

## **A NEW CATEGORY OF HERITAGE FOR UNDERSTANDING, COOPERATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; THEIR SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE MACROSTRUCTURE OF CULTURALHERITAGE; THE ROLE OF THE CIIC OF ICOMOS: PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGY**

*Suarze-Inclan María Rosa / Spain*  
President of the ISC on Cultural Routs of ICOMOS

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### **Cultural Routes as a new category within the evolving concept of Cultural Heritage**

Cultural Routes represent a new approach in the currently evolving and quickly expanding process that affects the conceptual universe of cultural heritage. The more we progress in the field of preserving cultural properties and stimulating social awareness, the more complex this universe becomes, and thus we need to found this process on rigorous scientific bases. Within this context, and given the increasing importance and complexity of the vast territorial ensembles involved in the concept of cultural heritage, the efforts carried out by the International Scientific Committee of ICOMOS on Cultural Routes respond to the necessity of clarifying concepts and setting operational guidelines. Besides trying to identify the existing differences between Cultural Routes and other ensembles of elements thematically related by a real or ideal common link, these efforts have led to the establishment of scientific bases for the identification of Cultural Routes and a methodology of work in this specific field.

Cultural Routes offer new perspectives and tools for preserving cultural heritage. By recognising and respecting cultural diversity, they contribute to the enhancement of intercultural dialogue and sustainable development. They may also provide conservation policy with a territorial breadth, cultural integrity and harmonization of actions and contents that has not been accomplished before.

Over time, the notion of “monument”-originally seen as an artefact in isolation from its context-has gradually evolved and expanded with the recognition that a historic site, or historic ensembles such as a public square, a neighbourhood or a city, as well as cultural landscapes, can be considered as cultural heritage properties. The elimination of chronological barriers and the recognition of the importance of other manifestations of culture, such as those from the industrial and technological field, have also

opened a path for the assessment of new elements as integral components of the cultural heritage. This more extensive notion requires new approaches to their treatment within a much wider context in order to describe and protect the significant relationships directly associated with their cultural and historical setting.

Within this advance in the field of concepts, Cultural Routes introduce and represent a qualitatively new approach to the notion of conservation of the cultural heritage. It does not conflict or overlap with other categories or types of heritage-monuments, cities, cultural landscapes, industrial heritage, etc-that may exist within the orbit of a given Cultural Route. Rather, it recognizes and enhances their significance within an integrated, interdisciplinary and shared framework, by means of an innovative scientific perspective that allows understanding, communication and increased cooperation among the peoples of the world through the work of preserving the cultural heritage.

Though Cultural Routes have resulted historically from both peaceful and hostile encounters, today they present a number of shared dimensions that transcend their original functions, offering a multilateral, more complete, and more accurate vision of history, as well as an exceptional setting for a culture of peace.

As a heritage category, Cultural Routes are the fruit of the cultural dynamics generated through the historic ways of communication deliberately created or used by mankind for the accomplishment of a specific and well defined purpose. Therefore, Cultural Routes reveal the heritage content of a concrete phenomenon of human mobility and exchange that pursued a specific and peculiar purpose. They include not only the physical ways of communication that facilitated their flow, but the cultural properties and values, both material and immaterial, uniquely associated with their specific purpose and historic functionality.

Notwithstanding, it is necessary to understand that, even though a Cultural Route may include monuments and sites of every kind, as well as cultural and natural landscapes, this concept implies a value as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts and gives the Route its meaning. This way, a Cultural Route as a whole helps to understanding the interactive, dynamic, and continually evolving processes of human intercultural links that reflect the rich diversity of the contributions of different peoples to cultural heritage.

A Cultural Route is a historic phenomenon that has developed within a well defined path and its existence, which must reflect its specific function, needs to be demonstrated on scientific grounds. Cultural Routes occur in a natural context - land, water, and etc. - and in different geographic frameworks: local, national, regional, continental and intercontinental.

Among other illustrative examples, we may find some of the great commercial and pilgrimage routes, and those of use and control of land that mankind has created along history, such as the Silk, Spice, Incense and Salt routes; the trade caravan routes in Africa, the Incan and Roman Empire routes, the Route of Santiago, etc. But, in any case, the identification of Cultural Routes and their different sections must be submitted to a careful analysis that proves both their existence and their authenticity from a scientific point of view.

