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INTRODUCTION

Massimo Tedeschi – President of the European Associations of the Via Francigena, Fidenza (Emilia-Romagna, Italy).

Reflections on the Via Francigena

Every year tens of thousands of people from around the world come to walk along the Via Francigena. The Via, stretching from Canterbury to Rome, attracts many for its landscapes, *borghi* (Italian hamlets) and cathedrals as well as the history, cuisine and culture of important European countries. This flux of pilgrims and walkers reawakens pride in the host communities promoting a new economy of goods and services along with the construction of new infrastructure. All contribute to the development of these territories while boosting private initiatives and creating new work opportunities.

The Via Francigena touches territories so-called “minor” but it is not a local nor regional itinerary, not even national; it is a European itinerary. Therefore the project has a broad horizon, which represents its greatest strength and makes it appealing for people from Europe and all over the world. This is clearly demonstrated by the increasing number of visits to our official site, www.viefrancigene.org.

The Via Francigena family is all-inclusive and peaceful. These characteristics constitute our very essence and strength, and can act as an example for all. In the 86 reporting pages that make up these 74 interventions from the conference, there is a photograph that illustrates the beautiful experience of our European Association. An experience that consists in the proposal of ideas and important projects, in the establishment of solid links between people and communities. This sense of union and mutual respect will last and continue to grow in time.

In the year 2017, in addition to the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the “Program of the Cultural Routes of Council of Europe,” launched by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Santiago de Compostela in 1987, two years before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Italy will have the honor of hosting the European Cultural Itineraries’ *Advisory Forum* in the city of Lucca. The conference is a time to meet and exchange ideas and proposals among all those who, in public institutions, associations and on the business world, are involved with the great project of the European Cultural Routes.

This the Europe we love: a Europe revolving around the Via Francigena and people.

THE HISTORY OF THE *VIA FRANCIGENA*. THE ROUTE OF FAITH

Archbishop Carlo Mazza - Bishop of Fidenza (Parma, Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A GREAT NETWORK AND MEETING POINT BETWEEN ITINERARIES
- THE CREATOR OF TODAY'S EUROPEAN MAN
- A FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNAL FAITH

The Via Francigena has made its history and built its fame from the testimonies of innumerable pilgrims who, sweating, suffering and hoping, have wished to reach the city "caput mundi" (Head of the World- which would have been Rome for Latins). Here, they worship the sacred memorials of the Apostles Peter and Paul by experiencing the visit "*Ad limina apostolorum*" (to go to the bases of the apostles' tombs) and to see the "*mirabilia*" (marvels) testifying to the remains of a great empire. Firstly, in terms of the Via Francigena's origins, we have no hard, scientific evidence but only hypotheses that seem to suggest that it existed in the mists of the late Roman times. Starting from the eighth century to the present day, the Via has been subjected to go in multiple directions, deviations and multiple interruptions for natural, political, economic, cultural reasons and last but not least, for reasons of religious order and decretals ecclesiastical. The Via Francigena realized its highest point of celebrity and fruition in the temporal tract of the X-XII centuries. This came in the Early Middle Ages, at the same time as the flowering of the pilgrimage phenomenon, which was marked by penance, confession of faith, piety and the search for Martyrs' signs. Nevertheless, **the specific function of the Via Francigena is not clear**. This is partly due to its weak identity, which was not defined by an omniscient, charismatic goal nor by homogenous religious content to a specific and identifying goal. Secondly, the entire path must be interpreted in light of what it is, a converging network of roads forming an "*unum*" (one) that have a common end. In fact, the Via Francigena will serve as a "road" for other destinations (Santiago, Rome, Holy Land, etc.), thus becoming a meeting point between the three famous medieval "*peregrinationes maiores*" (ancestral pilgrimages). Indeed, it is well to consider that on the Via Francigena a new man is formed, to later be defined as the "**European man.**" In the fruitful crucible of encounters, knowledge and experiences, a "**cosmopolitan**" man gradually came to life. He was capable of bringing together cultural and religious ties in an unprecedented anthropological unity, characterized by the dynamics of cross-inculturation between faith, cultures, symbologies and languages. **Here, in reality, a Europe of freedom, solidarity, and culture of acceptance was born.** It is a Europe "*in fieri*" (in progress), ever striving for the future. The unifying and widely shared theme of those traveling on the Via Francigena is manifested by the undisputed fact of faith that accumulates "*in solidum*" (in solidarity) between the individuals in the moving society under the thrust of a dreamy Palingenese, perceived as the necessary promise for a purified and free world. Pilgrimages in the late medieval age expressed and testified with authenticity to the "status" of the established Christianity as a cohesive society in which transcendent values are dominant and totalizing, but in a non-constricting form that reveals deep and sedimentary convictions. In conclusion, the Via Francigena preserves a natural trace of popular religiosity, of living faith. From this perspective, it promotes and sustains *peregrinations* in relation to self-consciousness and destiny, in harmony with the "universe" of beliefs of each time period as common heritage of populations and individuals. For these

