

EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTE OF REFORMATION PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE 2018

Work Paper, Deliverable T.1.3.2

Version 1
05 2018



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Work Paper

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1. Our heritage: where the past meets the future

Cultural heritage has a universal value for us as individuals, communities and societies; shapes our identities and everyday lives and for these reasons it is important to preserve and pass on to future generations.

To enable people to become closer to and more involved with their cultural heritage the European Year of Cultural Heritage, throughout 2018 is seeing a series of initiatives and events across Europe (at EU, national, regional and local level) in celebration of our cultural heritage diversity.

Through cherishing our cultural heritage, we can discover our diversity and start an inter-cultural conversation about what we have in common, reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common European space.

Cultural heritage is essential when the quality of a place is measured as it determines its attractiveness and thereby also competitiveness for business, investors, and creative and enterprising individuals.

The INTERREG CE project *European Cultural Route of Reformation* focuses on cultural development strategies and the participants are exchanging knowledge that is already being developed within a local and regional context and could be applied at a wider European level.

The project applies an empowering bottom-up approach, in which local and regional stakeholders are actively engaged throughout the project's running time.

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.

Formal framework for the development and implementation of the route adopted in ECRR project.



2. ECRR outcomes to the European Cultural Heritage Year 2018

The European Year (organized by the European Union in cooperation with the Council of Europe) will provide the opportunity for a comprehensive exchange among European partners at all levels.

It is a significant opportunity to highlight the many connections between cultural heritage and other areas (research and development, education, cultural and creative industries, tourism and nature conservation as well as regional and rural development).

ECRR applied for the European Cultural Heritage Year label and each project partner can include the official logo in its own national initiatives, as well as in its own websites. All the States involved in the project have already a dedicated website to the year's event.

COUNTRY	WEBSITE
Austria	https://www.kulturerbejahr2018.at/en/
Belgium	http://www.europeeserfgoedjaar2018.be/
Czech Republic	https://www.mkcr.cz/
Germany	https://sharingheritage.de
Hungary	https://koe2018.kormany.hu/en
Italy	http://www.annoeuropeo2018.beniculturali.it/
Poland	http://erd2018.pl/
Slovakia	http://www.culture.gov.sk/posobnost-ministerstva/kulturne-dedicstvo-/ochrana-pamiatok/europsky-rok-kulturneho-dedicstva-31d.html
Slovenia	http://www.zvkds.si/en/elkd/eych-slovenia
Switzerland	https://www.patrimoine2018.ch/



A significant impetus to the concept of Europe's cultural heritage as an essential part of our common European as well as local identity is provided by the German project *SharingHeritage*¹.

A representative of Sharing Heritage also took part in the ECRR Policy Conference - held in Erfurt on November 2017 - during which the Route of Reformations was officially launched, in the context of the choral collaboration among the member states of the initiative and proposing itself as an interesting example of the enhancement of the European cultural heritage.

¹ Cfr. the concept paper "*Sharing Heritage*" drafted by the Reflection Group "EU and Cultural Heritage" and presented in Berlin on 13 November 2015.

This paper is available at: http://www.dnk.de/uploads/media/1955_Sharing%20Heritage_EN.pdf

Germany will also host one of the key public events of the EYCH: *the European Cultural Heritage Summit. Sharing Heritage - Sharing Values*².

As reported in the event's website, the Summit will engage and mobilise a wide range of stakeholders, public and private, for an ambitious European Cultural Heritage Agenda. The Summit will be attended by highest representatives of EU Institutions, Member States and civil society organisations from all over Europe.

In addition ECRR will be present at the Summit to promote the project and to gather information, with representatives of the *Association for Rural Development Thuringia, Erfurt* (Lead Partner) and *Church and Tourism Association (CaTA)*.

Another project that goes under the EYCH label is the so called *Historic Bible Project* carried out in the Inner Salzkammergut (one of the most important areas for Reformation in Austria) where a local multi-stakeholder group is working as pilot region within the ECRR. Several families in this region still have very old protestant bibles from the times of the counter reformation - hidden in holes in their roofs, in secret caves, etc. Books full of history and stories. These bibles and other religious books from those times (old until the 17th century) will be first documented with photos and digitalisation, and then renovated ,if necessary and possible). Then bibles and books will be used for storytelling (short movies with the owners telling the history of their books are planned), used for series of mini-exhibitions in tourism offices but also in hotels (to find sponsoring money), and also used for gamification (a station game of several hikes for children and other measures are planned)³.

