

Cultural Routes – Cross-border Tourist Destinations within Southeastern Europe

Aleksandra TERZIĆ^{1,*}, Željko BJELJAC¹

¹ Geographical Institute “Jovan Cvijić”, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SASA), Djure Jakšića 9, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia

* Corresponding author, a.terzic@gi.sanu.ac.rs

Received on <09-10-2016>, reviewed on <20-11-2016>, accepted on <03-12-2016>

Abstract

Cultural routes may become interesting tourist destinations because of their thematic and traveling experience, making connections to renown places, events and personalities. The process of forming cultural routes as tourist products is considered a new principle of protection, revitalization, use and presentation of cultural heritage. Europe in particular is rich in cultural heritage originating from different historical epochs. This is why within the renown and most visited cultural routes were formed in Europe. There are 32 pan-European cultural routes, of which several routes cross Southeastern Europe. This article aims to examine the interrelation of the cultural routes within Southern Europe with those from the entire Europe. The main goal is to determine to what extent their connection to the existing routes contribute to the tourism promotion of SEE states, making them the cross-border tourist destinations.

Keywords: *cultural routes, tourism, destination, Europe, South East Europe*

Rezumat. Rutele culturale – destinații turistice transfrontaliere în Europa de Sud-Est

Rutele culturale pot deveni destinații turistice interesante datorită experienței tematice și de călătorie pe care o propun, făcând legătura între locuri, evenimente și personalități faimoase. Procesul de individualizare a rutelor culturale ca produse turistice este văzut ca un nou principiu pentru protecția, revitalizarea, utilizarea și prezentarea patrimoniului cultural. Europa dispune de un vast astfel de patrimoniu, ce datează din diferite perioade istorice. Prin urmare, și cele mai cunoscute și vizitate rute culturale se află în Europa. Există 32 de rute culturale pan-europene, dintre care unele traversează și Europa de Sud-Est. Lucrarea de față își propune să analizeze legăturile dintre rutele culturale din Europa de Sud-Est cu cele din restul continentului. Principalul scop este acela de a determina în ce măsură legătura acestora cu rutele deja existente contribuie la promovarea turismului din statele din Europa de Sud-Est, transformându-le în destinații turistice transfrontaliere.

Cuvinte-cheie: *rute culturale, turism, destinație, Europa, Europa de Sud-Est*

Introduction

The cultural itineraries are located on different levels, from local to transcontinental. Their main force becomes the networking of the territories, so that the path is divided into sub-nets and the networks into sites with a common coherence. The research of this common coherence and continuity is significant in terms of image and visibility of the route and the destinations. The thematic paths are focused on the attractions that are organically part of the geographic space, marking the uniqueness and individuality of the territory and linking sites with similar elements (Zabbini, 2012). Since cultural routes appeared, in the 1980's, their popularity is constantly growing. They are placed into a context of a visit to a greater number of destinations, expanding to whole regions, countries and even international space. Combination of the cultural exchange and social values are creating the recognizable identity for each cultural route. Even though their main concept is not primarily focused on the tourist use, they represent, beside the cultural dimension, a tourist product as well. Cultural routes have proven to be an extraordinary opportunity for the tourism development in

underdeveloped regions that have valuable cultural or natural resources (Meyer, 2004, Terzić et al., 2014).

The Council of Europe (2006) defines Cultural Corridors as: *"Networks of interaction and economic exchange based on culture and creativity, incorporating principles of sustainability, fairness and inclusion, based on wide stakeholder partnerships which are rooted in solid institutional frameworks that stimulate regional socio-economic development."* The basic idea is to create networks which move beyond physical routes linking cultural sites to include the full range of creative assets in a region (Richards, Russo and Grossman 2008).

Based on the global trend, the number of cultural routes, cultural districts, corridors and itineraries (Di Pietro et al., 2014) in the world is growing. These concepts were developed in Western Europe (Italy, France), considering that Europe has the richest cultural heritage and that it is the most visited destination of the so-called "cultural tourists (Terzić et al., 2014). Creativity in tourist production and consumption opens the door to a variety of themes, activities, experiences, combined with different levels of involvement and participation of tourists. In the range of products designed to establish a

partnership between tourism and the cultural sector, itineraries connected to cultural heritage are considered an effective means of generating positive effects, and they have therefore gained a central role in local tourism development policies (OECD, 2009).