reasons, it is wise to evaluate the “Christian” value of the Via Francigena with a "historical" spirit by inserting it into the context of a strong and compact Christianity, entirely in conformity with its indole and nature.

SHARING PILGRIMAGE AS A WAY OF LIFE

Fausto Taiten Guareschi - Honorary President of the Italian Institute Zen Soto Shobozan Fudenji - Salsomaggiore Terme (Parma, Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- THE SENSATION FELT BY THE PILGRIM IN FRONT OF THE FIDENZA DOME
- PILGRIMAGE AS A METAPHOR FOR LIFE
- PILGRIMAGES AFFIRM THE UNITY OF EUROPE

Who would have thought? Fifteen years ago the significance of this route was reborn in the same place that I was born, but we recognized its importance too late. Well, I was wondering to myself, did the staff go to the right or left? Because in classical representations you always see it held to the left while the right hand sometimes indicates the goal. In today's photographs, almost everyone holds it right. Is there a reason for a path without origin, a path without a goal, is it even possible? Probably yes and probably not. Origin, truth, goal, life are together and are indissociable. But I strongly identify with Fidenza, and its medieval villages and so I can bring my brief testimony to the discoveries I made on the churchyard of this cathedral. Today we no longer see children playing in the churchyard in which we played. From the stylistic stone lions, we used to fall from the stylistic stone lions in front of the church every time we climbed up to pet their muzzles. In this sense you could say we grew up in front of these shocking images. And here I briefly remind myself of the feeling that the pilgrim could have had while in front of that façade: a lurking, aesthetic shock. But where did the pilgrim look, where did they feel this intense thrill? Well, I can imagine it's like where someone was born. Where you were born, where a conversion was born, where there was an apostolate, a mission, where you were dead. At least one of these four points touch all of us and could make anyone of us feel like a pilgrim. **Man on the go.** From the provisional goals. And it's nice to hear Dante address Palmieri and Romei, two pilgrims on the road, on the topic of "*delle genti che vanno al servizio dell'Altissimo*" (people who go to serve the Lord). Goethe had already prophesied of Europe, "**It is on the paths of pilgrimages that we will make Europe.**" Today, more than ever, to rediscover Goethe's Europe, one must look to the Indian sub-continent. The unity of this sub-continent is derived from shared pilgrimages. So let's try to keep going together without stopping.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA, A PASSION THAT GENERATES NEW PROSPECTS

Paolo Piacentini - Cabinet Minister for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A CORNERSTONE OF THE NATIONAL ATLAS OF WALKS

- AN ADDED VALUE FOR THE TERRITORIES OF A “*DIFFUSED*” ITALY
- A PROSPECTIVE OF A BETTER FUTURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

In this **2016, year of the walks**, I would like to begin by thanking all the people who work with the AEVF with such passion and expertise, and hope that they will continue to work so with ever greater vigor. Since the Ministry has honored me with the task of taking care of the walks, as a walker, I found myself in front of a world that I did not know very well, and where I discovered an Italy made of passionate people, in the form of institutions and associations that work with the walks. It is enough to only talk about the ways to discover an incredible passion for a sector that fascinates you that then, takes you inside, in an inner dimension. The year of the walks was launched under a ministerial directive that envisaged a series of actions with the main aim being to build an atlas of the Italian paths. **The Via Francigena is certainly the cornerstone of the atlas** that will also be promoted through a national walkway portal. We are working to ensure that the paths can become an added value for the territories through the promotion of spiritual and religious experiences as tourism. The final aim is to make this widespread and wonderful Italy, made of unique cultural and historical landscapes in the world, to be enjoyed and moreover, to give young people, who are returning to live in the inner areas crossed by these paths, a better future - even with regards to occupational opportunities. Among the numerous prospectives, an important settlement, which took place this morning at Fidenza, of the coordination group for the recognition of the Via **Francigena as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as the Santiago Way**, is very important. Attention to the road segment is strong, despite being a niche sector, although all the data speak towards a growing industry. We shall continue to build our team.

