



# **THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF VIE FRANCIGENE**

Articles of Association

## **THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF VIE FRANCIGENE**

### **SIGERIC’S ROUTE: “MAJOR CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE”**

The Italian and other European public authorities situated on Archbishop Sigeric’s route along the Via Francigena, which has been designated by the Council of Europe as a “Major Cultural Route”, and on the other Francigena routes, have set up an association which aims to enhance these ancient routes, involve new entities and make new investments in the promotion of cultural activities and tourism in the relevant areas.

The purpose of the Association is to provide a common basis for the different levels of local government, thus providing the opportunity for collaboration, through the exchange of ideas and experiences, between local and regional representatives.

A collaboration with similar Italian and European associations having the same purpose is also proposed.

#### **Article 1 – Name, registered office and duration**

The Association is called the “**Associazione Europea delle Vie Francigene** ” (European Association of the Vie Francigene).

The Archbishop Sigeric route, designated a “Major Cultural Route” by the Council of Europe, is the main route which may incorporate Italian and other European routes to Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago.

The registered office is at 16, Piazza Duomo (Casa Cremonini), Fidenza (Parma), Italy. The Association can establish subsidiaries, branch offices and agencies.

The duration of the Association will be until 31/12/2050.

#### **Article 2 – The territory**

The main route is that of Archbishop Sigeric, designated by the Council of Europe as a “**Major Cultural Route**”. It covers five European countries, i.e. Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy and the Vatican City. However, it will be possible to incorporate other routes which cover an extensive geographical area and lead from Europe to Rome, southern Italy, and Jerusalem, and which are historically verifiable and mapped in accordance with the technical standards applied to the main route. The scientific reasons for, and technical mapping of, these other routes must be accepted and approved by the Meeting of Association Members, which can avail itself of the opinion of the International Scientific Committee appointed by the Meeting.

#### **Article 3 – Purpose**

The Association is non-profit-making. Its purpose is to:

- promote fruitful relationships with the Council of Europe and with European Community authorities;
- confirm close collaboration with the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg;
- promote the communication and exchange of good practices with other Italian and European cultural routes with regard to the enhancement of the route;
- carry out initiatives aimed at raising awareness of, protecting, promoting, enhancing and co-ordinating the Via Francigena in Europe;
- unite and co-ordinate all the European public authorities situated on the route of the Via Francigena as described by Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury (GB), and which was designated by the Council of Europe as a “Cultural Route” in 1994 and as a “Major Cultural Route” in 2004;
- unite and co-ordinate public authorities legitimately involved in the development, enhancement and promotion of the Via Francigena routes;

- promote the knowledge and enhancement of religious and cultural locations and routes for pilgrims;
- include the other “roads” or alternative routes in the Association;
- assist and safeguard pilgrim travel by supporting and promoting the appropriate infrastructures and services set up by the relevant authorities and ensuring the best use of the routes while adhering to an ethos of sustainable tourism;
- organise and promote initiatives together with those involved in the project for the enhancement of the Santiago de Compostela Way and other cultural routes in Europe;
- promote and organise initiatives addressed at young people with the aim of increasing their knowledge of their national roots and of establishing a shared European identity;
- co-ordinate promotional activities in the areas by enhancing their cultural and tourism potential and by encouraging the sale of local products;

The Association can carry out any activities that are connected with, or similar to, those described above. It can also proceed with and finalise all commercial and financial operations and those concerning moveable and immovable property, which are considered necessary or useful for the achievement of the purpose.

The Association can join other associations and bodies which carry out activities within the scope of its purpose.

#### **Article 4 – Members**

The Association is open to Italian Municipalities, Provinces, Regions and Mountain Communities and to all those public bodies that have been set up in conformance with the laws of their own countries and on the basis of the principles established by the European Union, within the Territory referred to in Art. 2.

The following are the membership categories:

- **founding members:** all those who joined the Association before 30 April 2006;
- **ordinary members:** all those who joined after 30 April 2006;
- **supporting members:** those who are not situated on the Sigeric route or on the other routes authorised by the Meeting, but who wish to participate in the Association’s projects.

The Meeting can also appoint **honorary and meritorious members** from the public and private sectors: meritorious and honorary members are those whose personality, participation in the Association, financial contribution or activities on behalf of the Association support and enhance the activities of the same.