With the definition of a *Transnational Action Plan (TAP)*⁴, ECRR project achieved a capacity building for sustainable management of cultural heritage throughout training on preservation, stakeholder alignment and promotion in all involved regions.

Based on the collected information, networking among European Cultural Routes took mostly place within meetings (events, training) organised by the CoE and the European Institute for Cultural Routes. Knowledge transfer and mutual learning are fostered through peer-review and mentoring schemes. In addition to direct networking among Routes 'members, the stakeholders within their own structures and territories have been involved in several activities in order to contribute to the success of the Cultural Routes with their scientific, touristic or economic competences and services, giving more authenticity to the Routes. All these actions add the neighbourhood and European view of cultural heritage to the regional and national perspective and are preparatory to launch the pilot actions: digital (website and mobile app) and physical (80 information

² The Summit will take place from 18-24 June 2018 in Berlin and will be supported by the EU's Creative Europe programme. The European Cultural Heritage Summit will be co-hosted by Europa Nostra, the Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, SPK) and the German Cultural Heritage Committee (DNK), acting as national coordinator of the EYCH in Germany.

³ The project is the outcome of local training sessions provided by the Austrian partners: "*Protestant Church of Augsburg Confession in Austria*" (PP11) and "*Upper Austrian Tourism Board*" (PP12).

⁴ Cfr. D.T1.2.5 "*Transnational Action Plan*".

plates and 7 multimedia info-points). Across all ECRR regions, the route will be physically launched to be visible for its guests.

The neighbourhood and European perspective also enables a broader and more intensive discussion of quality standards for preserving and developing cultural heritage: commitment to developing and preserving cultural heritage does not end at national or European borders.

ECRR project identified cultural heritage in each region and listed it in a catalogue of nominated sites to join the Route.

This is actively contributing to ECHY, identifying Europe's cultural heritage and to promote it across national borders to attract tourists and foster tourism opportunities while also providing networking opportunities and shared learning.

3. Conclusion

European Cultural Route of Reformation project has a big role to play in building the future of Europe making use of the increasing worldwide demand for touristic offers relating to the Reformation.

The legacy of the Reformation, albeit still widely neglected as a regional resource, is an essential part of the shared history and culture of Europe.

The managing bodies of existing paths in Germany and Austria will now join forces with regions in Hungary, Poland, Italy, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic to set up the transnational European Cultural Route of Reformation.

Focusing on this valuable heritage the project will create a critical mass of Reformation-themed offers to unlock investments and attract more visitors to Central Europe.

What is more, the project highlights and boosts the important role of cultural heritage in Europe as a resource and a common good.

European Cultural Route of Reformation project is representative of European values and illustrative of European history and heritage.

The valuable heritage (tangible / intangible) identified is linked together through a narrative that ultimately creates the route⁵.

The members of the network are undertaking several coordinated actions that contribute to create the narration of the route and at the same time acting as an open-air laboratory of European construction.

Furthermore, the creation of a common visibility in order to promote the route at a local, national and international level and the involvement of local communities and stakeholders is a fundamental process, lasting during the whole period of route implementation, necessary to its success.

⁵ The route is aiming at receiving the certification of the Council of Europe.

The project is fully in line with the year's objectives, such as promoting European values, heritage-related skills, common history, intercultural dialogue and social inclusion through education, non-formal and lifelong learning.

Various stakeholders, from numerous backgrounds, joined to ECRR „Train the trainer“ sessions, the local trainings in seven different Countries, and the Policy Conference sharing their expertise on cultural heritage, emphasising on different aspects of the Reformation and fostering the idea of shared learning and collaboration to gain an all-encompassing understanding of the Reformation and its heritage.

Many European cultural landscapes - as well as ECRR project - require multiple countries to work together in preserving, maintaining and developing them as an opportunity for cultural tourism.

Preservation, education and use embedded within a framework of cultural tourism can be better organized as a cross border endeavour.

The aim is to raise awareness of these connections in order to create a stronger identification with Europe and as a prerequisite for further European integration.

This is also ECRR's focus and ideal: to achieve a closer connection, network, and collaboration between and with stakeholders but also policy makers.

Finally, ECRR aims to connect people and to highlight the unifying character of the Reformation on a European scale.