

2nd International Congress on World Civilizations and Historic Routes

Sofia Hotel Balkan, Bulgaria, 15-16 November 2018

Preliminary Programme

Thursday, 15 November

- 08:00 - 09:00 Registration and Welcome Coffee
- 09:00 - 09:45 **Opening Ceremony**
- **Mr. Boyko Borissov**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria
 - **Mr. Zurab Pololikashvili**, Secretary-General, UNWTO
 - **Ms. Nikolina Angelkova**, Minister of Tourism, Bulgaria
 - **Ms. Yordanka Asenova Fandakova**, Mayor of Sofia, Bulgaria
- 09:45 – 10:00 Group photo
- 10:00 - 10:30 Coffee Break
- 10:30 - 12:30 **High Level Meeting: Exploring the role of governments and regional policies in the development of historic routes**
- Governments play an important role in the enhancement of cultural heritage and in particular in the development of historic routes, which often require a strong political will and effective transnational cooperation if spread over different regions. This Panel will bring together High level representatives to discuss ways to fully harness the potential that cultural heritage offer for the development of tourism, while ensuring it contributes to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs’).
- Moderator:** Ms. Sofia Mavratzas, Editor-In-Chief, CNN Greece

Participants of the High-Level Panel:

- **Ms. Nikolina Angelkova**, Minister of Tourism, Bulgaria
- **Ambassador Michael Christides**, Secretary General, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- **Mr. Ali Asghar Munesan**, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, Iran
- **Dr. Thong Khon**, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Cambodia
- **Ms. Salma Elloumi Rekik**, Minister of Tourism and Handicrafts, Tunisia



- **Mr. Khaidr Beshir Malek**, President of the General Authority for Tourism, Libya
- **Mr. George Tziallas**, Secretary General for Tourism Policy and Development, Greece
- **Mr. Omer Arisoy**, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkey
- **Ms. Sayeda Mojgan Mostafavi**, Deputy Minister of Administration, Finance and Tourism Affairs, Afghanistan
- **Mr. Haitham Mattar**, CEO of Ras-Al-Khaimah, Region of UAE

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch in Sofia Hotel Balkan

14:00– 15:00 **Opening of the Tourism Exhibition, located in the Communicative Complex “Serdika”, area Largo: cultural programme and presentation of Bulgarian customs, traditions and crafts** (*The exhibition will be open until 18:00*).

15:00 - 17:00 **Session 1: Creating Signature Cultural Tourism Experiences along the Historic Routes and World Civilizations**

Iconic historic routes have inspired the travels and discovery of new territories of countless generations. Praised through literature, arts, and cinema, they have contributed to reveal the unique history, culture and natural assets of territories along them, becoming powerful promotional tools. This panel session will gather some of the most famous routes of all to see what it is that makes them so special. Panellists will discuss ways to effectively develop a tourism product around them, with a particular focus on the enhancement of the visitor’s experience and safeguarding the identity and authenticity of the destination.

Moderator: Mr. John Bell, Travel Journalist and Writer

Participants:

- **Via Rhodopica and the Development of the Cultural-historical Tourism in Bulgaria, Prof. PhD. Nikolai Ovcharov**, Advisor of the Minister of culture of Republic of Bulgaria, National Historical Institute with Museum at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- **The Phoenicians’ route, Dr. Antonio Barone**, Director of the Pheonician route, Italy
- **St. James’ Route, Ms. M^a Nava Castro Domínguez**, Director of Tourism, Xunta de Galicia, Spain
- **Route 66, Mr. Aaron Mahr**, Superintendent, National Trails Intermountain Region, US National Park Services, U.S.A.

10:00 - 18:00 All-day tourist exhibition in the cultural and communicative complex "Serdica" (Largo area), where Bulgarian municipalities and tourist companies will present their unique cultural and tourist products.

20:00 - 22:00 Gala Dinner in the National History Museum (Upon invitation only)

Friday, 16 November

08:45 – 09:30 Welcome coffee

09:30 – 09:50 **Presentation: “Successful promotion and branding of a historic route”**

Promotion plays a major role in correctly enhancing the value of a historic route. This presentation will introduce key aspects related to the successful branding and promotion of a historic route, shedding the light on the effective use of new technologies and ways to engage with new audiences.

- **Mr. Jens Thraenhart**, Executive Director - Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO)

09:50 – 10:30 **Keynote: “A traveller’s story: I’ve travelled the route”**

Mr. Kai Markus Xiong will be sharing his inspiring trip along the historic Silk Road routes, and reflect on the many adventures, encounters, and challenges he met along the way.

- **Mr. Kai Markus**, Extreme Athlete and Activist. Founder of the “Run My Silk Road” initiative

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 **Session 2: The challenges and opportunities of developing transnational tourism routes: the Silk Road as a case study.**

As part of UNWTO’s Silk Road initiative, Silk Road Member States, regional and local tourism authorities, academic partners and private sector tourism stakeholders have acquired an understanding of the value of transnational collaboration and are willing to share a common development plan for the historic routes. However, how to practically materialize the step from awareness-raising to transnational product development and tourism management? By bringing together representatives from different fields – academia, civil society, tourism consultancy and training, and governance – this session will explore the opportunities and challenges of making historic routes such as the Silk Road a tangible travel reality.

Moderator: Mr. Patrick Fritz, Technical Coordinator, Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Department, UNWTO

Participants:

- **Mr. Barnaby Davies**, Co-founder, Eastguides West
- **Dr. Stella Kostopoulou**, Associate Professor of Regional and Tourism Development at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Department of Economics, and Head of the “European Interdisciplinary Silk Road Tourism Centre”, AUTH
- **Mr. Solomon Passy**, President of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria (TBC)

10:00 - 18:00 All-day farmers’s market: in the cultural and communicative complex "Serdica" (Largo area), where local farmers will present their own production.

13:00 – 13:30 **Closing Session and Conclusions**

13:30 – 15:00 Lunch in Sofia Hotel Balkan

15:00 – 17:00 **Complimentary half-day technical tour of the city centre of Sofia**

20:00 – 22:00 Dinner in a Traditional Bulgarian Restaurant (Restaurant Vodenitzata) (Upon invitation only)