#### **Article 5 – Friends of the Via Francigena**

*Amici delle Vie Francigene* (Friends of the Via Francigena) are the public and private non-profit-making and non-commercial associations which do not make any financial contribution, but which carry out activities supporting the overall project for the enhancement of the Francigena Routes and have signed a protocol of understanding with the Association.

#### **Article 6 – Withdrawal and exclusion**

**Withdrawal.** In addition to the circumstances provided for by law, members can withdraw from the Association if they no longer agree with its purpose. Advice of withdrawal must reach the Office of the Chairperson by 31 October of the solar year prior to the year of withdrawal.

**Exclusion.** Exclusion shall be resolved upon by the Meeting of Association Members with regard to members who:

- do not comply with the provisions of these Articles, the Association regulations, or the resolutions legally adopted by the Association bodies;
- have not paid the entire membership fee for two years running after receiving a written request from the Chairperson to pay the membership fees within 60 days from the date of the request;

- carry out activities in competition with or against the interests of the Association.

The member will be notified of the exclusion by registered letter with advice of receipt. Appeal against exclusion shall be valid only if it is received by the Office of the Chairperson within 15 days from receipt of the notification. The presentation of an appeal does not entail the suspension of the exclusion. The granting of an appeal does not give the right to the payment of damages.

The withdrawal or exclusion of a member does not give the right to the reimbursement of the membership fees paid.

### **Article 7 – Association bodies**

The Association bodies are:

- **the Meeting of Association members**
- **the Office of the Chairperson**
- **the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

All members of the Association bodies remain in office for three years from the date of their appointment and they can be re-elected.

### **Article 8 – Meeting of Association Members**

The Meeting of Association Members is composed of the legal representatives of the founding and ordinary members or persons deputised by them.

Supporting, honorary and meritorious members are permanent guests at the Meeting, but do not have the right to vote.

The Meeting of Association Members shall be convened in writing and sent by mail, e-mail or fax at least 10 days before the Meeting, indicating the place, date and time of the first and second call, and the items on the agenda.

Topics covered by the Meeting will be:

- the aims and general policies of the Association;
- projects and promotional campaigns;
- the closing statement and the budget statement;
- the appointment and dismissal of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and the Office of the Chairperson;
- determining reimbursement of expenses for the members of the Office of the Chairperson;
- setting the amount of membership fees;
- the exclusion of members;
- amendments to the Articles of Association;
- on the proposal of the Office of the Chairperson, the appointment of the members of the auditing body and their fee;
- if it considers it necessary, the appointment of an International Scientific Committee composed of two well-known and respected academics from each country crossed by the Via Francigena;
- the admission, appointment and resignation of members on the basis of the provisions of Art. 4, above.

The Meeting of Association Members is convened at least once a year within four months from the end of the operational year. The Meeting is convened by the Office of the Chairperson or when requested in writing by at least one-fifth of the members of the Meeting, indicating the subjects to be discussed. In the latter case, the Meeting shall be held within thirty days from the date of the request.

The Meeting is chaired by the Chairperson of the Association or, in his/her absence, by the Vice Chairperson.

The Minutes of the Meetings are taken by the general secretary in office or, in his/her absence and for that Meeting only, by a person designated by the Chairperson from those present.

The Meeting is validly constituted:

in first call, with the presence of half the members plus one with the right to vote;

in second call, with any number of members present.

The resolutions made by the Meeting are only valid if passed in first and second call with the absolute majority of the votes of those present.

Resolutions to amend the Articles of Association or to dissolve the Association are passed in first and second call by the votes of at least two-thirds of the members present.

### **Article 9 – Office of the Chairperson**

The Office of the Chairperson is composed of:

- Chairperson;
- Vice Chairperson;
- legal representative or a deputy of a Province designated by the founding members of the Association;
- legal representative or a deputy of a Province designated by the ordinary members of the association;
- legal representative or a deputy of a Region designated by the members of the association;
- legal representative or a deputy from a similar sector as that of the Italian Provinces for each member country;
- a representative from a similar institutional sector as that of the Italian Regions for each member country;
- Mayor or deputy of the cities of Rome and Canterbury;
- a representative of the Vatican City;
- legal representatives or their deputies of seven founding-member Municipalities, one for each Region of the Sigeric route in Italy;
- two representatives of each country elected from the ordinary members by the Meeting of Association Members.
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The Meeting of the Office of the Chairperson is convened by the Chairperson or on the request of at least one-third of its members. In the latter case, the Meeting is convened by the Chairperson within 15 days from the request.