Over the past decade, cultural routes have been established as an attractive, flexible and extremely effective means of developing cultural tourism products. The cultural corridors are a keystone of tourism, as they enrich the travelers' experience thanks to a wide variety of attractions along a thematic route. These new tourists are motivated by special interests, less oriented to touristic packages, but rather in search of experiences and emotions. In this context, it seems clear that the itinerary becomes an excellent form of cultural tourism as a response to a new postmodern tourist's request. Connections and corridors imply "multiple-destinations itineraries", which a tourist may define as journeys through various regions in one or more countries. This requires cooperation strategies between the regions concerned. In this case, competition gives way to cooperation, allowing each destination to cooperate in building a better tourist product according to a holistic view from which everybody can benefit. The combination of cultural itineraries and tourist creativity could strengthen the local brand, encouraging the improvement of territorial space and the creation new networks (Gallucci, 2007; Messineo, 2012). Throughout this process, tourism products related to cultural routes, cultural cities and cultural must-do's – those which are connected to popular culture, arts, the search for authenticity of destinations and local cultures, are probably the core elements forming the basis of the new scenario of worldwide cultural tourism (UNWTO, 2015).

Cultural routes of the Council of Europe

The Cultural Routes Programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987. In 1998, the Council of Europe entrusted to the European Institute of the Cultural Routes the task of monitoring the Cultural Routes programme as a whole. The World Heritage Committee Board approved cultural route initiative at the World Heritage Conference "Routes as cultural heritage" (Madrid, 1994) and acknowledged the concept of routes as an important step forward on the path to the recognition of the diverse nature of mankind's heritage. "A heritage route is composed of tangible elements of which the cultural significance comes from exchanges and a multi-dimensional dialogue across countries or regions, and that illustrate the interaction of movement, along the route, in space and time" (UNESCO, 2004). European cultural routes can be classified

based on geographical model as national, regional and pan-European ones. In order to achieve the certification, it should meet some basic conditions: focus on a theme representative of European values common to several European countries; follow a historical route or a newly created thematic route; give rise to long-term multilateral co-operation projects in priority areas (scientific research; heritage conservation and enhancement; cultural and educational exchanges; contemporary cultural and artistic practices; cultural tourism and sustainable development); be managed by one or more independent, organized networks (in the form of an association or a federation of associations) (www.coe.int/routes).

The creation of cultural routes opened the possibilities for long term multilateral projects of cooperation in the cultural heritage promotion between neighbouring countries in Europe. The programme also started some significant initiatives in the protection of natural and cultural heritage resources, and promoted the sustainable development of Europe. It became the instrument for comprehension of the common European values and interpretation of these values based on rich heritage and interconnections between different regions, communities and historical flows in Europe. The financial gain achieved based on cultural route programmes is placed in function of social, economical and cultural development of Europe for more than a decade. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are also in line with the key trends of cultural tourism development in Europe today. It shows that people can be interested in the protection of cultural heritage and natural resources and environmental management, by creating special interest tourist destinations (The European Institute of Cultural Routes, 2012). They have achieved a noteworthy impact and progress and shown enormous potential for SME generation, clustering, networking (intercultural dialogue) and promoting the image of Europe. Transnational networks and accessibility to different levels of funding – European, national, regional and local, are viewed as the foundation for the Cultural Routes' success.

As there is a variety of cultural routes, there was a need to simplify the grouping of variables in order to arrive at a proposal of cultural routes as a tourism product that is as streamlined and functional as possible. Consequently, some categories can be defined, and routes can be generally classified on several manners (UNWTO, 2015):

- Classification based on their design and structure - There can be linear model of destinations with defined starting and ending point, such as Santiago de Compostela cultural route. However, it can be formed as network model with no defined sequence of connections between points. The visits

can be started or ended at any place of the defined route.

- Classification based on the general theme – Here we have cultural routes that are articulated around the main theme (Transromanica, ATRIUM), but there are also cultural routes which include several topics, with the route itself being the essential theme. Thus, they include the entire natural, heritage, historic and identity resources located near the route or the destinations forming it (Via Regia, El Legado Andalusi, etc.).

- Classification of cultural routes based on their territorial scope – There are five types of routes based on this classification: local, regional, national, transnational (several states) and international (worldwide).

- Classification of cultural routes based on their historic origin or their current reconfiguration – Even though generally all routes must have a well-founded historical basis (Route of Saint Olaf, Santiago de Compostela), some are created based on different “more fictional” representations of

actual historic situation, or based on a theme of a common narrative, rather than the strict historic act (Routes of the Olive Tree, European route of thermal towns).

