnational and multidisciplinary group of experts.

The second step is the identification of the heritage elements across Europe that are representative of the selected theme. They can be tangible or intangible elements and, once identified, they have to be linked together through a narrative that ultimately creates the route. Among the many Cultural Routes recognised by the Council of Europe, some of them are historical paths in which the heritage element is the path itself, while several attractions or sites compose other not physically connected, but linked together by the theme.

The creation of a European network with legal status, which is responsible for the route, is a mandatory step for the implementation of a Cultural Route. The network can be in through an association or a federation of associations, with members coming from at least three countries of the Council of Europe. Of course, it has to be linked to the theme of the route and work in a democratic and participatory way.

Then, the members of the network have to undertake several coordinated actions in the five fields of action listed in the resolution, which contribute to create the narrative of the route and at the same time already act as an open-air laboratory of European construction.

The last step is the creation of a common visibility in order to promote the route at a local, national and international level. If the certification award is reached, the common logo identifying the route must be placed together with the logo of the Council of Europe and the name of “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” and put on all communication materials.

The involvement of local communities and stakeholders does not represent a specific step in the implementation of a Cultural Route, as it crosses all the five steps previously mentioned. It is a fundamental process, lasting during the whole period of route implementation and it is necessary to its success.

## Engagement of local communities

What is a community?

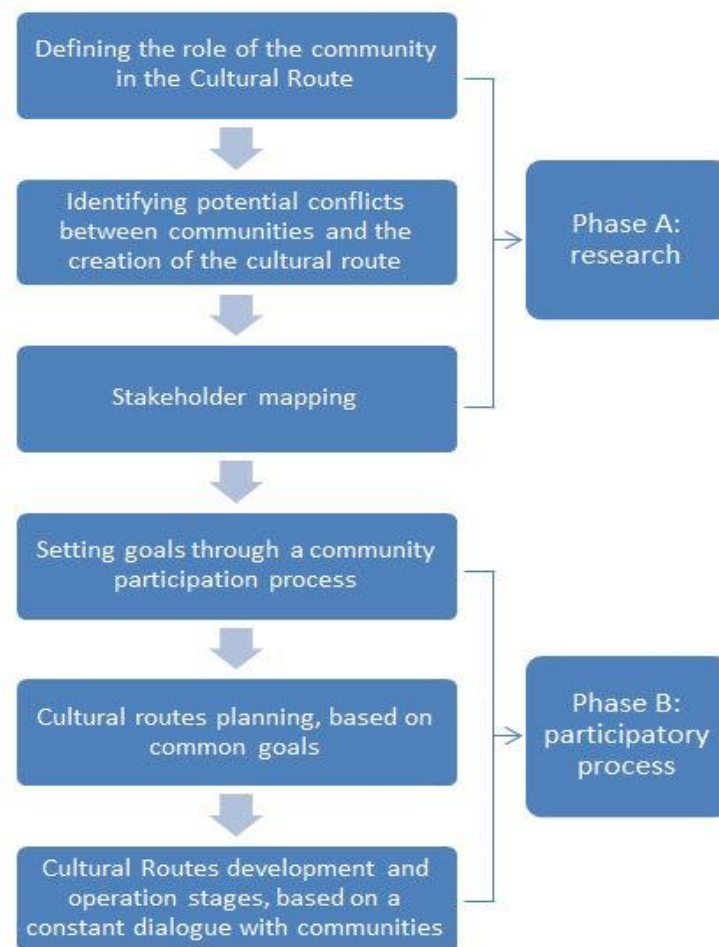
We define a community as a group of people with a common identity and who may be involved in an array of related aspects of livelihoods. Communities often have customary rights related to the area and its natural resources and a strong relationship with the area, from a cultural, social, economic and spiritual perspective (Scherl and Edwards, 2007). For this paper, we consider the local community as the set of people who can affect or could be affected by the development and implementation of a Cultural Route, so that the main stakeholders are the public and the private sectors and the residents along the route.

The tourism industry often serves as a driver for economic and political agents, processes and resources. The interactions among these elements will ultimately determine the level of positive or negative impacts tourism may have on the destination. Thus, involving as many stakeholders as possible - including the local community, tourism industry and government - in

the process of planning and implementing tourism development, greatly increases the chances of long-term success.

Particularly, integration between communities living in and along Cultural Routes into the process of route planning, route development and route management is a key factor in guaranteeing sustainability and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage. According to Mansfeld (2015), “attaining socio-cultural sustainability among communities living along Cultural Routes is much more challenging than dealing with the planning and development of a stand-alone cultural tourism project. This is due to the complex array of functional, spatial, political and socio-cultural constraints and characteristics impinging on local communities, in a differential manner, along Cultural Routes”.

The lack of community involvement in the development process is much more evident when the tourism product is related to cultural tourism. In fact, the lack of involvement could lead to the so called “zoo syndrome”, which is the feeling of detachment that the tourist perceives when visiting tourism sites without any contact with the local community. The same feeling is perceived by local communities, who can see themselves either as the attraction or as totally detached to the cultural identity promoted by that specific tourism product. Cultural Routes may represent an extreme case, as they link several attractions across different countries and touching several communities.



**Figure 1. Involvement of communities in the Cultural Route building process (Siti, 2016).**

Figure 1 summarizes the steps for the involvement of local communities in the Cultural Route building process. The first phase is the research phase, which aims at identifying to what extent the community is part of the tourism product, what level of involvement is desirable, the potential conflicts that can arise and the selection of people representative of the community. The second phase is the participatory process, in which communities, through their representatives or as a whole, are directly involved in the project.