DISCOVERY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN CANTERBURY

William Pettit - Canterbury City, Head of International Relations (1981-2011), Canterbury

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A SUCCESSFUL REVIVAL FROM A WONDERFULLY CASUAL MEETING
- A UNIFYING THREAD BETWEEN CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES
- AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE CULTURAL HERITAGE

I want us to go back in time to the year 1993 when a wonderfully casual encounter happened. I was the Canterbury City Council Tourism Manager during a period when it was not given much priority. Greater emphasis was placed on industrial investments, which were considered the main vehicle for economic development. There were only six months left until the opening of the Channel Tunnel and many people were convinced that this very important work could mean the end of local tourism as we had always known it. So much of my time was spent on developing preliminary ideas for economic development. I worked with our regional partners in Kent and our French partners on the other side of the Channel within the framework of the European community collaboration programs. During those years, we worked very well with the Interreg project, but it was not able to make a significant breakthrough. After those few engaging projects, **in late 1993, good news arrived** in the form of a message from Massimo Tedeschi,

Mayor of Fidenza. I made a phone call in my best Italian and **was surprised to learn what you Italians had discovered about Sigeric, 27th Archbishop of Canterbury.** In 990 AD he traveled to Rome and then returned to Canterbury, leaving us his travel diary. My first thought was to contact the Cathedral's archivist to find out what materials we had about Sigeric's trip. They replied with absolutely nothing, but shortly after a copy of Sigeric's diary was found at the British Library in London and we managed to obtain a photocopy. In times of economic uncertainty, if new information like this landed on your desk, how much priority would you have given to develop an itinerary like this? Fortunately, the **Council Leader at that time thought it was deserving enough to send me to an exploratory meeting convened in the Bologna Region** in December 1993. All I had was a copy of the diary of Sigeric and a mandate to find out more. It was here that for the first time I met Massimo Tedeschi and started a collaboration that lasted for more than twenty years. Let's think for a moment about the kind of challenges the Via Francigena, as a concept, has presented in Canterbury. As we know, Canterbury is at the start of the itinerary and the opportunities to generate economic benefits would be negligible compared to a city along the itinerary like Fidenza, where pilgrims would need to find food and shelter. Realistically, how many people will walk for the entire route? In addition, the stretch of the Via Francigena in England is less than 40 kilometers and the Canterbury section is less than 15 kilometers. Perhaps it was more a theme based on the cathedral than the city. The political conditions to be involved in the project were not favorable, however, Canterbury, supporting a public exposition of the Via Francigena in Rome in 1999, implemented the first real action in this regard. In 2000, the elected Mayor of the city was a convinced Eurosceptic who did not intend to accompany me anywhere abroad. Nevertheless, when we received an invitation for a meeting in Viterbo promoted by a local association, we were persuaded to participate. The whole event was in Italian and this was a bit annoying to the delegate who did not seem very interested in the subject. But two things happened, there was a formal gala dinner offered by the Serra Club where the mayor was a guest of honor and the following day there was a papal hearing in St. Peter's Square during which Massimo Tedeschi sat by our side. That visit to Viterbo was a political turning point for Canterbury's entry into the family of the Regions and Communes of the Via Francigena and the collaboration continues happily today. But the real starting point for the relationship between Canterbury and the Francigena Way was the City Council's decision in 2001 to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2008. Canterbury suddenly discovered that its cultural heritage was a strong point and from that moment on it has no intention of turning back. The City Council joined Kent County and also the cathedral authorities were happy to do their part. Between us **we have built the famous zero mile and the well-marked route between Canterbury and Dover that has become part of the official route of the Via Francigena.** We have all this due to Massimo Tedeschi, who was awarded the Civic Award of the Canterbury City Council in 2010, and his vision of how a XIX century journey of a little-known Archbishop Anglo-Saxon could transform and **develop a mutual understanding of our common project.**