- Classification based on the visitor infrastructure, classifies routes based on the number and type of overnight stays necessary to visit them. There are routes where overnight stays are not necessarily, those that can be visited with only one overnight stay, and finally routes involving an overnight stay in several places.

Since 1987 until 2016 the 32 Pan-European cultural routes were established and certified, covering 53 countries, and the number is growing (www.coe.int/routes). Different themes that illustrate European memory, history and heritage, also contribute to an interpretation of the diversity of present-day Europe. The classification according to theme is partly applied on the example of certified Cultural Routes (Table 1).

Table 1: Classification of Cultural Routes of Council of Europe

Cultural Route	Year	Theme	Territory
Santiago de Compostela	1987	Pilgrimage	BE, FR, IT, CH, DE, LU, PT, ES
Hansa Routes	1991	Trade Historic	DE, BE, EE, FI, LV, LT, NL, NO, PL, RU, SE, UK
Viking Routes	1993	Historic	UK, BY, BE, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, IS, IE, LV, LT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RU, ES, SE, TR, UA
Via Francigena	1994	Pilgrimage	IT, FR, CH, UK
El legado Andalusi	1997	Artistic	ES, PT, IT, MA, TN, EG, LB, JO
Phoenicians' Route	2003	Historic Navigation	IT, HR, MT, CY, EL, TR, FR, PT, ES, DZ, LY, TN, MA, LB, SY, UK
Pyrenean Iron Route	2004	Industrial	ES, FR, AD
Route of Jewish Heritage	2004	Historic Pilgrimage	BE, BA, HR, CZ, DK, FR, EL, HU, IT, LT, NL, NO, PL, RO, RS, SK, SI, ES, SE, CH, UA, UK, AT, BG, GE, DE, IE, LU, PT, TR
Mozart Ways	2004	Artistic	AT, DE, BE, FR, IT, CH, NL, SK, CZ, UK
Routes of Olive Tree	2005	Landscape Trade	AL, DZ, BA, CY, HR, EG,FR, EL, IT, IO, LB, LY, MT, MA, PT, RS, SI, ES, SY, TN, TR
St. Martin of Tours	2005	Pilgrimage	AL, AD, AT, BA, BE, BG, HR, CY, CZ, DK, EE, FI, FR, DE, EL, HU, IS, IE, IT, LV, LI, LT, LU, MT, MD, MC, ME, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO, RS, SK, SI, ES, SE, CH, MK, UA, UK
Cluniac Sites in Europe	2005	Pilgrimage	FR, BE, DE, IT, HU, CH, ES, UK, PT, PL, IL
Via Regia	2005	Historic	DE, BY, BE, FR, LT, PL, UA, ES
Transromanica	2007	Architecture	DE, AT, FR, IT, PT, RS, RO, ES
Iter Vitis	2009	Landscape	IT, AM, AT, AZ, HR, FR, GE,DE, EL, HU, MT, MD, PT, RO, SI, ES, MK
Cistercian Abbeys Route	2010	Architecture	FR, BE, CZ, DK, DE, IT, PL, PT, ES, SE, CH
Saint Olav Ways	2010	Pilgrimage	NO, DK, SE
Historic Thermal Towns	2010	Historic Landscape	IT, DE, BE, HR, FR, ES, HU, UK, CZ, RO, TR
Prehistoric Rock Art	2010	Artistic	ES, PT, FR, IT, IE, NO
European Cemeteries	2010	Historic	IT, AT, BiH, DK, EE, FR, DE, EL, IE, NO, PL, PT, RO, RU, RS, SI, ES, SE,

			UK
European Ceramics Route	2012	Artistic	FR, DE, IT, NL, PT, ES, UK
Casadean Sites	2012	Pilgrimage	FR, BE, ES, IT, CH
Megalithic Culture Route	2013	Historic	DK, DE, NL, SE, ES, PT, UK
Huguenot & Waldensian trail	2013	Historic Religious	DE, FR, IT, CH
Réseau Art Nouveau	2014	Artistic	AT, BE, FI, FR, IT, LV, NO, SI, ES, UK, HU, RO, RS, CH, DE
Via Habsburg	2014	Historic	AT, CH, DE, FR
ATRIUM - architecture of totalitarian regimes	2014	Architecture	IT, BiH, BG, HR, EL, RO
Destination Napoleon	2015	Historic	FR, IT, BY, BE, HR, CZ, DE, EL, PL, PT, RU, ES, UK
Roman Emperors & Danube Wine Route	2015	Historic Landscape	RS, BG, HR, RO
Emperor Charles V Route	2015	Historic	DZ, BE, DE, IT, MA, NL, PT, ES, TN
In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson	2015	Landscape Artistic	FR, BE, UK
Fortified Towns of the Greater Region	2016	Historic Architecture	DE, FR, LU