### *Defining the community's role*

The degree of involvement of local communities in decision-making is determined by the extent to which they affect or are affected by these decisions. In Cultural Routes in particular, it depends on the role that communities play within the tourism product, that is on which extent communities, through their social, cultural, religious and gastronomical traditions, are part of the cultural heritage and on their exposure to tourism.

### *Identifying potential conflicts*

Tourism development can also be a cause of problems, especially if it is not managed correctly. An increase of foreign visitors can, for instance, undermine the beauty, uniqueness, character, and social coherence of a tourist destination over time. As the tourism development process affects many stakeholders with different interests and vision of the tourism product, it can also be a source of conflicts between the different groups within the community, tourists and planners. Moreover, in the development of Cultural Routes there are specific aspects to keep into consideration:

- Communities along the route may have different perception and attachment to the selected theme of the route and different attitudes towards the acceptable level of tourism in their place; even within the community, different groups may have different goals and opinions;
- Tourists travelling along the route tend to give more importance to the common aspects characterizing the route rather than the differences between countries and communities;
- Planners and promoters of the Cultural Route pack together many attractions under the same theme and promote it as a unique tourism product, while communities along the route may perceive this as culturally imposing.

### *Representative stakeholder mapping*

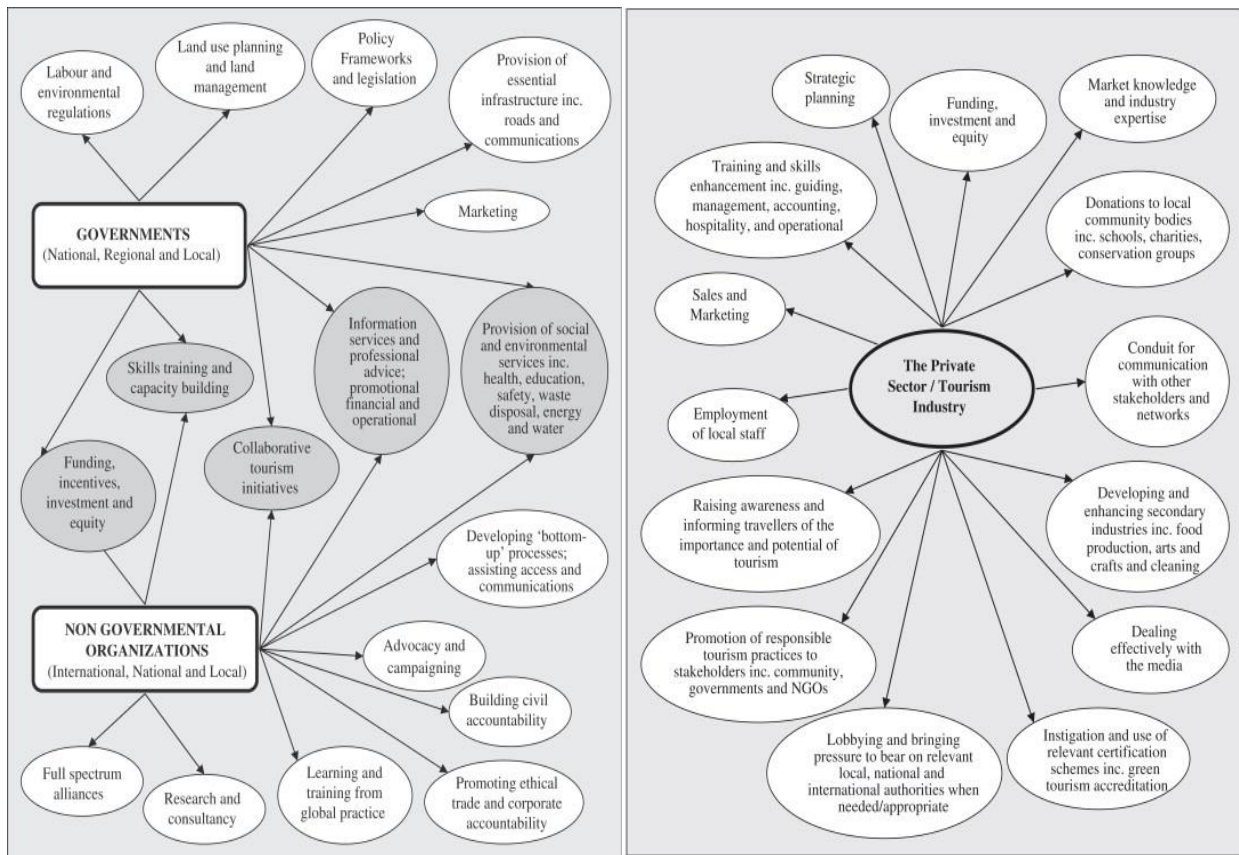


Figure 2. The role of different stakeholders in tourism (MC Simpson, 2008).

Figure 2 shows the role of the three categories of stakeholders that are involved in the tourism development process: on the left, the public sector and non-governmental organisations and on the right side the private sector. This is a general scheme, which needs to be adapted, enlarged or detailed for each specific tourism product.

Regarding Cultural Routes, the international, national and local dimensions are all involved, due to the transnational aspect that characterizes the routes. However, for the purpose of this paper we focus on the local dimension, as the transnational one, represented by a network with a legal status, is a preliminary and obliged step for the development of a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe.

