



© CDR14 / www.photodiscography.com

# Towards a European network

## Riverside Cities : Leisure & Culture & Sport

Since the 19th century, rivers have played a crucial role in several social activities, sports and cultural but also working class leisure activities. These activities such as swimming, canoeing, fishing and more recreational activities like listening to music, dancing and having fun have spread all along the rivers. It is a place where people from different age groups and backgrounds come together. With more and more spare time, these areas were visited a lot on Sundays and during the summer.

These activities are a European feature which was strengthened through transport development during the Industrial Revolution. Close to Paris, London or Berlin, some areas were devoted to leisure, recreation but also to festive events. They became vacation spots for townfolks who wanted to escape from the city.

Middle-classes were the first ones to go to the banks of urban rivers. This can be ascribed to their support for the social hygiene movement, their interest for Romanticism, their renewed relation with nature and the new trend for travel and sports.

When working classes also got more spare time, they began to frequent the banks of urban rivers too. A new form of leisure was thus born.

Through a sometimes complicated urban History, this European cultural phenomenon passed on a cultural and natural heritage to us. This heritage is linked to the past but carries on in the present with new activities practised along urban rivers.

In order to understand, protect and enhance this heritage, we think that it is essential to work together on the realisation of a network of European regions involving leisure and recreation along urban rivers. This network could be certified as a “Cultural Route of the Council of Europe” thereafter.



### THE CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CERTIFICATION

The Cultural Routes programme was launched by the Council of Europe in 1987. Its objective was to demonstrate how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage. It highlights the different facets of European culture that arose from the past and that appears nowadays in the way people live.

A European Cultural Route is a network of partners developing co-operation programmes in the fields of heritage enhancement, culture, arts, educational youth exchanges and cultural tourism.

The term “cultural route” did not only designate tangible paths, but may be a network of locations linked by a common theme. This theme must be representative of European values and shared by at least three countries of Europe.

→ [See more](#)

# On the edges of the Marne, a rich and diversified heritage ...



Landscapes



Intangible heritage



Architectural



Artistic



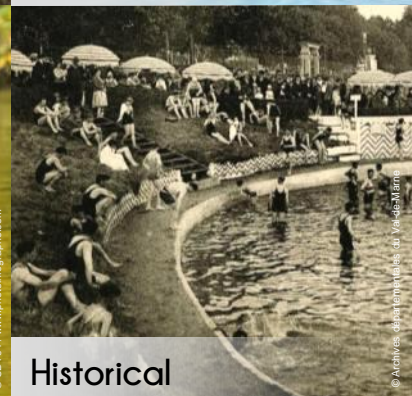
Industrial



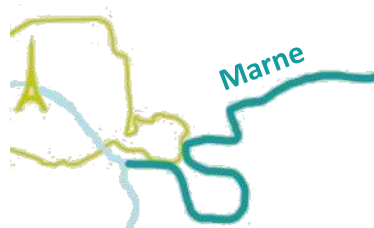
Festive



Natural



Historical



The Marne is one of the longest rivers in France (512 kilometres). Before the river flows into the Seine at Paris doors, the Marne runs through townscapes along the last thirty kilometres. However it still remains a green corridor. This area became a vacation spot for the Paris middle-class during the 19th century and for the urban poor during the 20th century. People used to come to practice cultural activities, sports, or just to have some fun in the *guinguettes*. This relaxed atmosphere gave inspiration to some great filmmakers (Renoir, Carné...) and photographers (Doisneau, Ronis...). Whereas new activities have been developed, this image of « the Sunday El Dorado » is still linked to the banks of the Marne.

## What is the project aiming at?

- To diversify the classic supply of European cities by offering a sustainable tourism in terms of nature and leisure along with urban tourism
- To spread the traditional tourism flows concentrated in the center of cities out and attract tourists in others peripheral areas
- To enhance the value of tourism offer in terms of culture, heritage, sport, leisure as well as the popular capital of the area
- To create favourable conditions for the development of new activities and improve the professional skills
- To improve the quality of tourism and cultural offer on partner territories thanks to the exchange of good practices within the network

## How to achieve these objectives?

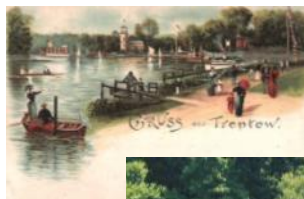
1. By forming a network of European countries and local partners interested in the project
2. By identifying the assets and needs of each European destination. Indeed, we will involve all the local stakeholders.
3. By drawing up a common European action plan thanks to a collaborative work
4. By submitting the project to obtain the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification
5. By seeking European funds for the implementation of the pre-defined action plan
6. By communicating with the public in order to enhance the European cities offer

## Potential partners ...

A lot of European cities could take part of the network considering their history and current projects along rivers. In each cities, collaboration projects could be developed in district or towns of Metropolitan areas.



## LONDON



## BERLIN



## PRAGUE



## BUDAPEST



## CALL FOR PARTNER

We are seriously looking for organisations and institutions interested in the project in order to strengthen the European dimension.

### Who can be associated with the project?

A public or private entity which deals in the fields of tourism or culture in or near a European metropolis.

We are also looking for partners with innovative projects or only the wish to make the tourism offer more attractive along the riverside.



A project coordinated  
by the Val-de-Marne Tourism Board

Since 2013, the Val-de-Marne Tourism Board has been working with its local partners to enhance the banks of the Marne on a European scale.

A Governing Board and a Scientific Committee have been set up. They have met on several occasions to define the project theme and its objectives.

For more information, please contact us or view our website [www.tourisme-valdemarne.com](http://www.tourisme-valdemarne.com)

**Contact** : Camille CHOWAH  
cchowah@tourisme-valdemarne.com  
+33 1 55 09 30 70