Among the cultural routes there are not yet certified are: The Heinrich Schickhardt Route, Wenzel and Vauban Routes of Military Architecture in Europe, Route of the Castilian Language in the Mediterranean, Migrations Routes, Parks and Gardens Landscape, Via Carolingia, Rural Habitat in Europe, Saint-Michel Routes, Don Quixote of La Mancha, etc. At the latest nomination list (2016) new themes were promoted: Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius, The European Places of Peace, Saint Coloman Route, Touring Le Corbusier's utopian living, Routes of St Augustine, Longobard Ways across Europe, The Chocolate Way, etc.

The study that was conducted by the Council of Europe that followed a survey of 29 certified Cultural Routes with goal of gathering current qualitative and quantitative data and information in order to assess the overall development potential of the Cultural Routes programme. Established in 1987, the Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe comprises 29 certified Routes with many more in the development state covering 70 countries on four continents (Kseniya Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012). The study outlined the great potential and essential importance of cultural route programmes in networking, cooperation and SME development process, especially in educational, cultural and tourism sectors.

According to the Figure 1, as previously indicated, the Cultural Routes programme of the Council of Europe comprises 29 certified Routes (by 2012). Some routes extend into other countries beyond Europe's borders, especially Mediterranean and Arab countries— for example the Omeyan Route

of the Legacy of al-Andalus (1997), the above-mentioned Route of the Phoenicians, or the Olive Tree Routes (2005)—and countries in America— for example the Viking and Norman Route (1993) and the Réseau Art Nouveau Network (2014) (UNWTO, 2015) Statistical analysis of the data demonstrates visually the density of the Cultural Routes networks.

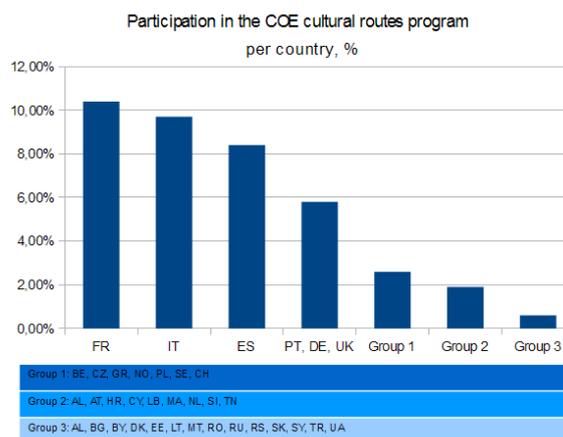


Fig. 1: Participation in the Cultural routes program of Council of Europe (source: www.coe.int, 2012)

It illustrates the share of the Routes network by country: France (10.4%), Italy (9.7%), Spain (8.4%), Portugal (5.8%), Germany (5.2%) and Great Britain (5.2%). The rest of the countries each comprise 2.6% or less. These nations form three large groups, which represent the unexploited development potential of the Council's Cultural Routes programme (Kseniya Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012). As about 45% of total cultural sites incorporated into the route's network originate from

only 6 countries, it becomes obvious the role they have in general governance issues concerning the cultural route creation and management process. Although highly diffused and decentralized in their way of working, an established network (with a legal structure) often require a node or pivotal point which is identifiable as its centre, the network co-ordination office or secretariat is often essential to undertake the day-to-day administration. Several studies suggest that in many cases the geographical location of the key decision maker is also the key location of the route headquarters (Figure 2), pointing to the strong centralization of the route management within Western European countries. Only two centers are located in SEE region, namely the headquarters of the Route of the Olive Tree located in Kalamata (Greece) and the Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route, located in Belgrade (Serbia).