At a local level, that is for each stage of the route, the relevant stakeholders are: local authorities and especially the tourism authority, the Chamber of Commerce, tourism board and tourism planners, transport providers, local enterprises such as accommodation and restaurants, attractions' managers, activist groups (e.g. in the field of social inclusion,

environment, etc.), resident organizations and other special interests groups linked to the specific theme of the route.

### *Setting the goals*

Communities along the routes could appreciate the development of tourism if they participate to the benefits generated by the establishment of the route. The most common community goals in Cultural Routes, and in tourism development in general, are:

- Economic:
  - Improving the standard of living
  - Creating new business opportunities
- Socio-cultural:
  - Increasing awareness about the importance of cultural heritage
  - Stimulating cultural preservation and share values
- Environmental:
  - Raising awareness about environment protection
  - Using tourism profits for the environmental sustainability
- Quality of services:
  - Improving the accessibility of local communities to services and cultural events
  - Improving the transport system in order to avoid congestion and pollution problems.

These common goals need to be verified and detailed through a participatory process, as each community may have different goals and levels of sensitivity.

### *Cultural routes planning and development*

Once the community has expressed its needs and expectations, the plan for the implementation of the Cultural Route can be formulated. The plan is then detailed with all the specific actions that will contribute to the creation of a narrative, in order to link the identified heritage elements. During this phase, a constant dialogue with the stakeholders affected by each action and a great effort in the divulgation and promotion of the route is required, so that to include the whole community in the process.



## Community engagement methods and techniques

In the previous paragraphs, we stressed the importance of a participatory process in the implementation of the route and the involvement of local communities. A key task in planning community engagement is to assess **which engagement techniques** are the most appropriate for any given circumstance. The decision mainly depends on the engagement objectives, the stakeholders and the available resources. Community engagement techniques can be classified into information, consultation and active participation techniques, depending on the appropriate level of community involvement and on the objective. However, some techniques may be used for a variety of information sharing, consultation and participation outcomes.

### *Information techniques*

Information strategies are the base for any community engagement activity as they allow the community to understand the issue, feel part of the decision process and decide whether they want to participate in further activities. The main advantage of these kinds of strategies is that they can reach a wide audience in a quick time, but often represent just a step of a much bigger involvement process. The main techniques are:

- Advertising: specific information are developed in particular formats and distributed through print, radio, television and online media. It is an effective way to bring issues and activities to the attention of a large and diverse population, but can be expensive and does not build a two-way relationship.
- Newsletter: it provides information about an issue or program usually in an online format. The typical targets are stakeholders already informed and interested in the program and it should be distributed on a regular basis in order to raise awareness and keep the community informed about the development of the program.
- Education and awareness programs: it provides a set of factual information, usually used as the starting point for encouraging a behavioural change. It requires technical knowledge and can be expensive.
- Community fairs or events: they represent a fun opportunity for sharing information, raising awareness and creating active participation moments. It should incorporate several different activities aimed at various targets, in order to involve the greatest possible audience. It is an effective way to increase visibility, but it requires a significant organizational and economic effort.

- Community meetings: they are one of the most common methods to share information and increase awareness and they are suitable for small and large groups. They usually contribute to minimise community frustration, demonstrate respect for community processes and lead to more coordinated engagement. They should be avoided if the issue raises significant conflicts between stakeholders.

### *Consultation Techniques*

Consultations represent a good opportunity to develop a two-way relationship between planners and promoters and the local community. They are usually preceded or can be combined by information activities. The most important are:

- Workshops: they consist in a meeting of limited number of participants and include various structured activities to draw out a range of views and opinions. The main difficulty is the analysis of the information collected.
- Survey research: the broad area of survey research encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking open or closed questions to respondents. It is an effective method for the collection of a large amount of data and information, but it requires specific technical skills and it is usually time-consuming. It can be conducted face-to-face, over the telephone or via internet.

### *Active participation techniques*

An active participatory process should be supported by an effective information program and its goal is the increase of inclusiveness of stakeholders in the decision process. Thus, it is appropriate when the decisions have not been taken and the opinions of participants can effectively influence the project implementation. Between the several techniques available, for the purpose of this paper we focus on the most common ones in tourism development:

- Focus group: it is a small group, ideally of six to ten people, led through an open discussion by a skilled moderator. The group needs to be large enough to generate rich discussion but not so large that some participants are left out. Focus groups are structured around a set of carefully predetermined questions, but the discussion is free-flowing and participant comments should stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others. It should last between 45 and 90 minutes. Focus group represents a good method for in/depth exploration of people views and can be used at different stages of a project.

- Tourism destination visioning: it is an exercise that can be done in a small group session and it is useful to understand what is the desired outcome of the process for the community. It starts from the real and actual situation, then participants are asked to imagine the desirable end result of a project and the last phase is dedicated to the definition of the steps required to get from the present to the desired future. Tourism destination visioning contributes to create a sense of community and a positive attitude toward the future steps of the project, but it can be difficult to actively involve all participants.

### **Focus Group Guidelines**

#### The role of the focus group team

The focus group team should have at least two people. One person is the facilitator and the other is the note taker. It is important to have a note taker to record the focus group feedback, as a focus group is a conversation and this should not be impeded by someone stopping to take notes.