EMILIA ROMAGNA, CROSSPOINT OF THE EUROPEAN ROUTES

Liviana Zanetti - President of APT Services, Region Emilia Romagna

THE FRANCIGENA WAY IS:

- A TEACHING TOOL ON THE TOPIC OF PILGRIMAGE
- A EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTE
- A THEME THAT ENGAGES CITIZENS AND SMALL COMMUNITIES

This morning, right here in Fidenza, we presented the first geographical map of the pilgrimage routes that cross the Emilia-Romagna Region. We presented it here because we recognize that **Fidenza and the Via Francigena have created a school about pilgrimage**. There are ten pilgrimage routes that cross the region, which is an extraordinary heritage of passion, history and expertise, suggesting a way of life respectful to well-being. Those who decide to walk during vacation show great respect towards self-searching and also the Region's policy to envisage the **routes as cultural**. Next to the Emilia Romagna logo there is a motto that is not a nice commercial advertisement to attract benevolence. It says "*terra con l'anima e con il sorriso*" (earth with the soul and with a smile). This is **a model, a way of approaching your neighbor, and a way to welcome tourists**; it is the way of living in this region that we must learn how to promote. So here we face an important journey in which we are not alone, as a Region or as APT services, but we are accompanied by the Regional Episcopal Conference, which I thank for the walk that we are going to do. We are aware that the routes can have a theme that involves all citizens and members of small communities, but envisages a level of European culture. **We are part of a European route and I believe in the Europe here today**. This is the message given by Fidenza and the 15th anniversary of the European Association. A particularly important message during this historical period. So, I thank you for the work done in these past fifteen years and thank you for the work you will do considering that you will have to attend pilgrimage school for the other nine routes. Good walk to you all.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA USING THE THREE PILGRIM QUALITIES: PATIENCE, TENACITY AND KINDNESS

Paolo Bongini - Region of Tuscany

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A GREAT DREAM IN A UNITED EUROPE
- A PRECIOUS SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR 1000
- A MODEL OF GOVERNANCE AND COLLABORATION

We are in 1993, the year in which Jacques Delors is president of the European Commission. In my opinion, he was the greatest president in respect **to the desire of a unified Europe not only economically but politically**. It is right in the year 1993 that we move from the European Economic Community to the European Union. There is great anticipation, especially among young people, talking about Europe makes the heart beat fast and now, the heart beats with concern. The Treaty of Maastricht was approved in 1992 and the following year the single market is based on the four freedoms of movement: goods, services, people and capital. Shortly afterwards in Schengen, a small town in Luxembourg, agreements are reached to allow European citizens to travel freely throughout the Union. Our work on the Via Francigena was born during this moment of great enthusiasm. There was a great interest in tourism on the part of the European Union and it was believed to have resources meriting to be employed. In those years, a

three-year action plan specifically devoted to tourism was launched under DG XXIII by Heinrich Von Moltke. **In 1993 some "facinorosi" (obsessed persons) used the word cultural tourism and launched a hypothesis: the Via Francigena European Tourist Itinerary.** Emilia-Romagna, Lazio, Liguria, Lombardy, Piedmont, Tuscany, Valle d'Aosta, Kent, Canterbury, East Sussex, Surrey and North Pas-de-Calais founded the promoting committee under the aegis of the World Tourism Organization, Council of Europe, UNESCO and the Vatican City. Together we built the project and prepared a general scientific dossier. The Scientific Committee, composed of Luciano Gambi (University of Bologna), Giovanni Cherubini (University of Florence), Giuseppe Sergi (University of Turin) and Pierre Tubert (Sorbonne Paris), pinpointed a snapshot of Sigeric's path in the year 1000. In 1994 the Via Francigena was formally recognized and the symbol of the Via Francigena, "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe," was born. In 2003, Tuscany, decided to obtain funding to do engineering work on the Italian route in order to transform it into a viable itinerary. It coordinated a series of targeted actions along with the fundamental collaboration of the European Association of the Vie Francigene and established an interregional project with the Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Liguria, Emilia Romagna and Lazio regions. On March 28, 2011, NECSTOUR, a major European network of sustainable tourism, presented at the European Institute of Cultural Itineraries in Luxembourg, an analysis of the **Via Francigena in Tuscany. The analysis is to be considered a shared management model on destination tourism**, which can generate repercussions on small and medium-sized businesses, making the cultural route an **important economic product for occupation and territorial development**. Since 1993 over twenty years have passed and we have always worked by keeping the bar straight and using the three great pilgrim qualities: tenacity, patience and above all kindness. These skills allow one to continue moving forward and be appreciated for the ideas they have and the wish to do well.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN CANTERBURY INTEGRATING INTO AN UNESCO SITE TO THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Velia Ann Coffey - Canterbury City and Vice President AEVF, Canterbury

