

VARIATIONS OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

1. Aim of the document

To define the method of analysis and identification of the official variations of the Via Francigena hiking route.

2. The Via Francigena hiking route

The Via Francigena itinerary is composed of four national sections:

1. English section: North Downs Way
2. French section: GR 145 (and the historic route)
3. Swiss section: Route 70
4. Italian section: a marked route mapped and validated by competent authorities of each area and by the EAVF

The aforementioned “primary” route is recognised by the European Association of the Vie Francigene (EAVF) and is present in the route of the Via Francigena, certified by the European Council. Any proposal to modify the route must be presented and justified to the EAVF, using the Via Francigena *réseau porteur*, following the methods described in this document.

3. Variation and necessary requisite typologies

Variations of the primary route, in other words, route alternatives that depart from and then re-join or merge with the primary route and that are historically relevant to the vie Romee can be accepted by the EAVF.

4. Evaluation criteria

While evaluation modification proposals the needs of the walkers/pilgrims are first and foremost taken into account, as well as the fundamental security and gratification requisites of the route, the presence of water sources and places of rest and accommodation along the route.

The following criteria are therefore considered:

1. Improvement of security;
2. Shortening of the route;
3. “Philological” improvement (for example, passing by a “submansio” of Sigeric, ancient dwellings or places of worship);
4. Higher degree of gratification (for example, the distance of traffic, passage through areas of notable landscapes or of cultural interest);
5. Improvement of hospitality (passing by hostels, water fountains, rest stops);

5. Procedure for the presentation of a request for Variation approval

The variation request should be sent to the EAVF (the operative headquarters of Piacenza, segreteria@viefrancigene.org)

The request must be sent by a public administration responsible for the tract affected by the variation, and must be approved by the regions and public administrations affected by the variation, and that are competent within the field.

The request must include the following information:

- personal details of the entity proposing the variation and all the public and private entities involved;
- description of the motivation behind the request;
- declaration of compliance to the requisites listed in the “evaluation criteria”;
- declaration of responsibility, at one’s own expense, for moving or completing the present signage of the route, taking care to exclusively utilise the official signage using the methods described in the *Guidance on European common path and accommodation standards on the Via Francigena* and the *Abacus of the signage along the Via Francigena in Italy*;
- declaration of responsibility for the overseeing of the verification of ownership of premises affected and – in the case of private property – of stipulating an agreement with the proprietor for the passage of people on foot and by bike, undertaking the pertinent duties in terms of maintenance and civil responsibility;
- declaration of the potential responsibility of managing the dispossession of lands appertaining to private property, in the event that the latter are unwilling to stipulate an agreement;
- a detailed cartography in the scale of at least 1:10,000.

Once received the information, the EAVF has the discretion to organise the evaluation and inspection of the application by a sector expert (in accordance with the applicant), whom will prepare a *dossier* evaluating the applications conformity to the evaluation criteria of point 4.

All of the information submitted will therefore be presented to the General Assembly of the EAVF, which will evaluate the information and deliberate upon the acknowledgement of the variation.

6. Verification of the state of maintenance and conservation

The proposing entity recognises the discretion of the EAVF to verify the state of conservation of the modified route in accordance with the standards defined in the *Guidance on European common path and accommodation standards on the Via Francigena*, thus reserving the right to revoke the certification of the variation in the event of repeated non-compliance.