A good facilitator has the ability to guide discussion and allow the participants to express their views on the topic. A focus group facilitator should be able to deal tactfully with outspoken group members, keep the discussion on track, and make sure every participant is heard. Moreover, the facilitator should be knowledgeable about the project. The facilitator has a responsibility to adequately cover all prepared questions within the time allowed. S/he also has a responsibility to get all participants to talk and fully explain their answers. Some helpful probes include: Can you talk about that more? Can you give an example? Help me understand what you mean. Because the moderator holds a position of authority and perceived influence, s/he must remain neutral, refraining from nodding/raising eyebrows, agreeing/disagreeing, or praising/denigrating any comment.

It is better to make participants sit in a circle, without a specific place for the facilitator.

#### Structure of the focus group

The focus group is usually organized in three parts. The first one is the introduction, during which the facilitator explain how a focus group works and which is the goal, trying to make participants comfortable. The second part is the core one, in which the facilitator guides the discussion in order to get the points of view of participants about the themes of the focus

group. In the last part there is usually a brief summary and participants have the possibility to make some questions and final considerations.

1) The opening part is dedicated to: 10-15 minutes  
*approximately*

- Presentation of the facilitator;
- Brief presentation of the issue/project and main goals of the focus group;
- Presentation of participants.

2) In the central part the facilitator should guide the conversation in order to get opinions about the selected themes. 15-20 minutes  
*for each question*

3) Conclusion, clarification and thanks to participants. 5-10 minutes  
*approximately*

#### Expected result

Focus group can generate a large amount of qualitative data. Starting from a written transcription of all answers, the analysis consists in 4 steps:

- Data Grouping: group answers from all interviews to each question;
- Information Labels: Organize and classify answers into categories and label each group of answers;
- Findings: link the information answer to the research objectives;
- Implications: identify the possible implications of the findings for the project/issue.

#### **Tourism destination visioning guidelines**

Excerpted from *Linking communities, tourism & conservation: a tourism assessment process*.

In tourism, "visioning" refers to a thought process that allows professionals and experts to develop a basis for the planning exercises. An easy way to understand "visioning" is to think of it as if it were an architectural term. Imagine that you saw nothing more than the shell of a building; then try to envision its possibilities after completion. In a like manner, community tourism visioning refers to the process of "gaining the most out of the possible." Remember, visioning is not "planning."

The visioning session should be centred on three questions:

- Where are we now? Discuss the current situation with regard to tourism and anything related (including economic, social and environmental factors) at this point.

- Where do we want to be? Ask all the visioning session participants to “dream” about what the ideal situation for tourism development would be in their community or destination. If funding, politics, market access, etc. were not an issue, what would the best-case scenario for tourism be in the future?
- How do we get there? Look at the present and the desired future during this question. Generate the action steps needed to get from the present to the desired future.

Here are a few simple thoughts to follow when “visioning”:

- Create the “total picture” - It is important to think of all the potentially effected issues because tourism touches so many parts of a community's social-life. Develop sub-visions for such things as: cultural benefits and issues, environmental quality issues, business and industry concerns, public service costs, access to parks and other public facilities, demographic make-up, housing costs, health services, traffic congestion.
- Do not get caught in the details - Often communities fail because they become so enmeshed in the small details involved in planning that they forget the direction in which they wish to go. Stay focused on the big picture!
- Leave room for change - When developing Vision, permit a certain amount of creativity. As new details emerge, allow your mind to think of new possibilities. Fluidity is a key part of visioning; as situations and possibilities change so may your visions change.
- Listen to all views - Different stakeholders may have different visions of the future. The facilitator is tasked with synthesizing everyone's individual ideas to create an overarching vision representative of the total community.
- Be patient when starting a community on the road to visioning. It is a difficult task to get people to think about the type of future they wish to develop and not to get bogged down in personality clashes. Remember visions must be based in both creativity and in reality.
- Be aware and reach out to people who are not able to speak in public. Use of visual tools like drawings and sketches can help to communicate to a larger segment of the community.
- Concentrate on what is the desired outcome rather than on what the current problems are and identify strengths that unite the community.



## 4. Community engagement in existing routes

In this chapter, we will focus on some examples of local communities engagement in four different Cultural Routes. The first one is The Via Francigena, one of the most famous European pilgrims route along with Santiago de Compostela. This Cultural Route, following the path taken by the Archbishop of Canterbury, presents some specific features, due to the physical linkage between stages and to the spiritual aspect of the itinerary. The other three routes examined are thematic cultural routes, as they do not follow a physical path but link different cultural heritage elements together. The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns gathers the most famous thermal towns of Europe and aims to develop and diversify the offer of wellness and multisensorial tourism, which represent growing trends of the tourism sector. Finally, we focus on the Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements (ATRIUM), which is a cultural route promoting the architecture of the totalitarian regimes of Europe, with the aim of enhancing the historical memory and thus stress the importance of democratic principles.

### The Via Francigena

The Via Francigena is one of the first cultural routes recognized by the Council of Europe and one of the best known. It was awarded in 1994 as Cultural Route and in 2004 as a Major Cultural Route. The Via Francigena is an historical pilgrims' route and it follows the path taken by Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury, who travelled to Rome in 990 to meet Pope John XV and receive the investiture pallium. The Archbishop's diary of his journey have made it possible to retrace the key stops on this, the shortest route between Canterbury and Rome, which first became known as the "Via Francigena" in 876<sup>5</sup>.