**The increasing interest in Cultural Routes at a national and international level. The existing conceptual confusion. Other ensembles made up by thematic related properties for promoting cultural awareness, tourism development, and regional integration. Their importance and different characteristics**

The numerous conferences and debates devoted to Cultural Routes at the national and international level demonstrate the interest awoken by this new category of cultural heritage. Currently, Cultural Routes also play a major role as candidates for inscription in the World Heritage List.

Nevertheless, it's important to recognize that there is a great deal of conceptual confusion with regard to this new category. For this reason, we need to make very clear that Cultural Routes, from the scientific point of view, have nothing to do with the common-today widely diffused-idea that a Cultural Route is created by applying one's imagination and will to the establishment of a set of associated cultural assets that happen to possess features in

common, or to the commemoration of historical events that occurred along a given voyage or route. So, for instance, within the European Union itself, where-given its current geopolitical situation-an effort is being made to foreground a sense of shared identity, the Council of Europe employs the following slogan: "Create your own cultural route". It should not, therefore, be surprising that ICOMOS' ISC on Cultural Routes (CIIC) should be bombarded with innumerable proposals that aim to promote tourist or intellectual routes that have nothing at all to do with the scientific premises on which this Cultural Heritage category is based.

To be clear: a Cultural Route is not a simple association of ideas or elements, nor is it a military expedition, nor a voyage of exploration, adventure or discovery without any resultant cultural exchange and continuity, however great the historical importance any of these may turn out to have had. Nor can we include within the category of Cultural Routes mass migrations which have not generated a cultural patrimony based on a back-and-forth cultural exchange of considerable historic duration, nor networks of communication routes that do not display the characteristics that define a Cultural Route.

It is absolutely legitimate to employ all of the above-mentioned methods of associating cultural elements or of commemorating historic events. It can even be a positive development from the viewpoint of cultural tourism, promotion of various cultural icons, enhancement of area or regional development, or all of the above. But the artificial-or "virtual"-creation of thematic routes or sets of cultural assets, based on inductive or even simply associative reasoning, does not constitute a sound basis for the formation of Cultural Routes. On the contrary, Cultural Routes, understood in the scientific sense, are historical/cultural realities based on profound and evident heritage assets which have arisen in response to their own, substantive, internal dynamic.

As stated above, a Cultural Route can be a road that was expressly created to serve a specific and well-determined purpose or a route that takes advantage either totally or partially of pre-existing roads used for different purposes. But its existence and significance as a Cultural Route can only be explained by its use for this specific purpose and by its being provided with functional elements expressly created and serving the route.

Cultural Routes have sometimes arisen as a project planned *a priori* by the human will with sufficient power to undertake a specific purpose (for example, the Incan and the Roman Empire Routes). On other occasions, they are the

result of a long evolutionary process in which the collective interventions of different human factors coincide and are channelled towards a common purpose (such as in the Route of Santiago, the African trade caravan routes, or the Silk Route). In both cases, they are processes arising from the human will to achieve a specific objective.

### **Cultural Routes as a Cultural Heritage category. Antecedents. The work of the CIIC of ICOMOS**

The ongoing project of formulating a scientific definition for Cultural Routes has not experienced interruptions or contradictions, though it has undergone a process of enrichment and evolution during the last decade.

The antecedents of this evolution, through which an existing reality has become a subject of study and research, are found in the listing of the Route of Santiago as a World Heritage asset in 1993—a complex cultural concept without precedent at that time. And from the conceptual point of view, another antecedent was the meeting on “Cultural Routes as a Part of our Cultural Heritage” which, as a result of the interest created by that listing, was held in Madrid in November of 1994, with representatives from UNESCO and ICOMOS.

