

II EU-LAC Dialogue Sessions

“Cooperation and Policies in the realm of Cultural Heritage, Cultural Routes, and their relevance for the Bi-regional Partnership between the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean”

17 - 18 February 2022

Background

The EU-LAC Foundation is an international intergovernmental body made up of the Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) and European Member States of the European Union (EU) and the EU through its institutions. Its mandate is to work closely with its 61 members to promote bi-regional partnership and dialogue, including through the participation of civil society, in order to generate relevant inputs for intergovernmental processes. An essential part of this mission is to extend bridges to increase mutual knowledge and promote dialogue on the issues that are high on the agenda of the strategic partnership between the two regions. For this reason, the Foundation has organised spaces for dialogue, exchange of perspectives and good practices between government officials, and leading experts in the field of reference and representatives of civil society from both regions.

At the Second Meeting of EU-CELAC Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held in July 2018 in Brussels, they asked senior officials “to establish reflection and hold consultations with relevant partners on the role of culture and creative sectors in the bi-regional relationship” (paragraph 38 of the Declaration). Based on this assignment, in 2019 the EU-LAC Foundation held two related activities. The first was a technical meeting held in Lisbon with the aim of generating proposals and recommendations on cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries. Based on the results of this meeting, in November of the same year the Foundation dedicated the tenth edition of its Reflection Forum to the role of culture and cultural and creative industries in the bi-regional relationship. This Forum was attended by senior officials of the members of the Foundation, from the respective Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministries of Culture, relevant international organizations, as well as some experts and cultural managers. Both events highlighted the relevance of culture as an instrument of rapprochement between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In September 2021, the EU-LAC Foundation convened, in partnership with the Center for Ibero-American Studies of the Rey Juan Carlos University (URJC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dominican Republic, the Universidad del Norte, UC3M, the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI), the National University of Rosario, the Centre for International Relations Studies of Rosario and the European and Ibero-American Academy of Yuste Foundation, an International Congress with the objective to analyse the cultural dimension in the bi-regional space between Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union, including topics such as traditional cultures and vulnerable groups – minorities, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant communities –, as well as the role of cultural heritage in the Bi-regional EU-CELAC Partnership and the Ibero-American Community of Nations. On the sidelines of this Congress, an inter-institutional meeting was held to agree on ways of cooperation in the field of cultural itineraries and routes, promoted by OEI jointly with the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) and Yuste Foundation, and which was attended by representatives from the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports, the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the Regional Institute of World Heritage of Zacatecas, as well as universities of the region.

Against this background, the EU-LAC Dialogues Sessions, to be held on 17-18 February 2022 virtually, seek to advance a bi-regional dialogue on intangible cultural heritage and, more specifically, on cultural routes as an instrument to make visible the importance of relations and cooperation between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in the field of culture, as well as to account for the potential of heritage and cultural routes as a means to address challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and digitisation, among others. To this end, it will focus on policies and cooperation programmes in the areas managed by international organisations and countries, as well as on the exchange of experiences with the management of cultural routes among their managing entities.

Cultural Routes

The concept of Cultural Routes has gained increasing recognition over the last decades, in the field of culture, heritage and tourism. Since 1987, the Cultural Routes Programme of the Council of Europe has become the flagship initiative in Europe and subsequently in several regions of the world. In 1993, following the inclusion of the Camino de Santiago in the UNESCO World Heritage list, the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) – UNESCO's scientific advisory body – raised the need to define the new category of Cultural Itinerary that until then had not been contemplated in the Operational Guidelines of the World **Heritage Convention, Cultural and Natural of 1972**. This led to the establishment of the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) in 1998, which helped to clarify the conceptual and methodological foundations for addressing and researching the theme of Cultural Routes.

According to the "**Charter on Cultural Routes**" ratified by the General Assembly of ICOMOS in 2008, a 'Cultural Route' is understood as *“Any route of communication, be it land, water, or some other type, which is physically delimited and is also characterized by having its own specific dynamic and historic functionality to serve a specific and well-determined purpose, which must fulfill the following conditions:*

- a) *It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multidimensional, continuous, and reciprocal exchanges of goods, ideas, knowledge and values between peoples, countries, regions, or continents over significant periods of time.*
- b) *It must have thereby promoted a cross-fertilization of the affected cultures in space and time, as reflected both in their tangible and intangible heritage.*
- c) *It must have integrated into a dynamic system the historic relations and cultural properties associated with its existence.”*

According to the same Charter, Cultural Routes *“represent interactive, dynamic, and evolving processes of human intercultural links that reflect the rich diversity of the contributions of different peoples to cultural heritage. Though Cultural Routes have resulted historically from both peaceful and hostile encounters, they present a number of shared dimensions which transcend their original functions, offering an exceptional setting for a culture of peace based on the ties of shared history as well as the tolerance, respect, and appreciation for cultural diversity that characterize the communities involved. The consideration of Cultural Routes (...) stimulates not only understanding*

and communication among the peoples of the world, but also increases cooperation to preserve cultural heritage”¹.

The Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, better known as **Faro Convention (2005)**, also constitutes a frame of reference in this realm, especially due to the importance it shifts to the value of cultural heritage for societies as well as its role in the integration of cultural, ecological, economic and socio-political development.

Since its inception, the Council of Europe has been aware of the importance of cultural heritage in achieving greater unity among Europeans. One of its most innovative initiatives was the launch in 1987 of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme, aimed at highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures and making shared European cultural identities a tangible reality across political and ideological divides.

By travelling through space and time, these Cultural Routes demonstrate how the heritage and cultures of different and distant regions of Europe contribute to building a shared cultural heritage. Cultural Routes preserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage as a factor in the improvement of the environment and are a source of cultural, social, and economic development. They work in favour of cultural tourism, the protection of cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Indeed, the **45 Council of Europe Cultural Routes** involving more than 60 countries genuinely represent the diverse and rich heritage of the region, allow cultural and educational exchanges, and have become key resources to enhance the history and memory, architecture, artistic and cultural expressions, gastronomy, as well as landscapes shared by different populations. It provides a model for transnational cultural and tourism management and enables synergies between national, regional, and local authorities and a wide range of partnerships and actors.

The Cultural Routes programme rests on two main pillars: On the one hand, the **Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)**, which brings together 35 Member States and benefits from cooperation with regional and local authorities, as well as with various international organisations, including the European Union, the OECD, UNESCO, the OEI and the UNWTO. It is the body that ensures the development, implementation, evaluation, and promotion of Cultural Routes. On the other hand, the **European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)**, which functions as the technical agency of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes programme and assists EPA in activities related to the evaluation of routes, capacity building, promotion of scientific activities and promotion of the programme.

In **Latin America and the Caribbean**, cultural routes have also been developed, such as, for example, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (Mexico), which represents one of several important sections of the Camino Real Intercontinental, the Estrada Real (Brazil), the Tapé Aviru (Guaraní road system crossing Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil), the Jesuit Way (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay), the Slave Route (referring to the slave trade between Africa, the Caribbean, and the Americas), or the Gaucho Road (Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil). Those routes are based on cooperation from different public and private actors, combining the preservation of heritage with cultural tourism and the integral development of local communities.

¹ See: https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/culturalroutes_e.pdf

In the Andean region there is an important experience in the management of a road system – the **Qhapaq Ñan** – which is shared by six countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The Qhapaq Ñan is the main road of an extensive communication network that had been organised over the many centuries of Andean civilisation and which the Incas had promoted as part of an integrating and expansionist political project of continental magnitude called Tawantinsuyu, which reached its maximum expression in the 15th century.

The road system is structured on the basis of longitudinal and transversal roads, strategically arranged with the Andean Cordillera as the backbone; people travelled along these roads and with them travelled knowledge, ideas and customs, as well as products, linking and integrating different ecological levels which are characteristic of the Andean region. The Route System incorporates a total of 780 kilometres and 291 archaeological sites, as well as hundreds of associated communities.

On 21 June 2014, the Qhapaq Ñan was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, in the Cultural Itinerary category, and has been widely recognised as an example of international cooperation among the countries that comprise it. In view of the 50th anniversary of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 2022, UNESCO has referred to the Qhapaq Ñan as the most successful example and even the driving force behind the Convention itself.

Experiences with the management of these cultural routes have highlighted the relevance of caring for this heritage by contributing extensively to territorial and economic development, responsible tourism, social cohesion, the revaluation of cultural identity, the development of grassroots networks, academic research, and local education. The management of cultural routes contributes, in particular, to Sustainable Development Goal 8, on economic growth and employment, and Goal 12, on sustainable production and consumption. And not least, itineraries are an important tool for the formation of cross-border alliances and international cooperation.