The European Association of Vie Francigene (EAVF), the carrier network, was founded in 2001 and it counts now more than 100 European local authorities, belonging to 7 different regions. Its mission is to develop and promote the route with particular attention to the promotion of the territories in a sustainable way. In fact, the Via Francigena can become a sustainable tourism project, focusing on the territorial dialogue, on the enhancement of local culture and traditions and, simultaneously, creating opportunities for development and dialogue at European level, to reinforce the local identity at national and international level of the cultural tourism product.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://culture-routes.net/routes/the-via-francigena>

Over the past 22 years, many activities have been organised in order to involve local stakeholders and promote the Route. Two projects seem to be more relevant for the purpose of this paper: Per Viam Pilgrims' Routes in Action and Cultural European Routes: Tools for a coordinated communication & marketing strategy (CERTO), both funded in 2012.

The first one aimed to create identity of the product "Via Francigena" pilgrimage route on a European level, to increase cooperation and joint initiatives among European Pilgrimage Routes and within The Via and to foster networking to enhance cultural, social and environmental value of the routes as key elements for sustainable tourism. Within this project, Per Viam academic partners created the European University NETwork of Knowledge (EUNeK), a network that includes specialists in several subjects and fosters multicultural dialogue through scientific research and exchange of best practices, in support of didactic and research activity on the Via Francigena and pilgrimage routes<sup>6</sup>. The network promoted seven workshops in Italy, Spain and France. Per Viam project also promoted the involvement of local authorities and regional administrations especially: two meetings were organized with regional administrations in 2012 and 2013, in order to encourage a coordinated dialogue, a common approach and find shared solutions on issues concerning all The Via.

The project CERTO had three main objectives, all requiring a greater involvement of local stakeholders: to introduce and test innovative marketing tool with interested partners, stakeholders and tour operators; to assure quality through a common quality brand and to enlarge the involvement of enterprises; to strengthen cooperative synergies with media to increase the visibility.

In the tenth anniversary of the AEFV, the association prepared a social balance sheet describing the many activities organised during the first ten years. The importance of the involvement of local stakeholders is particularly stressed in the Axis III, dedicated to the promotion of the Via Francigena as a tourist, devotional and cultural product. In order to promote the route, AEFV makes available to all stakeholders its wealth of information about culture, environment, religion and gastronomy using different types of media: the web page, the magazine, articles and publications.

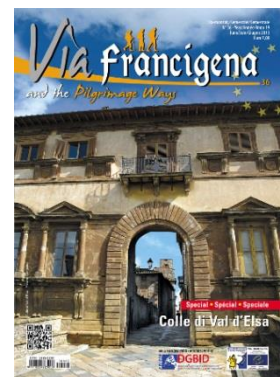


Figure 2. The magazine.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.viefrancigene.org/en/perviam/news5/>



The development process of media involves: international stakeholders, such as the European institutions and other Cultural Routes; national stakeholders, as ministries and governmental institutions; and local stakeholders, which are regions, local bodies, social organizations, associations, universities, religious institutions, partners' project, sponsor, tourist operators, consortium, tourists and residents along the route.

The webpage has been the first communication tool and it has been constantly renewed over the years. The website is very successful: it registers hundreds of thousands accesses every year and the number of visitors is continuously increasing. Starting from 2005, AEVF has published every six months a magazine called "Via Francigena and the Pilgrimage Ways" in English and Italian. It is possible to read it in printed or digital version and it contains socio-cultural articles about the route as well as interviews and information about the association activities. Above of several appearances on national radios, AEVF has recently created its own web radio, the Radio Francigena (<http://radiofrancigena.com>), currently available only in Italian.

Moreover, AEVF has organized several events to promote the Via Francigena route and participated to seminars, conferences and workshops aimed at young people and students in order to share information about the historical route and values increasing the common European identity. A list of the events can be found on the social balance sheet and on the web site<sup>7</sup>.

### The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns

The European Route of Historic Thermal Town, recognized as a Cultural Route in 2010, is a thematic route involving the most well-known towns in which thermalism marked the history of the past two centuries. The route is managed and promoted by the European Historical Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA), which activities are based on four pillars<sup>8</sup>:

1. a diversification of wellbeing offers;
2. the interactive valorisation of thermal heritage;
3. a contemporary and innovative answer to cultural demands through actions which will help a better understanding of the past through a rich storytelling and a vivid involvement of contemporary creation;

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<sup>7</sup> Link to the [social balance sheet](#) and to the website <http://www.viefrancigene.org/en/resource/event/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://culture-routes.net/routes/european-route-of-historical-thermal-towns>

4. a proactive policy facing needs of new cultural and multisensorial tourism's trends based on active visits in search of lesser-known places and unusual events.

The SOURCE project, coordinated by the Route of Spa Towns in the Massif Central in partnership with EHTTA, is a multidisciplinary project based on the origins and the future of the “European spa-town culture”, notably in terms of all its forms of creativity that have been central to building of a European culture produced by exchanges<sup>9</sup>. Within this project, seven round tables called Cafés of Europe have been organized between 2013 and 2015. These meetings were linked to large-scale cultural festivals taking place in the towns and were declined on various themes, from tourism to communication, from social impact to thermalism. All meetings involved a large number of international and local stakeholders: decision-makers, sociologists, researchers, artists and writers and the whole EHTTA network. More information about the Cafés of Europe, including videos, can be found on the web site of the project.

### Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements (ATRIUM)

The ATRIUM Cultural Route was recognized in 2014 and aims to disseminate knowledge and protect and promote the European heritage - both tangible and intangible - associated with the architecture and history of the 20th century, with special focus on periods marked by dictatorial and totalitarian regimes in Europe.