Since then, the research carried out by the International Scientific Committee for Cultural Routes (CIIC) of ICOMOS, through its numerous international scientific meetings<sup>1</sup> as well as its publications, along with the work

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<sup>1</sup> “The Iberian Peninsula and Cultural Routes of the Mediterranean area: commerce and civilisation; an intercontinental scope” (Alicante, Spain. 16-19 Nov. 1997)

- International Symposium on “Intercontinental Cultural Crossroads; Cultural Itineraries, Legislation and Cultural Tourism”. (Tenerife, Spain. 5-8 Sept. 1998)

- “The wine and the vine routes in the Mediterranean Cultural Heritage”. (La Rioja, Spain. 17-19 May 1999)

- International Congress on “Hispano-Portuguese Bastioned Fortifications Across Five Continents”. (Ibiza, Soain. 18-20 May 1999)

- Seminar on “Methodology, Definitions and operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries” (1<sup>st</sup> part: Ibiza, Spain. 21-22 May 1999)

- Seminar on “Methodology, Definitions and operative Aspects of Cultural Itineraries” (2<sup>nd</sup> part: Mexico City and Guanajuato, Mexico. Oct. 1999)

- International Seminar on: “1. 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”. (Navarra, Spain, 20-24 June 2001)

carried out by its members in the most diverse regions of the world, have helped to clear away some of the conceptual confusion around the topic. These projects have taken, on the one hand, the form of identifying and systematically researching several Cultural Routes of notable importance; and on the other, of firming up and making more precise the conceptual and operational factors which are embodied in the current project of developing a Charter for Cultural Routes.

Independently of these efforts, and thanks to the interest shown by various member country delegations to the World Heritage Committee, the newest version of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention of UNESCO, approved in February of 2005, has recognized Cultural Routes as one of the four existing categories established to date.

The Annex 3 of the said text (*Guidelines on the inscription of specific types of properties on the World Heritage List*) says: “The World Heritage Committee has identified and defined several specific types of cultural and natural properties and has adopted specific guidelines to facilitate the evaluation of such properties when nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List. To date, these cover the following categories, although it is likely that others may be added in due course: a) Cultural Landscapes; b) Historic Towns and Town Centres; c) Heritage Canals; d) Heritage Routes”. It makes more specific references to “Heritage Routes” (which may involve both cultural and natural ones like, for instance, the migratory movements of birds) in paragraphs 21 to 24 of the same text. In any case, the specificity of Cultural Routes is recognised even in paragraph 24 (iii): “A heritage route may be considered as a specific, dynamic type of cultural landscape, just as recent debates have led to their acceptance within the Operational Guidelines”.

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- Scientific meeting on “Conceptual and substantive independence of Cultural Routes in relation to Cultural Landscapes”. This meeting was held on 4 December 2002 during the ICOMOS 13th General Assembly in Madrid, Spain. A recommendation was adopted and submitted to the General Assembly at its plenary session held in the morning of December 5th.

- 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 (Madrid, Spain. 29-30 May 2003).

- Scientific Conference of the CIIC. “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”. (Ferrol, Spain, 1-3 October 2004).

It is very difficult to imagine a cultural landscape as continuously present along a vast Cultural Route traversing high mountain, deserts, long maritime distances and different climatic atmospheres. It seems more reasonable to think that this Route may connect very diverse landscapes and cultural properties. In any case, it does not seem exaggerated to say that some persons who have worked hard in the field of Cultural Landscapes seem to consider that this conceptual approach is “*their baby*”. Instead, those who defend the specific nature of Cultural Routes believe that these are *creations of history*.

Unfortunately, up to now the lack of conceptual clarity around this topic has meant that various sections of Cultural Routes of historical importance, proposed by various member states, have not been able to be listed in the WH List as such. As a result, the interpretations, or “readings”, that these Routes could offer, have been stripped of their most revealing characteristics and significance. Let us hope that the recognition of this new category of cultural heritage will provide a new opportunity for them to make their contribution in the future.

On the other side, when describing the characteristics for inscription of a Cultural Landscape on the WH List, paragraph 11 of the Annex 3 says: “*The possibility of designating long linear areas which represent culturally significant transport and communication networks should not be excluded*”. This clearly opens the door for the inscription of other systems and specific ways of communication like “cultural corridors”, “historic roads” and other kind of thematically related elements along a path, that are not Cultural Routes, and to which we have already made reference in this paper.