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- SOMETHING THAT DEFINES CANTERBURY'S TOURISTIC OFFER
- MEANS FOR THE MUTUAL COMPREHENSION OF COMMON VALUES
- A DIGITAL EXPERIENCE FROM KM 0 UNTIL THE BORDER OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

In 2005, Canterbury joined the European Association of the Vie Francigene. In 2011, William Pettit (Head of International Relations) retired. He had taken me to a conference in Luxembourg and passed my witness saying "Velia, someone who understands the Via Francigena must take over this place." The project has grown and is now well integrated into the itineraries that the City Council works on, **becoming part of the Canterbury tourist offer and part of the city as a UNESCO site**. The VisitCanterbury team is committed to promoting the Via Francigena as an experience in and out of the UK and every day we seek to improve access to the itinerary from anywhere in Britain, particularly from Kent. We are working on bettering the promotion, signage

and narrative of the Via Francigena for our visitors and for the local community. For this, we have even included the Via Francigena into our museum, which is a very important cultural heritage for Canterbury. Signage from the KM 0 point of view has been improved in the urban area and we are moving forward to also improve signage in rural areas. We have introduced explanatory signs that further deepen understanding of the Via Francigena, its history and its origins. By the end of 2016, we are committed to providing complete signage throughout the English section. Last year we brought together various events to foster the involvement of the population and continued to promote the Via Francigena through Canterbury's magazines and publications, available all over the country. We are also improving the digital experience for our city visitors and Google is filming the itinerary for Google Earth, **shortly, there will be a Google street view across the entire Via Francigena section in the UK.** Sometimes it is worth revisiting the reasons why Canterbury continues to support this project, even though there are just over 30 km of Via Francigena in the UK and only 10 km are under the direct influence of our city. In the last five years, the resources available to the Canterbury City Council have been drastically reduced as a result of cuts in public spending. Nevertheless, we have continued to support this project **because we share in the values that are incorporated within the association and its members and we believe in the work we have already done.** The Via Francigena acts as a tool for a mutual understanding of shared values that go beyond boundaries because they sink their roots in our history, culture and common experience. So despite a more challenging future we will continue to support the association and work on the Via Francigena as a European project with initiatives on the local and national scale. That is why we have intensified relations with local actors in the area; in particular, we are working to coordinate our websites with the *Ramblers Association* and with *North Downs Way*, which is part of the *National Trail* in UK. We are working even closer with: the Canterbury cathedral, the *Green Pilgrimage Network*, the *Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome* and other volunteer associations. I am sure that we will continue our investment, even if it is risky, to make our part in introducing common technical standards on signage and information on hospitality. **We also welcome the opportunity to share knowledge on the Via Francigena south of Rome and to continue to break down barriers**, especially for residents of the United Kingdom during this period. The referendum is approaching and we have to decide whether to remain or leave the European Union. I want to confirm that whatever happens, the beneficial work done by Canterbury, started by William Pettit with Massimo Tedeschi's help, will continue for a long time into the future.

TRAVEL THE VIA FRANCIGENA TO REDISCOVER A EUROPE OF HOPE

Filippo Fritelli - Mayor of Salsomaggiore, President of Parma Province (Parma, Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A REALITY BORN OUT OF A DREAM 20 YEARS AGO
- A MESSENGER OF PEACE AND HARMONY FOR CIVIL COHABITATION AND COMMUNICATION BETWEEN POPULATIONs
- A JOURNEY FOR SELF-REFLECTION AND SELF-DISCOVERY