To promote and manage the ATRIUM Cultural Route the ATRIUM Association was founded in June 2013 by the partners of the South East Europe European Programme *ATRIUM-Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XXth Century in Urban Management*, coming from eleven different countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia).

The engagement of local communities is particularly important in this route as it regards a very controversial and uncomfortable theme such as the totalitarian regime. For this reason, the Center for Advanced Studies in Tourism (CAST), which has been supporting the project providing studies and policy suggestions, has developed a methodology for sustainable tourism planning in dissonant heritage sites integrating a participatory process of tourism stakeholders.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.sources-of-culture.com/en/source-project-communication-press.php>

Before investing in the promotion of a controversial cultural tourism product, the research has provided the municipality of Forlì, leader of the project, with a clear picture about the residents' willingness to perceive this dissonant heritage as a tourist attraction on a transnational cultural route. In particular, three different surveys were conducted, having as unit of reference residents, tourists and potential tourists respectively.

The surveys have been carried out over the autumn in 2013 by using social networks (Facebook), website of the Municipality of Forlì, newsletters and so on. A sample of 242 respondents has fully filled in the questionnaire. Despite the negative values related to fascism and the regime, the residents positively perceive the architectural heritage of the town as a distinctive characteristic of their local identity and are, nearly 70 years after the end of the regime, ready to use it “carefully” for tourism development purposes. At the same time, the analysis of Forlì as a tourist destination showed a generally neutral perception of the town's image and a wide curiosity with regard to its architectural features<sup>10</sup>.

After the kick-off meeting of the project, other 3 meetings have been organized between partners. More information about them can be found at [www.atrium-see.eu](http://www.atrium-see.eu).

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<sup>10</sup> World Tourism Organization (2015). *Cultural Routes and Itineraries*, (pp 118-119). Affiliate Members Global Reports, Volume twelve, Madrid.

## 5. Interview on the Via Francigena, with Luca Bruschi<sup>11</sup>

The paper ends with the analysis of some interviews, in order to report direct experiences of involvement of local stakeholders in the implementation of Cultural Routes. We start with the interview with Mr. Luca Bruschi, the director of the European Association of Vie Francigene, who is an expert of Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and directly works for the Via Francigena and the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns. He will also participate to the first transnational workshop of the ECRR project that will take place in Wroclaw the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The interview was conducted in November 2016 by telephone and it focused on six questions about the engagement of local communities in the two mentioned Cultural Routes, the evolution over time of the role of local stakeholders in tourism product development and the profile of tourists that travel on cultural itineraries. The questions, reported in Annex I, and the conversation with Bruschi were then written and translated in English.

### *Involvement of local stakeholders*

The main conflicts arising with local stakeholders in the implementation of a cultural route are mainly due to the different perceptions that stakeholders have towards the cultural itinerary. There is usually a general scepticism about the advantages that a cultural route can bring to local communities, in terms of socio-cultural and economic benefits. Particularly, tour operators and accommodation providers do not immediately realise the opportunity to increase their income and profits, as they have in mind a stereotype of a low-income wandering pilgrim, which is actually far from the truth. On the other hand, it takes time before associations and residents get to know the route and recognise the value of the cultural heritage of their territory.

As a consequence, accommodation managers, tour operators, associations and residents criticize local institutions that invest in these kinds of projects. In order to find a balance between different perceptions and interests a great effort in the participatory process is needed.

Regarding the Via Francigena, several capacity building workshops have been organised with the involvement of local stakeholders, aimed at informing them about the route and the

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<sup>11</sup> Director of the European Association of Vie Francigene (AEVF).

benefits that can generate for the local community, but also at discussing problems and finding shared solutions. Moreover, every year the AEFV organizes two or three general meetings with the presence of about one hundred people. Involving local communities has been a very long process, which is giving now the expected results, after about 15 years.

In this process, local partners of the transnational project have played a fundamental role, as they are the point of reference for all the other local stakeholders and keep a constant dialogue with local communities. Local institutions and associations proceed at different speeds and after a certain point they often start taking the initiative and organize local meetings and events in addition to the ones organized by the European network of the route. When they begin to feel part of a European Cultural Route, they always call the European network in order to have a general introduction, recognizing the importance of the transnational cooperation.

The building process of The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns presents some differences with respect to the Via Francigena. First, it is a younger route - it was certified in 2010 - so it is still looking for its own specific identity and there are surely local communities that do not even know to be part of this route. This is also due to the fact that The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns is a thematic route, which does not follow a physical path. Thus, there are not pilgrims walking on a path and clearly linked to the route, so that the effort in the involvement of local communities should be even greater with respect to the one necessary for a pilgrims' route. Within the project SOURCE seven meetings have been organized, called Cafés of Europe in order to link the modern meetings with the ones of the past. In fact, the famous town of Spa was also known as “the Café of Europe” in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, as it was a place characterized by intellectual gathering, discussion of political affairs and contemporary artistic creation. These round tables focused on different themes and involved many different local stakeholders: not only institutions and associations, but also schools and artists.

The other difference between the two cultural routes is that the Via Francigena is strictly linked with spirituality and, partially, with religion: several churches and dioceses are involved in the process, especially for the accommodation of pilgrims. Then, we have also to consider that mostly of the tangible heritage along the route is related to the religious field. Certainly this aspect is quite sensitive and thus it is necessary to pay attention when commercializing the route, in order to preserve the spiritual aspect of the route.