## **Progress in the development of the International Charter for Cultural Routes. Conceptual and operational aspects**

### **1 Objectives of the Charter**

- To establish the basic principles and methods of research specific to the category of Cultural Route as they relate to other previously established and studied categories of cultural heritage assets.
- To propose the basic mechanisms for the development of knowledge about, evaluation of, and conservation of Cultural Routes.
- To define the basic guidelines, principles and criteria for correct use of Cultural Routes as resources for sustainable social and economic development, respecting their authenticity and integrity, appropriate conservation and historical significance.

- To establish the bases for national and international cooperation that will be essential for undertaking research and development projects related to Cultural Routes.

### **2 Definition**

“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, which must fulfil the following conditions:

- a) It must arise from and reflect interactive movements of people as well as multi-dimensional, 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”.

### **3 Defining elements: context, content, cross-cultural significance as a whole, and dynamic character of Cultural Routes.**

1. *Natural context*: Cultural Routes occur in a natural context upon which they exert an influence and which they help to characterize and enrich with new dimensions as part of an interactive process.
2. *Content*: A Cultural Route must necessarily be supported by tangible elements that bear witness to its cultural heritage and provide a physical confirmation of its existence. Any intangible elements serve to give sense and meaning to the various elements that make up the whole.
  - 2.1. The indispensable physical element that determines the existence of a Cultural Route is the communication route itself as a project designed or arising through human activity to accomplish specific goals.
  - 2.2 . Other basic substantive elements are the tangible heritage assets related to its functionality as a historic route— staging posts; customs offices; places for storage, rest, and lodging; ports; defensive fortifications; bridges; markets; hospitals; urban centres; cultural landscapes; sacred sites, places of worship and devotion; etc.—as well as intangible heritage elements that witness to the process of exchange and dialogue

between the peoples involved along its path.

3. *Cross-cultural significance as a whole:* The concept of Cultural Route implies a value as a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts and gives the Route its meaning.

3.1 The cultural route constitutes a cultural asset enriched by the different cultures it has fertilized and which transcends them in overall value by offering a substantial number of shared characteristics and value systems.

3.2 Within its overall identity, the value of its parts resides in their common, shared, multi-faceted significance.

3.3 Its wider scale permits a cultural linking of peoples, countries, regions, and continents.

3.4 This breadth of scale is important from the point of view of both the territory included and of the comprehensive management of the various heritage elements included in it. At the same time the cultural diversity it implies provides an alternative to a process of cultural homogenization.

4. *Dynamic character:* In addition to presenting physical evidences of its historic path, along with cultural heritage elements, Cultural Routes include a dynamic factor that acts as a conductor or channel through which the reciprocal cultural influences have flowed.

4.1. The dynamic of a Cultural Route does not obey natural laws or casual phenomena, but rather exclusively human processes and interests, and is therefore understandable only as a cultural phenomenon.

4.2. By understanding a Cultural Route as a set of dynamic elements of cultural communication between peoples, its cultural heritage assets can be appreciated in their true spatial and historical dimensions, which allows for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to the conservation of the Route as a whole.

#### 4 Specific indicators

As basic differentiating indicators applicable to the category of Cultural Route, the following should be considered: the structure of the route and its physical substratum; historical data about its use; the existence of cultural manifestations of shared origin along (or at given points of) the route; any physical structures associated with the functionality of the route; practices, traditions, customs, and common uses of a religious, ritual, linguistic, festival, culinary, or similar nature; reciprocal influences in activities such as music, communication elements, and other material

and immaterial cultural assets whose full understanding derives from the historic function of the route itself.

#### 5 Types of Cultural Routes

Cultural routes can be classified as follows:

- According to their territorial scope: local, national, regional, continental, or intercontinental.
- According to their cultural scope: within a given cultural region or extended across different geographical areas that share a process of reciprocal influences in the formation or evolution of cultural values.
- According to their goal or function: social, economic, political, or cultural. These characteristics can be found shared across a multi-dimensional context.
- According to their duration in time: those that are no longer used versus those that continue to develop under the influence of socio-economic, political, and cultural exchanges.
- According to their structural configuration: linear, circular, cruciform, radial or network.
- According to their geographical setting: land, aquatic, mixed, or other physical setting.

