

ICOMOS

The proposed Charter on Cultural Routes to be presented for ratification at the 16th General Assembly of ICOMOS.

Presentation:

As a result of their intensive efforts and an exhaustive process of international consultation among its members, and universal distribution to all the National and International Committees of ICOMOS for comments, the CIIC has developed a definition, basic principles and a specific methodology for the identification and research of cultural routes along with the recommendation of practices for their proper assessment and preservation, as well as some guidelines aiming at their protection, conservation, correct use and management. All of these conceptual and operational aspects are reflected in the current *Proposed ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes*.

This project which now embodies more than a decade devoted to the formulation of the said principles and operational guidelines is the result of a deep reflection collated with field experience gained through numerous research projects around the world.

In 1993, on occasion of the evaluation of the Route of Santiago de Compostela (Camino de Santiago) as World Heritage, ICOMOS raised the need to define a new category of cultural route not encompassed by any of the then existing categories established by the Operational Guidelines of the 1972 World Heritage Convention.

A first meeting in November 1994 contributed to this task but did not totally delineate and define this new category or establish an appropriate methodology for its identification and management. Due to this, a group of ICOMOS members from very diverse regions of the world began to work on this topic, resulting in the creation of the International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes (CIIC) in 1998.

Arising out of the work performed by the CIIC of ICOMOS and the growing interest aroused by the Cultural Routes in other spheres related with cultural heritage, Annex 3 of the revised text of the World Heritage Operational Guidelines was approved in February 2005, recognizing the existence of *Heritage Routes* as a new category, which may obviously involve both *Natural Routes*, like the migratory movements of birds, and *Cultural Routes*. Given its status as scientific advisory body of UNESCO, this recognition requires of ICOMOS the additional step of clearly establishing the conceptual and operational aspects concerning Cultural Routes for general knowledge and understanding and, specially, for the scientific community and for World Heritage purposes.

Aiming at this goal, a series of international conferences and workshops devoted to Cultural Routes contributed to set the basic concepts and ideas for developing the proposed Charter. Several expert meetings held in parallel took in charge the revision of its successive drafts which were also subject to discussion and comments by all the CIIC members.

Among these international conferences and workshops we should mention the following:

- *“Cultural Routes of the Mediterranean area: commerce and civilisation; an intercontinental scope”*. (1997)
- *“Intercontinental Cultural Crossroads; Cultural Routes, Legislation and Cultural Tourism”*. (1998)
- *“The wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage”*. (1999)
- *“Hispano-Portuguese Bastioned Fortifications Across Five Continents”*. (1999)
- *“Methodology, Definitions and operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries”* (1st part: 21-22 May 1999)
- *“Methodology, Definitions and operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries”* (2nd part: October 1999)
- *“The Intangible Heritage and Cultural Routes in a Universal Context; 2. Steps towards making a Pre-inventory of Cultural Routes: a) Strategies and Teams; b) Projects and Contents”*. (2001)
- *“Conceptual and substantive independence of Cultural Routes in relation to Cultural Landscapes”*. (2002)
- *Scientific workshop on conceptual and operational aspects with the participation of officers of the CIIC and some outstanding specialists, as well as representatives of the UNESCO*. (2003)
- *The intangible values of Cultural Routes. Analysis of the intangible and other aspects in the drafting of a Charter on Cultural Routes*. (2003)
- *“Identification, Promotion, and Inventory of Cultural Routes: Fortifications and port cities as components of cultural routes; control and use of land; trade routes; pilgrimage routes”*. (2004).
- *A large number of experts from the CIIC presented their research work in Section 4 of the Scientific Symposium held during the 15th GA of ICOMOS. Also, the participants at this General Assembly were invited to attend the CIIC open meeting for general presentation and discussion of a fifth approach for the drafting of a Charter on Cultural Routes*. (2005)
- *“Mining and Industrial Heritage: Impact and Importance for Cultural Routes of Universal Value”*. (2006)

The proceedings of some of these conferences have been published by the ICOMOS CIIC. (See footnote¹)

¹ - *The wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage* (1999)
- *Public Works of the Camino de Santiago in Galicia* (2000)
- *The Intangible Heritage and other aspects of Cultural Routes* (2002)
- *Cultural Routes. Identification, Promotion, and Inventory: Fortifications, ports and cities as components of Cultural Routes. Cultural Routes of control and use of land, trade and pilgrimage* (2005)

The process carried out for distribution of the draft for comments, subsequent revisions and appropriate edits is as follows:

- The 5th draft of the Charter was distributed to all the participants at the 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS in Xi'an (2005). The comments received were analyzed and a new draft was prepared.
- The new draft was submitted for discussion at the next CIIC annual meeting (November, 2006).
- The subsequent 7th draft was distributed to all the National and International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS for comments (January, 2007).
- The resulting 8th draft was distributed to all the CIIC members for possible last remarks (May, 2007)

Successive drafts were submitted to the international directives of ICOMOS at different official meetings in order to obtain the necessary approval and authorisation for its more widespread dissemination:

- Bureau meeting (Havana, June 2005);
- Executive Committee meetings (Xi'an, October 2005; Paris, January 2007)

The proposed final draft was sent to the ICOMOS International Secretariat in Paris (August 2007) for presentation to the Executive Committee, who approved the text without amendments (Pretoria, October 2007).

Finally, following the last steps established by the current rules of procedure for the adoption of a doctrinal text², we are re sending it to all the National and International Committees of ICOMOS for information, aiming at its submission for ratification at the 16th General Assembly to be held in Québec this year.

Sincerely Yours



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² Text presented at the 31st session of the Executive Committee in May 1984 and approved after review at the 33rd session of the Executive Committee in November 1984 in Paris.