### *The evolution over time of local communities' engagement*

In the past, the engagement of local communities was considered a secondary aspect of tourism product, but more recently, within the European projects and especially the Cultural Route program, it gains a key role in the development process. Actually, the involvement of local stakeholders in Cultural Routes really makes the difference as nobody better than people living on the route can transmit the authenticity that a pilgrim is usually looking for.

Local communities, from one hand, can give the right energy to tourists along the route and, on the other hand, they can establish an identity with the cultural heritage that is part of the history and culture of their territory and so be proud about it. Seeing that people from all over the world come to visit the place you are born is usually a great source of pride.

This creates a virtuous circle in which the positive energies of the residents affect the experience of tourists and vice versa. Moreover, local communities can transmit the intangible cultural heritage which is otherwise difficult to promote, especially without losing authenticity.

### *The profile of pilgrims travelling on Cultural Routes*

As already mentioned, the profile of tourists of the Cultural Routes is far from the stereotyped pilgrim that people often have in mind. Actually, the pilgrim of a Cultural Route is often young, educated, not necessarily low-income, with a strong attention to sustainability, authenticity and local communities. He really appreciates both tangible and intangible cultural heritage and wants to make the most of his travel experience. Being this the typical profile of pilgrims, the involvement of local communities is particularly important, as residents can offer to pilgrims what just a transnational network is not able to give, that is authenticity and cultural identity.

## 6. Interview on ATRIUM, with Alessia Mariotti<sup>12</sup> and Claudia Castellucci<sup>13</sup>

In this chapter, we include the interview on the experience of the ATRIUM Cultural Route, thanks to the precious contributions of Ms. Claudia Castellucci, responsible for the European Projects' Unit of Forlì, and Ms. Alessia Mariotti, the director of the Centre of Advanced Studies of Tourism (CAST). The interview was conducted in December 2016 in Italian and then written and translated into English. It is based on three questions, which have been reported in Annex II.

*The origin of ATRIUM: a top-down or bottom-up approach?*

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe have their origin from European projects, therefore we can affirm that the creation and implementation of a cultural route always follows a top-down approach. However, the local administrations involved in the projects should be the starting point and key actors to reach a wide engagement of local communities. Regarding the Project Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Urban Managements, the original idea was born in Forlì. Our municipality has several cultural heritage elements, which are strictly linked to the Italian totalitarian regime: therefore, it was inevitable to start a discussion on how to deal with this controversial heritage. We decided to address this issue by capitalising on the opportunity given by the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which we consider a great opportunity to promote our cultural heritage on a transnational level.

*The involvement of local communities*

It has been clear since the beginning that the engagement of local communities was one of the main goals of the project: for such a sensitive and problematic issue, the consensus is necessary in order to avoid ambiguities and conflicts. The Centre of Advanced Studies of Tourism (CAST) has given a valuable input on this issue, starting from the survey conducted in Forlì.

The engagement of local communities in our municipality regarded both organized bodies and individual residents, but in a different way. The first ones, which include cultural associations, schools and universities, have played an active role, producing information materials and sharing knowledge. So far, this active role has not been developed by residents, but they

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<sup>12</sup> Director of the Centre of Advanced Studies of Tourism (CAST).

<sup>13</sup> Responsible for the European Projects' Unit of Forlì.

participate giving feedback about the several initiatives we organise and interact with the Facebook page. Based on the Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention), in 2016 we started a very interesting process aimed at the creation of new groups and communities on the neighbourhood of the city, in which there are cultural heritage elements linked to the totalitarian regime. The City Councillor, in charge of culture, proposed to these new local groups to study and promote the heritage offered by their area and we can say that it is working well, even if it just started. Moreover, some students have been involved in the project as Tour Guides of specific attractions near the school.

### *Visitors Profile*

It is a niche tourism, mainly represented by educational and cultural tourism. In fact, visitors are usually students or architects, with a generally high level of education. Enlarging the audience and number of visitors could be problematic, as it could happen that the cultural heritage linked to the totalitarian regime attract also people who are nostalgic for fascism. However, this depends on how we describe it, how we convey the message, and this is actually our concern. This task is mainly carried out by the Tour Guides: we recently organized with CAST a three-day workshop on public history, where 46 people attended. The first part was dedicated to face-to-face lessons on history, with the participation of four professors and the Historical Institute of the Resistance; in the second part, participants were asked to be actively involved, trying to describe the cultural heritage, in order to understand the risks linked to the controversial theme of totalitarian regime. If we are able to create the right narrative, this route gives us the great opportunity to enlighten the negative aspects of fascism and so to contribute to raise awareness about democratic principles.



## 7. Interview on the European Route of Historical Thermal Towns, with Raffaella Caria<sup>14</sup>

We conclude with the interview with Ms. Raffaella Caria, the secretary of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA). The interview was conducted in December 2016 by telephone in Italian language and then written and translated in English. It is based on 4 questions, reported in Annex III.

### *The demand for thermalism tourism over time*

The demand for thermalism has changed a lot over the last years due to the changes of the Italian labour law about spa treatments. In particular, workers have not anymore the possibility to go on leave for spa treatments, with very few exceptions, so that the demand for thermalism has decreased over time. However, this is not a problem for the route, as people should not stop in the same town for long as in case of spa treatments for illness. Tourists interested in this route should visit more than one thermal town.