#### 6 Identification

The identification of a Cultural Route must necessarily be based on a set of tangible evidences and elements that witness to the significance of the route as such. The identification process will also take into account its natural and geographic context, its functionality, its duration in time, its structural configuration, and its symbolic and spiritual dimension, which will contribute to its identification and to the understanding of its significance.

The intangible assets of a Cultural Route are fundamental for understanding its significance and its associative heritage values. Therefore, material elements and artefacts must always be studied in connection with other values of an intangible nature.

Even if in certain sections the material traces of a Cultural Route are not clearly preserved, the existence and value of the Cultural Route as a whole can be shown through its immaterial aspects.

Every Cultural Route should fulfil authenticity criteria in terms of both its natural and built environment, and concerning both its defining elements and its distinctive features of a material and immaterial nature:

- These criteria should be applied to each section under study to assess its significance in relation to the overall meaning of the Route throughout its historical development, and to verify the authenticity

of its structural layout through the vestiges of its path.

- Authenticity should also be evident in the natural context of the Route, as well as in the other tangible and intangible heritage elements included within its historic functionality and its setting.
- For the purpose of its comparative evaluation, the temporal duration and historic significance of the different sections of the Route in relation to the whole should also be taken into account.

For identification and evaluation purposes, the following criteria may be considered:

- Expressions of dynamic social, economic, political, and cultural processes which have resulted from exchanges between related areas;
- Distinguishing characteristics that are shared by areas connected by historical and cultural bonds;
- Evidences of mobility and of relationships forged between peoples or ethnic groups of different cultures;
- Specific cultural features rooted in the traditional life of different communities;
- Heritage elements and cultural practices—such as ceremonies, festivals and religious celebrations representative of shared values for different communities within (a) specific cultural and historic area(s)—related to the significance and functionality of the Route.

## **Methodology**

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The project for a Charter on Cultural Routes also takes into account that these assets require a new methodology for their research, protection, conservation, assessment, use and management. Given their breadth and their value as a whole, as well as their territorial dimensions, this methodology also requires establishing a system of coordinated and integrally managed activities, as well as specific legal instruments.

The *research* methodology, along with the adoption of practices for proper assessment and conservation of the different sections of a Cultural Route, should never lose sight of the meaning and historic significance of the Route as a whole. Research teams working on this cultural heritage category should be of a multidisciplinary and co-operative nature. Common working criteria and methodological instruments<sup>2</sup> should be established, as well as coordinating

mechanisms to facilitate communication and cooperation. Researchers should keep in mind that the presence of various types of cultural heritage properties along the path of a Cultural Route does not, in and of itself, imply that they are necessarily integral components of that route or are appropriate objects of study in relation to it. The only elements that should be highlighted in the scientific research of a Cultural Route are those related to the use of the route and any influences arising from its functional dynamic.

Given the scope of this type of research project, it is recommended that *funding* be approached in stages that allow for similar progress to be made along the different sections of a Cultural Route. As there are notable examples of Cultural Routes whose historic paths involve various countries, *international cooperation* is essential and funding may be obtained through bilateral or multilateral agreements. When Cultural Routes involve countries with different degrees of development, it is recommended that the more developed countries provide their assistance. It is also desirable that UNESCO and other international organizations should establish mechanisms of cooperation.

It is not sufficient to guarantee *protection* of the heritage elements of a Cultural Route. It is necessary to develop a preservation strategy and appropriate instruments that guarantee its conservation and integral assessment of its structure and its system of authentic values as a whole.

With regard to *cultural tourism*, special care should be taken to avoid confusion between the concepts of tourist routes—even including those of cultural interest—and Cultural Routes. However, it should also be recognized that a Cultural Route is a reality that can have great importance for territorial cohesion and sustainable development. From this point of view, and respecting certain conditions, efforts should be made to promote knowledge about Cultural Routes, along with their appropriate and sustainable use for tourism purposes, with the essential condition that it does not jeopardize the integrity, meaning, and authenticity of the historic values of the Cultural Route as key elements to be conveyed to visitors. Given the fact that a Cultural Route is an integrative concept which provides a holistic reading of the encounter of cultures and civilization that form that

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identification, inventory, and managerial development of Cultural Routes, available on its Web site ([www.icomos-ciic.org](http://www.icomos-ciic.org)). These forms have been used by the CIIC in the creation of a database. Many of the projects developed through the use of these forms are included in its latest publication (2005).