Faced with the **Covid-19 pandemic** involving the **risks** generated for public health, the limitations to mobility, and the severe economic contraction worldwide, the managers of cultural routes have been facing enormous challenges. According to a UNESCO study², at the height of the pandemic, around 90% of countries with World Heritage assets globally had closed them totally or partially, with manifest social and economic consequences for the surrounding communities. Visitors to World Heritage sites decreased considerably in 2020 and a significant number of staff that had worked in the management and maintenance of these spaces and their surroundings lost their source of income. The possible reduction of public and private investment, especially at the local level, puts at risk the conservation of these sites in the medium and long term. Not least, digitisation has likewise posed an important challenge for the management of cultural heritage and itineraries.

At the same time, both the pandemic and the increasingly palpable impact of climate change offer a **window of opportunity** to rethink the promotion and protection of cultural heritage, seeking to strengthen new modalities of action, themes and formats – including the educative dimension –, taking advantage of digital innovations and the willingness of a growing number of citizens to opt for national / local cultural and tourist offers that help protecting the environment and the integral development of local communities, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In fact, the decrease in visitor flows and traffic has also meant a respite for vulnerable cultural and

² See: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377667?posInSet=1&queryId=bd741d77-d5ef-4c62-b83b-bfafo40b7b32>

natural spaces. Some cultural sites have been able to carry out rehabilitation or restoration works that would otherwise have been difficult to carry out.

At the EU-LAC Foundation as well as the Peruvian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Culture, we believe that it is an opportune moment to invite EU and LAC stakeholders to jointly address existing challenges and explore new avenues that could contribute to strengthening the future resilience of cultural heritage, while at the same time reflect on ways to increase bi-regional cooperation for a sustainable recovery.

Objectives

Based on the above, the II EU-LAC Dialogue Sessions have the following objectives:

- To provide a space for dialogue, articulation, and exchange of perspectives between officials, managers and experts on policies and programmes dedicated to the promotion of cultural heritage and cultural routes in the EU and LAC regions.
- To take stock of the challenges and projections for the future of the management of cultural heritage and routes in LAC and the EU, in a context characterised by the pandemic, natural disasters and climate change and digitisation.
- To share existing policies, programmes, instruments, and management models aimed at increasing the capacity to manage and protect cultural heritage and generate proposals for bi-regional cooperation initiatives in this area.

Participants

- Senior officials of the EU and LAC Ministries of Culture;
- Representatives of cultural institutions, agencies and entities managing cultural routes;
- Representatives of international organisations working on cultural heritage in both regions;
- Experts in the field from academia and civil society in the EU and LAC.

Format

The event will be held in a **virtual format** over **two days**. Upon registration, participants will be able to connect with the digital platform that will be used for implementing this event. **The Dialogue Sessions will be held in Spanish and English and a simultaneous translation service will be available.** The **event will be recorded** for the purpose of editing a report, which the EU-LAC Foundation will disseminate among the attendees and the interested public.

Link for registration:

https://uso6web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fuioppWPRwyRNLPAT__rbw

We kindly ask all interested persons to register at the platform in their personal capacity before Friday, February 11th, 2022.

Supporting documents

- Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage
<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>
- "Charter of Cultural Routes" ratified by the ICOMOS General Assembly in 2008:
https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Charters/culturalroutes_e.pdf
- Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005)
<https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>
- Final Declaration of the 2nd EU-CELAC Ministerial Meeting (2018):
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36181/declaration-en.pdf>
- Qhapac Ñan, Andean Road System :
<https://patrimoniomundial.cultura.pe/sitiosdelpatrimoniomundial/qhapaq-%C3%B1an-sistema-vial-andino>
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1459/>
- UNESCO 2021: World Heritage in the face of COVID-19. Paris.
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377667?posInSet=1&queryId=bd741d77-d5ef-4c62-b83b-bfafo40b7b32>
- Resolución CM Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA) of the Council of Europe:
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c69ac
- Resolución CM Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification:
https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=09000016805c69fe
- Summary of Executive Report "Cultural Routes of Council of Europe and Ibero-America" (in Spanish and Portuguese): <https://oei.int/oficinas/secretaria-general/publicaciones/informe-itinerarios-culturales-del-consejo-de-europa-e-iberoamerica-resumen>
<https://www.coe.int/de/web/cultural-routes/-/joint-report-on-the-cultural-routes-of-the-council-of-europe-and-ibero-america-available-online>