Over the years local authorities in this area have strongly contributed in determining a part of the route that is presented here today. The six municipalities in the province of Parma have been involved with the Via Francigena, the province of Piacenza, the city of Piacenza and the province of Parma, have all been investing for several years in various initiatives within the territory. Initiatives that seemed like a far-off dream in 2000 when they started. Several messages have emerged today. The first **is the meaning of Europe**. The title of today's meeting is "*Via Francigena, Via di Pace*" (Via Francigena, Route of Peace) at a time when peace, understood as civil coexistence and communication between peoples and between ourselves, is partly undermined by what is happening. **The history of a route like the Via Francigena is a testament and has a general symbolic value** that reminds us to think about how in the world today we are not respecting this message nor are we not realizing it. The very idea of Europe has changed, it is no longer seen as the Europe of hope as it was 15 or 20 years ago, but as a Europe of constraint and limitation. Another message that highlights the sense of walking. To speak of the pilgrim's journey is to speak of humanity's journey of meditation and peace, exactly the opposite of what we are doing today, where we are traumatized by the chaos of life and lack time for introspection. The value of this story and tradition must be the bearer of that message, a piece of humanity's history and the development of our thought, and above all a culture, the European Christian, which today in the light of our events and styles of life we are slightly undermining. The hope is that this path is really a Via Francigena of peace, meditation and self-rediscovery because we need it above all today in the year 2016.

COOPERATION, COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION THE KEYS TO SUCCESS FOR CULTURAL ITINERARIES

Inger Harlevi - Coordinator of the Council of Europe's Cultural Itineraries Task Force

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A QUALITY ITINERARY MADE FROM COOPERATION
- AN EXAMPLE OF ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION AND EFFECTIVE DESIGN
- AN INNOVATIVE CONCEPT TO ATTRACT EMERGING MARKETS

I would like to spend a few words on the cultural route of the hanseatic cities, **Hansa**, which is also certified by the Council of Europe, who I work with. It also demonstrates that cultural itineraries represent Europe, a Europe made of connected states to one another, a Europe that wants to cooperate. **Hansa** is a city that overlaps 16 European countries and I would like to once again emphasize, the importance of the **Partial Extension Agreement on Cultural Itineraries of the Council of Europe which has re-launched the quality expectations of cultural itineraries**, a crucial step if we want to play a key role in the field of Europe's cultural tourism. One of the key aspects is communication. In order to improve communication between the itineraries and between the itineraries and the European Institute of Cultural Routes, which is based in Luxembourg, it was decided to set up a task force during the Baku Advisory Forum in 2013. The management of the itineraries has another problem in common in regards to the shortage of operating funds. This even means that representatives often do not have the

opportunity to make the trip to participate in the annual meeting of cultural itineraries. This is a shame because there is a real need for us to meet all together at least twice a year. Some routes have received financial support from the European Union to carry out projects like, the Viking route that has been funded for a major project as well as the Via Francigena and Hansa who have also had some projects approved. This is positive and I encourage the itineraries to present projects in order to develop an overall basic structure and quality that can benefit all the members of the itinerary. In terms of communication, as a *project manager* responsible for a *task force*, I understand the importance required to have a constantly updated website and a live Facebook page. **The connection with regional development is important.** All itineraries have small and remote partners, towns, and villages in inner areas. Our goal is to develop projects that allow remote areas to attract tourist flows, create jobs and to bring life and hope in places of despair. **It is also necessary to involve citizens in the on-going initiatives and encourage entrepreneurs to develop products, including food-based, to be linked to the itinerary.** Citizens will have to be proud of their city. It is very important to support cooperation between itineraries. We should improve the way we work together in order to: better existing products and to develop new ones, get funding, access the European Institute's services, meet more people like us and work together. Many members and places part of one itinerary may also belong to other itineraries, showing that the breadth of the cultural concept is a richness for all interested operators and visitors. It is my sincere opinion that **cultural itineraries are among the best concepts to attract new emerging markets in the field of cultural tourism**, India and China are two such examples. Each individual itinerary will experience significant difficulties in launching its cultural products, but by increasing cooperation between the itineraries along with the European Institute, the European Commission, UNESCO, UNWTO and other bodies, we will have a clear future in our hands.