Fig. 2: Headquarter's distribution of the Cultural Routes of Council of Europe (source: <http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes/interactive-map>)

Cultural routes of Southeastern Europe

Southeastern Europe is a geographical region of Europe, expanding primarily on the Balkan peninsula, spreading over 666,700 square km. Geographically, this region is bordered by four seas (the Adriatic, the Aegean, The Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea), three rivers (the Danube, the Soča and the Sava) and by two straits (the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles), but historically, its northern frontier stretched as far as the Carpathians Mountains (Okey, 2007; Terzić et al., 2015). From the administrative point of view, it includes several

states – Greece, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Albania, but also some small parts of Croatia (land between Kupa and Sava rivers), Slovenia (Primorska, Notranjska and Dolenjska region), Romania (Northern Dobrogea), Turkey (East Thrace), Cyprus and Italy (Provinces of Trieste and Gorica). This is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-confessional area, the borders of which are determined differently in scope of geographical, historical, demographical or sociological approach. Southeastern Europe has been a real crossroads of civilizations and religions throughout the centuries; a mediator between the East and the West, the North and the South, transpierced by internal connections and influences, bound up by common historical routes (Terzić et al., 2015). Hence, cultural corridors in the region have been formed, and they could represent transnational axes of regional interactions and the living memory of the civilizations and connections between nations of this region.

Certain branches of pan-European cultural routes of the Council of Europe are trespassing the South-Eastern Europe's territory, such as: *The European Route of Jewish Heritage*, *Transromonica*, *Atrium - on the architecture of totalitarian regimes of the 20th century*, *European Route of Cemeteries*, *Iter Vitis Route*, *Route of Historical Thermal Towns*, *Olive tree Route*, *The Réseau Art Nouveau Network*, *Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route*, etc. The branches of these routes expand to SEE countries, and are interconnected to the SEE cultural corridors. However, SEE countries only have a modest share in site participation in the cultural route networks (Figure 3).

The headquarters of most of these routes are located within Western Europe, and the proper management of the route usually doesn't reach these destinations, as the management system of the cultural routes are predominately centralized. Furthermore, the initiative of the creation of the Cultural Corridors of South East Europe is a project implemented by the Association for Cultural Tourism in collaboration with the European Institute of Cultural Routes. It is part of a macro-regional project for South-East Europe as promoted by the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNESCO, ICOMOS and other institutions. The Pilot Project "Cultural Corridors – Analysis to Synthesis" is implemented as part of the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South East Europe 2003-2008.

The initiative nested several SEE cultural development projects: The Children and the Cultural Heritage of South East Europe, 2005-2006, the Website Cultural Corridors of South East Europe, 2006, the Exhibition at the Regional Forum "he

Trans-Balkan Cultural Corridor”, 2007 and Heritage: ESPRIT, 2007-2008.

SEE countries	Number of routes	CERTIFIED CULTURAL ROTUES
ROMANIA	9	European Route of Jewish Heritage, ATRIUM, Iter Vitis Route, Transromanica, St. Martin of Tours Route, Via Habsburg, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Via Habsburg, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route
CROATIA	10	Phoenician's Route, European Route of Jewish Heritage, European Cemeteries Route, Olive Tree Route, ATRIUM St. Martin of Tours Route, Iter Vitis Route, Route of Historical Termal Towns, Destination Napoleon, Roman Emperors & Danube Wine Route
GREECE	8	Viking Routes, Phoenician's Route, Olive Tree Route, Iter Vitis Route European Route of Jewish Heritage, European Cemeteries Route, Route of Historical Termal Towns, Destination Napoleon
SERBIA	5	European Route of Jewish Heritage, Transromanica, European Cemeteries Route, Réseau Art Nouveau Network, Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route
BULGARIA	3	European Route of Jewish Heritage, ATRIUM, Roman Emperors & Danube Wine Route
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	2	European Route of Jewish Heritage, European Cemeteries Route
CYPRUS	2	Phoenician's Route, Olive Tree Route
ALBANIA	1	Route of the Olive tree
MACEDONIA	1	Iter Vitis Route
MOLDOVA	1	Iter Vitis Route

Fig. 3: Pan-European cultural routes of the Council of Europe within SEE (source: Council of Europe, 2016)

The project promotes the development of several Cultural routes:

- the Danube Road as fluvial cultural corridor along the Danube River;
- the Diagonal Road (Via Diagonalis, Via Militaris, Carigradski drum, Via de Ragusi in the region of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro);
- the Eastern Trans-Balkan Road, connecting important monastery centers and the cultural route Via Regia (the Royal Road) in Ukraine;
- the cultural corridor Sofia-Ohrid, passing through Bulgaria and FRY Macedonia and connecting the monastery agglomerations and the churches;
- Via Adriatica, spreads over the western seaboard of the Ionian and Adriatic seas, and symbolizes the exchange among the Aegean, Roman, Byzantine, Dalmatian and west European civilisations, joining the Saint James' Way and Saint Martin cultural route;
- Via Anatolia is connecting two unique cultural centers: Istanbul and Antakya (former Antioch), where it meets the branch of the Silk Road coming from Esia, and crosses a Bronze age sea trade Route known as Via Maris;
- Via Egnatia is an ancient Roman road, facilitating communication between Rome and Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). It was important for the dissemination of Orthodox

Christianity in SEE and, later on, Islamic domination. It also links to the Via Francigena, Route of the Castilian Language and the Sephardic Routes.

