



This project is co-funded by the European Union and the Republic of Turkey

PRESS RELEASE

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THE 'EUROPE TO TURKEY ON FOOT' PROJECT

Creating a Cultural Route between Europe and Turkey

Turkey's Culture Routes Society (CRS), an NGO that was founded at the request of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism to develop, maintain and promote cultural routes in Turkey, is preparing to connect a great European walking network to Turkey!

The **Civil Society Dialogue** program, which is financed by **the European Union** and **the Turkish Republic**, has made a grant to our project '**Europe to Turkey On Foot**'. Turkey's Culture Routes Society will be implementing the project in partnership with the **European Association of Via Francigena (EAVF)** and three Turkish municipalities – Antalya's **Demre Municipality**, Bursa's **Inegöl Municipality** and Isparta's **Eğirdir Municipality**. This one-year project, which is due to start in February 2016, will take preparatory steps to extend the **Via Francigena** network into Turkey through the Balkans. Currently, the Via Francigena extends from England to Italy via Switzerland and France.

The project aims to assess the applicability of the EAVF's operational model, which is premised on collaboration with local municipalities and Regions, to the management of cultural routes in Turkey. It will be implemented by the Culture Routes Society together with three municipalities abutting existing Turkish trails - the Evliya Celebi Way, the St. Paul Trail and the famous Lycian Way. During the project, representatives from each of these municipalities together with three other local representatives will visit Italian cities along the Via Francigena, which are operating alternative tourism under the desired model. One of these Turkish municipalities will then develop a pilot route and Cultural Heritage Management students from Italy will visit to test the pilot section in Turkey. During the project, a reference guide on the development and management of cultural routes according to the European standards will be created and different national and local organizations will be informed and mobilized to participate in several meetings and conferences on the subject. Mr. Hüseyin Eryurt, CRS representative and the project coordinator, says that the project is 'the most important step to establish the first internationally known long distance route in Turkey, which is on the brink of signing the Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA), a protocol that is prepared within the Council of Europe to designate the standards for European Cultural Routes.' The Italian project coordinator Silvia Lecci said 'I am looking forward to introducing you to European good practices and working together to extend the route through the Balkans and Turkey.'

The '**Europe to Turkey on Foot**' project is supported under the Civil Society Dialogue Programme co-financed by the Republic of Turkey and the European Union. The Civil Society Dialogue is a



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programme that brings together civil society organisations from Turkey and the EU to exchange knowledge and experience, and to build a sustained conversation around common themes. The Ministry for European Union Affairs is the responsible institution for the technical implementation of the programme, while the Central Finance and Contracts Unit is the Contracting Authority of the Programme.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About the Civil Society Dialogue Programme:

Civil Society Dialogue Programme has been developed as a platform enabling civil society organizations from Turkey and the European Union member states to familiarize with each other's communities, to exchange information and to establish a permanent dialogue by coming together around a common subject.

Civil Society Dialogue Programme is co-funded by Republic of Turkey and the European Union within the scope of the European Union Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and is carried out by the Ministry for EU Affairs. The contracting authority is the Central Finance and Contracts Unit. The Programme has been carried out with different themes and civil society organizations since 2008.

About the Civil Society Dialogue Programme - 4th Phase: A total of 80 projects are implemented under the Programme involving CSOs from 18 provinces of Turkey and 8 countries in Europe. Financial support of approximately 11 million Euros is provided for the projects developed in areas such as Energy, Environment, Justice, Freedom and Security, Consumer and Health Protection, Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments, Right of Establishment and Freedom to Provide Services, Enterprise and Industrial Policy, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Education.

For further information on the Civil Society Dialogue Programme, please call +90 312 219 82 55 and follow www.civilsocietydialogue.org.

Project Owner: Turkey's Culture Routes Society (CRS)

The Culture Routes Society (CRS) was established to preserve the existing culture routes, to promote the new ones and to form the best practice standards of these routes in 2012. As stated in the society's constitution 'a culture route is a sustainable route or a combination of routes that involves a historical, cultural or natural theme'.

www.cultureroutesinturkey.com

www.facebook.com/CultureRoutesSociety

Project Partner: The European Association of Via Francigena

The European Association of Via Francigena is the managing body of the Via Francigena, which is a long distance cross border cultural route accredited by the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR) and the



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Council of Europe. The route starts in Canterbury in England and stretches to Brindisi in Italy. The European Association of Via Francigena has decided to extend their route through the Balkans then Turkey to the Middle East.

www.viefrancigene.org

www.facebook.com/viafrancigena

The Associate Organizations: İnegöl Municipality (Bursa-Evliya Çelebi Way), Eğirdir Municipality (Eğirdir-St Paul Trail), Demre Municipality (Antalya-the Lycian Way)



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