

CULTURAL ROUTES BULGARIA 2026



11–12 June 2026, Boris Hristov House of Culture, Plovdiv



The event is held under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria.

DAY ONE, 11 June 2026

09:30 – 10:00 | Participant registration with a welcome coffee

10:00 – 10:30 | Official Opening

- Welcome Address by the Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality
- Welcome Address by the Ministry of Tourism
- Welcome Address by the Ministry of Culture
- Welcome Address by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- Welcome Address by the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria
- Welcome Address by the Centre of Excellence “Heritage BG”

10:30 – 11:15 | Plenary Lecture

The Council of Europe Cultural Routes as a Tool for Sustainable Development and Cultural Diplomacy, Rui Gomes, Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Luxembourg and Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

11:15 – 13:00 | Panel Session I

Bulgaria’s Participation in the Certified Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, Moderator: Dr. Elka Zlateva, Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

- The Roman Emperors and the Danube Wine Route, Prof. Nikolay Nenov, Regional Museum of History - Rousse
- Architectural Heritage of Totalitarian Regimes, ATRIUM, Yasho Minkov, Deputy Mayor of Dimitrovgrad Municipality
- European Cultural Route of Cyril and Methodius, Dr. Elka Zlateva, CMRC - BAS, National Route Coordinator for Bulgaria
- The Iron Age in the Danube Region, Prof. Nikolay Nenov, Director of the Regional Museum of History – Rousse
- European Route of Women Writers, Assoc. Prof. Nadezhda Stoyanova, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
- European Route of Historic Pharmacies and Medicinal Gardens, Prof. Svetlana Nikolova, Director of the Botanical Garden – BAS
- European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, Iva Valcheva, Mayor of Hisarya Municipality
ITER VITIS
- The Route of the Vine and Wine, Prof. Mariela Modeva, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism
Focus: Partnerships and Best Practices, Synergy between Institutions, Academia, Cultural Organisations and Business.

13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:30 | Panel Session II

Natural Heritage and Cultural Memory, Moderator: Prof. DSc Bistra Dimitrova, National Sports Academy “Vassil Levski”

- Provadia – Solnitsata: Europe’s Oldest Salt-Producing and Urban Centre, Nikolay Hristov, Director of the Historical Museum – Provadia
 - Archaeological and Historical Layers of Thermal Towns, Simone Zagrodnik, Executive Director of the European Route of Historic Thermal Towns, Germany
 - The Mineral Springs of Sofia and Their Potential for the Development of Niche Tourism, Prof. DSc Bistra Dimitrova, NSA, Researcher at the Centre of Excellence “Heritage BG”
 - Aquae Calidae – A Historic Site and a Modern Cultural, Tourism and Educational Centre, Diana Savateva, Deputy Mayor of Burgas Municipality
 - Kyustendil: The Thermal Town Between Past and Present, Ognyan Atanasov, Mayor of Kyustendil Municipality
 - The White Gold of Pomorie, Elena Yordanova, Chief Curator, Salt Museum – Pomorie
 - Cultural Heritage, Nature and Local Entrepreneurship, Yuliana Decheva, Programme Director of the America for Bulgaria Foundation
- Focus: Natural Heritage and Cultural Tourism, Economic and Regional Impacts

16:00 – 18:00 | Panoramic Tour of the Old Town with Visits to the Bishop’s Basilica of Philippopolis and the Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis

19:00 – 20:00 | Opening of the Exhibition “Cultural Routes - Bulgaria 2026” at the Boris Hristov House of Culture, Followed by a Wine Reception and a Musical Performance by Students of the Dobrin Petkov National School of Music and Dance Arts: Donika Miteva (violin), Beloslava Petrova (violin) and Nataliya Grozeva (piano), from the chamber music class of Detelina Marinkeva

DAY TWO, 12 June 2026

9:00 – 9:30 | Plenary Lecture

Living Heritage as a Resource for the Development of Cultural Routes: The Role of UNESCO, Dr. Irena Todorova, Executive Director of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the Auspices of UNESCO

9:30 – 11:00 | Panel Session III

Cultural Routes of European Memory: Literacy, Spirituality and Living Traditions, Moderator: Prof. Slavia Barlieva, Cyrillo-Methodian Research Centre at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

- Cultural Routes as a New Instrument for Cultural Diplomacy, H.E. Margarita Ganeva, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Poland, and H.E. Snezhana Yoveva, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to Slovakia
- The Grandeur and Splendour of the Medieval Capital: The Literary Heritage of Preslav, Dr. Alexander Gorchev, Director of the Veliki Preslav Archaeological Museum
- The Stone Passport of Bulgaria, Dr. Marina Perseng, Art Historian, Cultural and Historical Complex “Courtyard of the Cyrillic Alphabet” – Pliska
- European Route of Women Writers, Dr. Andrea Richter, President of the Route, Slovenia

- 50 Years of the National Museum of Literature: An Island on the European Cultural Map, Katya Zografova, Chief Curator at the Nikola Vaptsarov House Museum
- The European Fairy Tale Route, Prof. Marina D'Amato, President of the Route, Italy
- From Literary Classic to Certified Route: Preparing the European Route Dedicated to Goethe's Works, Daniela Hauf, Initiative Coordinator, Germany
- The Bulgarian Camino: A Pilgrimage Route to the Relics of St John the Baptist, Lyubomir Mechev, Executive Director of the Association of the Same Name
- The Route of St Francis as a Space for Spiritual and Cultural Experience, Vitor Marques, Member of the Board of the Route Association

11:00 – 11:30 | Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00 | Panel Session IV

Urban Environment, Cultural Spaces and Industrial Heritage, Moderator: Amelia Gesheva, Expert in the Fields of Culture and Cultural Heritage

- The Living Cultural Heritage of the “City Beneath the Hills”, Plamen Panov, Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality
- The Museum Exhibition “Jewish Street – Reconstruction”, Yavor Koynakov, Acting Director of the State Cultural Institute under the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria
- Jewish Heritage as Cultural Memory: Spaces, Narratives, Identities, Paul Sanchez Keely, Representative of the European Route of Jewish Heritage, Spain
- Traditional Routes of Seasonal Livestock Migration, Simona Messina, Route Coordinator, Italy
- Troyan Pottery, Nina Dimitrova, Curator, Museum of Folk Arts and Crafts – Troyan
- Architectural and Park Complex “The Palace” – Balchik, Petya Ilieva, Landscape Architect, University Botanical Garden – Balchik
- Industry and Memory: Underground Mining Museum in Pernik, Silvia Noteva, Director of the Regional Museum of History – Pernik
- Industry in Gabrovo: Crafts, Factories, People, Prof. Svetla Dimitrova, Director of the Regional Ethnographic Open-Air Museum Etar – Gabrovo
- The Danube Region as a Cross-Border Cultural Space, Milen Doulev, Mayor of Belene Municipality and Chair of the Board of the Association of Danube River Municipalities “Danube”

13:00 – 13:30 | Closing Plenary Session

- Summary of the Panel Discussions and Recommendations for Enhancing the Visibility of Bulgaria's Natural and Cultural Heritage through the Cultural Routes Programme of the Council of Europe: Institutional Support and Funding for Cultural Routes
- Closing Remarks and Conclusion of the Forum

14:00 – 21:00 | Cultural Programme in Hisarya