- Via Pontica is spreading over the south-west coasts of the Black Sea, from the Danube Delta to the Caucasus, crossing Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey.

- the Western Trans-Balkan Road is connecting western and central Europe with the Aegean and the Mediterranean seas, crossing consecutively the Danube Road, the Diagonal Road, the Sofia-Ohrid Road and Via Egnatia (Council of Europe, 2012).

The list of the most representative sites of each corridor are included and presented on the lists and maps on the official website (<http://seecorridors.eu/>). However, the cooperation of destinations presented is still underdeveloped, such as the joint activities between neighboring regions. Present state of cultural heritage in Southeastern Europe is fragmented in closed national and local systems, not considered in the existing transnational cultural corridors. In most cases these unique cultural values linked to cultural corridors, are little known in Europe, in the world, and even in the region itself. The fragmentation of the cultural tourism market only in local frameworks of individual countries or municipalities will have partial and incomplete effect in which the majority

of cultural resources will remain unknown and inaccessible (Shishmanova, 2015).

The cross-border cooperation in SEE region, considering heritage preservation and promotion is usually financed under several IPA CBC funds. A number of projects include natural and heritage promotion and the creation of regional tourist offer, such as: project financed through the South East Europe Transnational Cooperation Programme: ATRIUM cultural route, Extension of the Danube Limes - UNESCO World Heritage in the Lower Danube, SY_CULTour – Synergy of culture and tourism, Cultural (Garden) heritage as focal points for sustainable tourism, CULTEMA, CHERPLAN - Enhancement of cultural heritage through environmental planning and management, BanaTour and Banats cultural patrimony project (Romania – Serbia), Thematic Routes of DKMT Euroregion (Hungary- Serbia -Romania) – Secession Routes, Folklore without borders, „Wandering In The Pantry Of The Monarchy“, Recreation without borders – wellness/health tourism, Tasty DKMT – gastronomy route; The natural resources of the cross-border region – new destination for balneological and spa tourism (Bulgaria – Serbia – Romania), Legends as a tourism enforcing instrument in the region Kula-Zaječar-Vidin, Cultural events network, Revitalization of Golubac and Vidin fortress, “In Search for Economic Reviving and Development: Preparation for Joint Promotion of the Cross-Border Region Business Potential” (Bulgaria – Serbia) etc.

Anyway, the process of creation cultural routes and corridors within national and regional scope in SEE is expanding, and the new cultural/thematic/tourist routes are appearing fast. For example, in 2013, the cluster of cultural routes in Serbia was founded (cluster-culturalroutes.org), as a non-profit organization with a goal to promote Serbia and the Balkans as a cultural tourism product through specific routes such as The Valley of the Dragons - mythological heroes of Balkans epic culture, The Nikola Tesla and Stanojević Ways (Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia) and The Mining Route – The Balkans as a Cradle of Metallurgy (Graf, 2013). In Romania two interesting initiatives of creating cultural routes were evidenced - the Transhumance Route project (initiated in 2014 by Sibiu County Tourism Association for Marginimea Sibiului Area) and the Route of Fortified Churches, a highly potent theme of the architectural heritage, poorly harnessed so far (Oprică, 2015). Similar actions were noted in Bulgaria, Croatia (Golden Threads Road – rural tourism route in Slavonija, 2015), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania etc. Some of them are already functioning as a destination for cultural tourism, even though not exploited to their full potential.

The promotion of these sites through the constant promotional activities of the Council of Europe, different international organizations, national tourist organizations and joint websites is ensured. However, the actual tourist product for cultural corridors of SEE is still undeveloped. With offering only restricted information, usually through websites and brochures, without direct contact and information on visitation possibilities, tourist programs and existing tourist infrastructure, the sustainable tourism development of cultural corridors is questionable. Potential visitors are left to acquire information and organize their own trip, with no real clue what to expect on destination upon actual arrival. On the other hand, Cultural Routes of Council of Europe offer much more information for potential visitors and even offer full tourist programmes including accommodation, food, guiding services, visiting tickets to museums and festivities, free souvenirs, guidebooks and promotional materials (for a price of 89 EUR per night/destination on the Hansa Route).