The Meeting is convened by registered letter, and/or fax and/or e-mail at least 7 days before the meeting, indicating the items on the Agenda.

The Meeting of the Office of the Chairperson is validly convened:

in first call, when half the members plus one are present;

in second call, with any number of members present.

Resolutions are passed with the absolute majority of the votes of those present. If there are an equal number of votes, the Chairperson has the casting vote.

The Office of the Chairperson is vested with the widest powers for the management of the Association. If any members of the Office are lacking, they shall be substituted at the first useful Meeting of Association Members.

The Chairperson is the legal representative with power of signature.

### **Article 10 – Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are elected by the majority vote of the Meeting of Association Members.

The Chairperson represents the Association and is responsible for ensuring that its aims are met and that the Articles of Association are adhered to. He/she convenes and presides over the Meeting of the Association Members and of the Office of the Chairperson. He/she also implements the

managerial aims of the Meeting of Association Members and the Office of the Chairperson, also through the collaboration of deputies. The Vice Chairperson assists the Chairperson and stands in for the latter if he/she is absent or incapacitated.

### **Article 11 – General Secretary and Treasurer**

The general secretary and the treasurer are appointed by the Chairperson after consulting with the Office of the Chairperson. Their fee is decided by the Chairperson.

The general secretary works with the Chairperson and the Office of the Chairperson on the coordination, development and promotion of Association projects, assists the Association bodies and records their decisions.

He/she works with the treasurer on the preparation of the annual report on the activities of the Association.

The treasurer has the role of accountant. On the information received from the Office of the Chairperson, he/she prepares the annual budget statement and the closing statement with the accompanying reports, deposits the sums received by the Association and pays the expenses in accordance with the instructions of the Association bodies.

The general secretary and the treasurer are reimbursed for the expenses sustained in the fulfilment of their duties.

Deposits and payments are made through a current account or bank deposit at one or more banks.

The Chairperson and the secretary can receive cash advances to cover expenses incurred during the performance of their respective duties.

### **Article 12 – Financing and Assets**

The assets of the Association consist of moveable and immovable property owned by the Association itself.

The income of the Association comprises:

- annual fees paid by members;
- any extraordinary fees decided upon by the Meeting of Association Members with regard to special initiatives requiring sums in addition to the ordinary budget;
- financial contributions from the State, the Regions, the EU and other public or private bodies or persons (whether associations or not);
- donations, subsidies or legacies from third parties or associates
- any other income that will increase the assets of the Association.

The amount of the annual membership fee to be paid by the founding and ordinary members is proposed by the Office of the Chairperson and decided upon by the Meeting of Association Members. The fees shall be paid by 30 April of the relevant year.

However, the amount of the annual membership fee shall vary by type of body and, with regard to the Italian Municipalities and similar bodies in the other territories, it shall be commensurate with the number of inhabitants.

The Meeting of Association Members decides on the amount of the one-off fee to be paid by supporting members when they join the Association.

The membership fee due by ordinary members who join from 1 January 2007 shall be doubled for the first two years as a partial contribution to the value of the financial assets acquired in the meantime by the Association.

### **Article 13 – Association year**

The Association year is a solar year.

The treasurer prepares a closing statement accompanied by a report on the activities carried out by the Association bodies during the reference year.

The closing statement is approved by the Meeting of Association Members within 4 months from the end of the operational year; within this same period, the Meeting also approves the budget for the current year.

**Article 14 – Body of Auditors**

The Body of Auditors is composed of one to three members appointed by the Meeting of Association Members.

If it is a collective body, it appoints its own chairperson. It monitors the administration of the Association, examines the budget and the closing statement and prepares the accompanying reports; if called upon, it takes part in the Meeting of the Office of the Chairperson and the Meeting of Association Members. It has the right to the reimbursement of the expenses incurred during the fulfilment of its duties.

**Article 15 – Dissolution**

If the Association is to be dissolved, the Meeting of Association Members shall deliberate on the transfer of its assets for public use.

**Article 16 – General**

Any dispute arising from or connected with these Articles and the relationship between the members of the Association shall be governed by Italian law and shall come under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Court of Parma.

Any matter not dealt with in these Articles of Association shall be governed by the applicable laws in force.