

HUNGARY ORGANISED THE 13TH ANNUAL ADVISORY FORUM ON CULTURAL ROUTES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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The three-day forum (Fig. 1) was organised by the coordinators of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) and the European Institute of Cultural Routes, in collaboration with the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Innovation and the Hungarian Open Air Museum in the prominent locations of Visegrád and Budapest between 25 and 27 September 2024. This year's theme was "Transmission and innovation: Fostering youth participation along the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe."



Fig. 1. Official invitation to the 13th Annual Advisory Forum (© Creators)

At the ceremonial opening, more than 350 participants from approximately thirty countries were welcomed by Dr Balázs Hankó, Minister for Culture and Innovation, Dr Meltem Önhon, Chair of the EPA Governing Board, Dr Stefano Dominioni, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and Dénes Eöry, Mayor of Visegrád. Alongside protocol events, the organisers provided opportunities to discuss strategic issues related to the Cultural Routes program.

On the second day, participants were introduced to the long-standing heritage preservation and cultural mediation practices of the Skanzen (Hungarian Open Air Museum), including a deep dive into its narrative storytelling approach. Expanding on interpretive storytelling since the 1970s, historical reenactments brought the past to life with animators dressed in period costumes portraying historical characters.

The forum featured a variety of panels and workshops focusing on the central theme, with approximately sixty speakers. On the third day, Marta Rakvin, Secretary of the Iron Age Danube Route Association, participated in the roundtable discussion *"Successful Initiatives Related to Youth along the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"* (Fig. 2). Moderated by Dr Mike Robinson, Professor of Cultural Heritage at Nottingham Trent University, this session highlighted best practices.

Guided tours introduced participants to Visegrád's key historical and cultural landmarks, including the Citadel and the Royal Palace. Cultural routes from Hungary also presented themselves at individual booths. The Iron Age Danube Route showcased products such as Iron Age spice blends crafted by Dorka's Spice

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House, an archaeological travel app developed by the HUN-REN Institute for Computer Science and Automation, and replicas of Iron Age pottery by Christian Keramik and bronze pendants by Andreas Proksch, tangible outputs that foster a connection to archaeology and support tourism. The Route's magazine debuted its fourth issue at the forum (Figs. 3–4). We are deeply grateful to all contributors for their help.

The prestigious Pesti Vigadó building hosted the closing ceremony, during which Estonia officially joined the Enlarged Partial Agreement. Two new cultural routes – the *European Route of Historic Pharmacies* and the *Leonardo da Vinci Route* – were certified, expanding the network to 48 members. The *St. James Way* and the *Historic Gardens Route* were re-certified among reevaluated routes. The Cultural Routes University Network added two Hungarian members: Eötvös Loránd University, represented by Dr Orsolya Réthelyi, and Budapest Metropolitan University, represented by Dr Viktor Friedmann.

The *Iron Age Danube Route* received a *Best Practice Award* in the *Youth Education* category, underscoring the value of its initiatives (Figs. 5–6). Programmes like *Archaeological Encounters – Kids of the Iron Age* and *ArcheoGIM* were developed by a dedicated team led by Dr Jacqueline Balen of the Zagreb Archaeological Museum and supported by partners such as the University of Split and Zlatni Papuk Tourism Association. Dr Szilvia Fábián, President of the Iron Age Danube Route Association, accepted the award on behalf of the team. Plans are underway to extend these successful practices to other regions.



Fig. 2. Marta Rakvin explaining the details of the ArcheoGIM programme during the panel discussion (©Balázs Farkas-Mohi / Hungarian Open Air Museum)



Fig. 3. Representatives of the IADRA, Dorka Spice House, and the HUN-REN Institute for Computer Science and Control Institute at the IADRA stand (© Iron Age Danube Route Association)



Fig. 4. Issue 4 of the Iron Age Danube Route Magazine (© László György / Hungarian National Museum Public Collection Centre – Hungarian National Museum, National Institute of Archaeology)



Fig. 5. Winners of the Best Practice awards
(© Balázs Farkas-Mohi / Hungarian Open Air Museum)



Fig. 6. Association members participating in the closing ceremony (© Iron Age Danube Route Association)

On September 28, participants joined additional programmes, including an archaeological walk through Budapest’s Gellért Hill, organised by the Hungarian National Museum. The tour traversed ancient fortifications and terraces, concluding with a visit to the museum’s permanent exhibition, “*At the Crossroads of East and West.*” Attendees were also treated to Iron Age-inspired beverages (Fig. 7).

The forum highlighted the importance of preserving cultural heritage and the strength of international cooperation. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to addressing future challenges, especially involving youth. The 14th forum, to be hosted by Turkey, promises further opportunities to strengthen and share cultural values.



Fig. 7. Snapshot of an Iron Age Walk on Gellért Hill
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