

## 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress on World Civilizations and Historic Routes

Sofia Hotel Balkan, Bulgaria, 15-16 November 2018

### Preliminary Programme

Master of Ceremony: TBD

#### Wednesday, 14 November

- 08:30 – 19:00 Hotel check-in and badge collection at the Sofia Hotel Balkan  
19:00 - 22:00 Opening dinner (Upon invitation only)

#### Thursday, 15 November

- 08:00 - 09:00 Registration and Welcome Coffee  
09:00 - 09:15 Group photo for the Heads of delegation  
09:15 - 10:30 **Opening Ceremony**  
09:15 - 11:30 **High Level Meeting: Transnational cooperation along historic routes: Leveraging landmark initiatives and new economic perspectives**
- Landmark initiatives and major collaboration frameworks, such as the EU-China Tourism year or the European Year of Cultural Heritage, play a key role in facilitating transnational cooperation among countries, and thus can also be leveraged to promote sustainable tourism development along associated historic routes. This Panel will bring together Ministers and high level authorities to debate how governments and institutions can use the momentum and political will of such initiatives to enhance the development and promotion of historic routes, while ensuring inclusive development in the regions along them.
- 12:00 - 12:30 Press Conference (Upon invitation only)  
13:00 - 15:00 Lunch  
15:00 - 17:00 **Session 1: Creating signature tourism experiences along historic routes**

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. Panelists will discuss ways to fully harness rich cultural heritage through the design of innovative and unique tourism experiences. Topics include the effective development, management and promotion of a historic route, best practices in the enhancement of the existing cultural heritage, as well as the importance of public-private partnerships.

20:00 - 22:00 Gala Dinner (Upon invitation only)

### Friday, 16 November

08:45 – 09:30 Welcome coffee

09:30 – 09:50 **Presentation: “Assessing the viability and sustainability of a cultural route”**

This keynote session will address ways to assess and maximize the economic and social impacts of a culture route on the territory and local communities, providing useful guidance for the development of adequate public policies.

09:50 – 10:30 **Keynote: “A traveller’s perspective: story-telling along the historic routes”**

A media representative or influential blogger will be sharing his or her own exciting travel experience along an iconic historic route, while shedding the light on ways to reaching new audiences through the use of new marketing tools and innovative branding.

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 **Session 3: UNWTO’s Silk Road initiative: from awareness-raising to product development and stakeholder engagement**

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 for the historic routes. However, how to practically materialize the step from awareness-raising to transnational product development? By drawing on different perspectives ranging from tour operators to travel guides, this session will explore different approaches focused on making the Silk Road a tangible travel reality.

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

13:30 – 15:00 Lunch

15:00 – 17:00 Complimentary half-day technical tour of the city centre of Sofia (Prior registration required)

20:00 – 22:00 Dinner (Upon invitation only)

**Saturday, 17 November**

All-day technical tour with lunch (Prior registration required)