Discussion

Despite the Resolution CM/Res (2010) on the rules for the award of the “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” certification, stating that the networks should “operate democratically”, in a number of cases the Cultural Routes are dominated by a single member albeit within the framework of an association and are only nominally operating in a democratic fashion. New route themes need to be common for at least three European countries, they must bring forward opportunities for renewed cultural and educational exchange and need to aim at developing new touristic products and events within sustainable development scope. Both subscriptions to existing routes and new route proposals need to demonstrate multidisciplinary and multiorganizational involvement, and to undertake rigorous research and evaluation steps before making official proposal to the Council of Europe.

The process of application is lengthy and once approved, the registered site usually commits to paying an annual membership fee (that vary from route to route). According to the initial survey carried out by the Council of Europe in 2012, 14 of the 29 Cultural Routes collect some sort of membership fee or receive funding from a range of city authorities (from 70 euro/year for *The Viking Route*, 300 euro/year for the *Route of European Cemeteries*; reaching up to 1000 euro/year per destination on *Iter Vitis* route and *Transromanica*, to even 4000 euro/year for *The Route of Prehistoric Rock Art*) (Oprică, 2015). This brings forward an issue of observed interests and benefits for cultural

sites and destinations for applying for the official certificate of Cultural Routes.

The studies (Hospers, 2002; Meyer, 2004; Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Jansen-Verbeke, Priestley & Russo, 2008; Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012; Graf, 2013) show that there is collaboration emerging between the Cultural Routes and tourism sector, in order to develop cultural tourism. Some of the initiatives incorporate the development of interactive guides, links to new audiences via social media, creation of new festivals and events, establishing joint marketing with tour operators, especially hotels and restaurants, gastronomic tourism and agritourism/ecotourism destinations, etc. However, there is still relatively limited articulation between the cultural routes and newly developing themes in cultural tourism. In particular, the types of tourism activities being created by most of the cultural routes seem to have little overlap with some of the main focus of the Council of Europe, such as human rights, democracy, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue (Khovanova-Rubicondo, 2012). One of the aspects of cultural tourism that makes it particularly relevant for the policy of the Council of Europe is its intercultural dimension, as many different cultures are brought together in the development, consumption and communication of cultural tourism. The economic benefit of the investment in the evaluation of protected areas and cultural monuments can be found in the planned inclusion of these areas into the national tourism promotion.

When it comes to a complex tourism products such as cultural routes, it is an absolute necessity to incorporate different institutions (engaged in the field of culture, education), public associations and organizations in the process. Different initiatives and activities should advance the cultural life of a local community and also enrich the tourist offer in various places along the route. Such results can be achieved only with cooperation on multiple levels (Terzić et al., 2014, 2014a). The special interest tourist programmes, such as cultural routes are usually more expensive than prefabricated mass tourism programmes, as they offer high quality, the possibility to choose among a variety of offered items and a specific experience value for each consumer. These programmes, thematically oriented, time-consuming and quite expensive, are attractive for certain consumer groups (rich senior individuals, mostly from Western European Countries). Even though becoming more popular among tourist, it is not likely they will ever become mass tourism products. However, their educational, multicultural, multiethnic and multi-confessional scope could be interesting for youth groups (students), whereas tourist offer should be developed in the form of student exchange

programmes. The prices of such programmes must be significantly reduced or co-funded at the institutional or national/international levels.

Conclusions

The geographical distribution of the cultural routes within European space points out to the potential for the further development of the existing routes, and the incorporation of the Southeastern European destinations into the cultural route networks. The subscription of new sites to existing cultural routes collates with the problems of accommodating unique sites within the domain of generic themes. Clear guidelines by the Council of Europe frame the possibilities for expanding the existing certified routes and for new proposal of routes. Horizontal and equitable governance structuring is a fundamental principal of strong networking. With constant struggle to maintain and preserve heritage sites within Southeastern countries, with only symbolic funds invested in the heritage management and promotion, there is no real interest nor support for the integration of SEE heritage sites to European cultural routes. Certain concrete measures to support the integration are being taken by national authorities and public institutions. Leveling the interests of cultural routes principles and tourism development potentials, enabling certain compromising options, between preservation - utilization (exploitation) sides, could bring the win-win results for both, at local, national, regional or international level. A coordinated tourism management within integrated regional network of cultural tourism products will reveal the full richness of the regional cultural phenomena and would increase the competitiveness of the tourism market in the region as a whole. Regional network of cultural tourism products integrating cultural, tourist and travel information infrastructure for cultural itineraries could create conditions for flexible regulation of tourist flows. The development of new thematic routes gives the outstanding opportunities for the regional cooperation, especially in the underdeveloped regions in SEE. The inclusion of significant funds in the development of cultural routes, demands for cultural heritage to be incorporated into the route and by its revitalization to become more appealing to tourists.