### *The involvement of local communities and the tourist profile*

It is certainly a cultural tourism: people spend about two hours in the spa centre and then they have time to visit exhibitions, museums, historical city centres and to enjoy local gastronomy. Thermalism tourism is also a deseasonalized tourism, going from October to May, with an average stay of 4/5 days and so it represents a great opportunity also for the economic development of the thermal towns. Young tourists usually go to Spa centres by chance, just to relax some hours, but then they discover the cultural offer of the city and enjoy it. Our typical tourism target are people aged about 50 years old, interested in historical, cultural and gastronomic tourism. They usually have a high level of education and a medium/high income.

The reference of the 7 Cafés of Europe to historical thermal towns as places of intellectual gathering is appropriate also for present days: thermalism tourism is still an exclusive tourism. The Cafés of Europe represented a successful way to involve those people who could be interested in this kind of tourism: artists, writers, researchers and decision-makers. Another important moment for the engagement of local community is the World Water Day, on March 22th. During this day, we organize activities with schools, such as photo competitions, meetings and events, in order to raise awareness about the cultural heritage linked to thermalism. Apart

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<sup>14</sup> Secretary of the European Historic Thermal Towns Association (EHTTA).

from these specific occasions, the engagement of local communities is limited to the local tourism offices, which have the task to promote the cultural route.

### *The promotion of the transnational route*

The European Route of Historical Thermal Towns is quite difficult to promote, because there is not a physical path that links the cities as in the case of the Via Francigena. We have to focus on marketing and storytelling, in order to create the narration of the route. With this purpose, the EHTTA wants to create a passport for tourists travelling on the route and make stamps for each visited destination, as it was a pilgrim route. Moreover, we are thinking of developing an App and enlarging the offer of holiday packages putting together two or three historical thermal cities not distant between each other.

A transnational route can help especially unknown destinations, as they can have visibility in the international tourism market. The Council of Europe gives a valuable contribution in terms of visibility, although less than other programs, such as UNESCO. But we can also take advantages from international events: last year we participated to the World Travel Market of London, which represented a great opportunity for the promotion of the route as a unique tourism product. We have to keep in mind, in fact, that if we want to involve local stakeholders and tourism operators, we should focus also on the tourist aspect, strictly linked to local economic development.

## 8. Conclusions

From the analysis of the three selected Cultural Routes, it emerges that many activities have been organised in order to involve local stakeholders in the building process of a route. However, it is difficult to find a specific strategy of engagement of local communities and the involvement is often reserved to the relevant stakeholders included in the official network of the route.

This is also due to the fact that, even though there is an extensive literature about the importance of cooperation between different stakeholders and on the community-based tourism, very few authors suggest structured ways to successfully apply theory to practice. Moreover, not many European projects aiming at the creation of a cultural route start from the bottom-up, so that the engagement of local communities is rarely taken into consideration from the very beginning.

Moreover, the European Cultural Route of Reformation (ECRR) project started with a mainly top-down approach: it is very important to investigate the perception and awareness of local communities about the cultural heritage linked to reformation in each partner region. Due to the religious aspect of the route, protestant churches and religious communities should be directly involved in the development process, also on a local level. Then we will have to define to what extent we would like to involve in the project a wider set of stakeholders.

Of course, it is necessary to identify the cultural heritage elements that will be included in the route in order to identify the local community along the route. On the other hand, the presence of specific local stakeholders should affect the selection of cultural heritage elements, so that these two processes will be developed simultaneously. Only in that moment the considerations so far exposed will find a practical application.

Within the project, the first important cooperation opportunity will be the transnational workshop of Wrocław, with the aim to find a common definition of cultural heritage linked to the Reformation. This should be considered a good starting point to then identify and implement a strategy for the involvement of all the relevant stakeholders also on a local level, as well as what could be the best methods of information, consultation and participation.

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## ANNEX I

The semi-structured interview about The Via Francigena followed a general guide with six main questions:

1. Which are the most common conflicts between local stakeholders arising in the implementation of a Cultural Route?
2. Regarding the Via Francigena, which have been the most important activities for the involvement of local communities? Which methods (conferences, meetings, workshops, and interviews) have been applied? Which results have been achieved?
3. Regarding The European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, could you tell us more about the seven Cafés of Europe that have been organized within the SOURCE project? Who has been involved?
4. Which are the main differences between the two mentioned cultural routes and how these affect the engagement of local communities?
5. Has the role of local communities in tourism product changed over time and how do you imagine it in the future?
6. Who is the pilgrim who travels on Cultural Routes today?

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## ANNEX II

The semi-structured interview about ATRIUM followed a general guide with three main questions:

1. What is the origin of ATRIUM? Did it follow a top down or bottom-up approach?
2. Considering also the controversial theme of totalitarian regime, have you foreseen since the beginning a wide engagement of local communities? Which methods have you used, which stakeholders have you involved and with what results?
3. Which is the typical visitor's profile? Do you see the risk of attracting people nostalgic for fascism?

## ANNEX III

The semi-structured interview about the European Route of Historical Thermal Towns followed a general guide with four main questions:

1. The route of historical thermal towns aims at a diversification of wellbeing offers. How the tourist demand for this type of product changed over time? In your opinion, what are the future scenarios about wellbeing tourism?
2. The seven Cafés of Europe organized within the SOURCE project referred to the role of thermal towns in 19th Century as places of intellectual gathering, aimed at the European elites. Is the thermal tourism still aimed at the upper class? Which is the typical tourist profile?
3. Regarding this route, do you think it is necessary a wide involvement of local communities? Which local stakeholders have you involved in the creation process of the route? Which methods (meetings, workshops, surveys, etc.) have you used?
4. What are the main differences and similarities between a single wellbeing tourism product and a transnational route regarding the engagement of local communities?