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<sup>2</sup> The CIIC of ICOMOS has designed a series of forms for the

Route, we should also keep in mind that the relative importance of each one of its parts, along with the promotion of positive developments in each one, leads to increased interest and benefits for the other parts.

In order to protect those values, tourist development should be managed on a rational basis in accordance with prior environmental impact studies and with plans for public use and community participation. It should guarantee in any case that priority is given to the participation of the local community and to local and regional tourist companies, preventing the creation of monopolies by large international companies or by powerful companies based in the more developed countries through which the historic path of the Cultural Route passes.

*Management* of Cultural Routes requires a cross coordination that ensure durable development on a national (at the provincial, regional, local level, etc.) and international scale, as well the establishment of management tools designed to protect the Route. It also calls for the *stimulation of public awareness and the participation of the inhabitants* of the areas that share the Route.

### **Closing thoughts**

The notion of Cultural Routes –besides representing a historic reality which is evident in their vestiges- constitutes a new concept that enriches and illustrates the growing worldwide tendency to approach cultural heritage from a multidimensional perspective, and contributes significantly to our understanding of this heritage. It shows the evolution of ideas with respect to the vision of cultural heritage, as well as the growing importance of values related to its setting and territorial scale, and reveal the macrostructure of heritage on different levels. It also helps to illustrate the contemporary social conception of cultural heritage values as a resource for sustainable social and economic development. This concept introduces a model for a new ethics of conservation that considers these values as a common heritage that goes beyond national borders, and which requires joint efforts.

As an aid to the comprehension of any tangible and intangible heritage which presents shared roots and influences, Cultural Routes have become an essential tool for understanding cultural relationships and exchanges between two or more groups linked by an intentionally-established historic route.

Given the cultural richness and variety of both the interrelationships and the characteristic assets directly associated with the reason for the existence of Cultural

Routes (such as monuments, archaeological remains, historic towns, vernacular architecture, intangible, industrial and technological heritage, public works, cultural and natural landscapes, transportation means and other examples of the application of specific knowledge and technical skills), their study and management requires a new methodology and a multidisciplinary approach that illustrates and reinvigorates scientific hypotheses and stimulates increased technical, artistic and cultural knowledge.

To summarize: Cultural Routes provide an important means for mutual understanding, cooperation, and development among nations, as well as helping to establish models for sustainable cultural tourism of a calibre which will contribute to a better understanding of the true and complex dimensions of our rich and diverse cultural heritage. They help to confirm to us, at the end of the day, that universal civilization is a heritage that belongs to us all, resulting as it does from a historical process to which all of the world's peoples—never mind who writes the history—have contributed through their reciprocal cultural influences.

It now becomes our task to identify them, evaluate them, and administer them wisely.

### **Abstract**

As a new category of cultural heritage, Cultural Routes

help not only to observe the evolution of this concept but to reveal its true macrostructure. They also help to recognise the increasing importance of both the environmental and territorial aspects related to cultural heritage. Cultural Routes represent a value set whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts and offer new perspectives for preservation / conservation by stimulating intercultural dialogue, sustainable development, and cultural tourism. This category launches a model for a new ethics of conservation that contemplates cultural values as a common and shared heritage which often transcends the internal frontiers and requires to unify our efforts to be defended.

The International Scientific Committee on Cultural Routes of ICOMOS has worked hard for the last ten years in order to define their characteristics and to elaborate a methodology aiming at their identification, appreciation, inventory and adequate treatment. This paper will present a resume of this work and its results.

Among other aspects, there will be explained the differences between real Cultural Routes and simple thematic circuits or tourist tours which are based on associations of ideas or elements and other ways of communication like cultural corridors that do not correspond to the historic and conceptual category of Cultural Routes.

Cultural Routes forge into a dynamic system of reciprocal influences the historic communication routes which served a specific and well determined goal over significant periods of the history, along with tangible and intangible cultural assets associated with their functionality which testify the existence of those reciprocal influences. They occur within a natural context and on a variety of possible scales: local, national, regional, continental, and transcontinental.