References

- Briedenhann, J. and Wickens, E. (2004) Tourism routes as a tool for the economic development of rural areas - vibrant hope or impossible dream? *Tourism Management*, 25, 1, 71 – 79.
- Di Pietro, L., Mugion, R.G., Renzi, M. F. (2014) Cultural technology district: a model for local and

- regional development. *Current Issues in Tourism*, vol. 16, issue 1, pp.1-17.
- Gallucci, F. (2007) *Marketing emozionale*. Milano: Egea.
- Graf, M. (2013) Industrial Cultural Routes, *Journal "Energy, Economy, Ecology"*, Energy Association, Belgrade, Serbia, n.2, year XV, March 2013, p. 328-335.
- Hospers, G.J. (2002) Industrial heritage tourism and regional restructuring in the European Union, *European Planning Studies*, 10(3): 397-404.
- Jansen-Verbeke M., Priestley G.K., Russo A.P. (2008) *Cultural resources for tourism: patterns, processes and policies*. Pennsylvania, Nova Science Publishers.
- Khovanova-Rubicondo, Kseniya (2012) *Impact of European Cultural Routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness – Study*. Provisional Edition, Council of Europe.
- Messineo, Eliana (2012) Tourist creative processes and experiences in the European Cultural Itinerary 'The Phoenicians' Route'. *Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice*, Volume 4, No 2, pp. 41 – 54.
- Meyer, D. (2004) *Tourism routes and gateways: Examples and a selection of key issues for development of tourism routes and gateways and their potential for pro-poor tourism*. Tourism. London: ODI. (www.pppilot.org.za)
- OECD (2009) *The Impact of Culture on Tourism*. Paris: OECD
- Okey, R. (2007) *Taming Balkan nationalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Opricã, M. A. (2015) European Cultural Routes in Romania: Opportunities for Developing Sustainable Tourism and Architectural Heritage. *Acta Technica Napocensis: Civil Engineering & Architecture*, Vol. 58, No. 4, pp. 119 – 127.
- Richards, G., Russo, A.P. and Grossman, M. (2008) *Cultural Corridors in South East Europe: Refinement of concept and development of pilot projects*, Council of Europe.
- Shishmanova, V. Maria (2015) Cultural Tourism in Cultural Corridors, Itineraries Areas and Cores Networked. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 188, pp. 246 – 254.
- Terzić, A., Bjeljic, Ž., Jovičić, A., Penjišević, I. (2014) Cultural Route and Ecomuseum Concepts as a Synergy of Nature, Heritage and Community Oriented Sustainable Development. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 3, 2, 1-16.
- Terzić, A., Bjeljic, Ž., Jovanović, R. (2014a) Protection, revitalization and use of cultural heritage through the system of cultural route creation, *Kultura*, vol. 143.
- Terzić, A., Krivošejev, V., Bjeljic, Ž. (2015) Cross-cultural exchange: Saint George's day customs as a common heritage of Balkan nations. *Anthropological Notebooks*, vol. 21, pp. 71-88.
- Zabbini, E. (2012) Cultural routes and Intangible Heritage, *Almaturism – Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*, vol. 3, no 5, pp. 59 – 80.
- European Institute of Cultural Routes, Website: <http://www.culture-routes.lu>, Accessed July 2015.
- UNESCO (2004) World Heritage, www.unesco.org/whc/, Accessed July 2015.
- UNWTO (2015) *Global Report on Cultural routes and Itineraries*. Website: http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/global_report_cultural_routes_itineraries_v13.compressed_0.pdf, Accessed July 2015.
- Cluster of cultural routes in Serbia, Website: www.cluster-culturalroutes.org, Accessed August 2014.
- DKMT Euroregion, Website: <http://www.dkmt.net/>, Accessed July 2015.
- Website: <http://www.southeast-europe.net/>, Accessed July 2015.
- Website: <http://www.evropa.gov.rs/Cbc/PublicSite/Projects.aspx>, Accessed June 2015.