FROM FIDENZA A NEW LEAP TO ACTION FOR THE VIA FRANCIGENA, TOWARDS NEW AND AMBITIOUS AIMS

Andrea Massari - Mayor of Fidenza (Parma, Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A JOURNEY TO BECOMING PART OF THE UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST
- EUROPEAN UNITY, CONTINUOUSLY DEMOLISHING WALLS AND BARRIERS
- A REALITY THAT ASSUMES ITS BODY AND FORM DAY BY DAY

I am honored and proud to be hosting all of you, guests, AEVFF members, institutions, Vicente Nencini, on a special day for Fidenza. It is the 15th anniversary of the founding of an intuition, which materialized in Fidenza 15 years ago, when so many local administrators believed in and gave birth to this spectacular project that we see year after year emerge more and more body and shape. It is a special day because we are steadfastly trying to put ourselves back in the middle of the administrative actions, even with other bodies affiliated to the Via Francigena. On the part of the Emilia Romagna Region, with President Bonaccini and Tourism Councilor Corsini, there is such constant support that Fidenza has chosen to present the agreement made between the Emilia Romagna Region and the Regional Episcopal Conference on the ten historical paths of faith and pilgrimage of the region. **The Via Francigena is the most structured, the oldest and the most**

important pilgrimage, if we look at its dimension and transnationalism, as well as being one of the few recognized by the Council of Europe. In addition, thanks to the tenacity of many multi-level institutional administrators, since a year ago, we have been looking to resume the project for **the candidacy of the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Via Francigena**. This morning, here in Fidenza, the official meeting of the MiBACT Working Group was held to work on the candidate route. Lastly, just a little reflection. The Anniversary Celebration manifesto recalls the Via Francigena of peace in a moment in which Europe, united by routes and trails, risks to see the construction of new internal walls and barriers. Well what we have to learn from what we have seen over the years is that the walls have never risen in time and eventually they always fall. The path and history of the Via Francigena can deliver us a message of hope and optimism about the future.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA, A STRIKING EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS FOR THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S CULTURAL ROUTES PROGRAMME

Stefano Dominioni - Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg and Executive Secretary of the Partial Enlarged Cultural Itineraries for the Council of Europe, Luxembourg

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- AN INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE TO UPHOLD COMMON VALUES
- AN ASSOCIATE REALITY THAT EXISTS, LIVES AND DEVELOPS ON THE TERRITORY
- EDUCATIONAL WORK AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT FUSED INTO A HIGH QUALITY TOURIST PRODUCT

For many years, the Council of Europe has been dealing with cultural itineraries because by the 1980s, when the walls still existed, it was already understood that the **fate of Europe was a common one**. The idea of creating cultural itineraries on issues close to heart proved to be a winning one, which demonstrated that the **values and history of European civilization are shared beyond borders**. The "Cultural Itineraries of the Council of Europe" have evolved from different themes of history, religion, architecture, music and literature, showing the cultural diversity of our continent. Today there are over thirty recognized cultural itineraries. We have had a great expansion since 2010 when an Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Itineraries was launched between several European states, including Italy. The strength of the certification lies in the fact that it is not just a label on a historical monument, but rather a symbol of an associative reality that exists, lives and develops in the territory. For this reason, the Council of Europe continues to support the program, especially at this historic stage. The **Via Francigena** is an **example** that has developed and continues to grow in Italy and Europe. It is doing an **exemplary job of educating and developing the territory**, involving young people and creating a quality tourist product. Instead of relying on the big tourist centers, the Via Francigena is based on so-called "minor" territories, which are not really minor, thus being the ideal model for the Council of Europe's values: human rights, democracy, participation, citizenship, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA TOWARDS BECOMING A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE OF HUMANITY SITE

Adele Cesi - MiBACT, UNESCO Focal Point, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A REALITY WHICH HAS THE STRENGTH TO BE INSCRIBED AS HERITAGE FOR HUMANITY
- A ROUTE IN GROWTH
- AN ITINERARY OPEN TO COLLABORATION AND PLURALITY

We are here to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the European Association that supports the Via Francigena itinerary, but we are also here to inform you that another project is beginning on this itinerary: the recognition of the **Via Francigena as a UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It is a journey that begun in 2009/2010, and after a pause, has resumed with great force. Today, A Coordination Group has been established, representing several Italian municipalities and regions, and promoting the Via Francigena with the expectation that other actors will join. Certainly patience, perseverance and kindness will be fundamental during this **long journey as a growing project** because this journey has a slightly different character than the challenges previously faced when trying for the recognition as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. Fortunately, we have a good deal of experience, which we will make available to people who have proposed to resume this application **and we are convinced that the project has the strength to be accomplished**. Looking to UNESCO's recent recognition of cultural itineraries in respect to the Council of Europe's routes, we have the example of the Santiago Way, which was recognized by the Council of Europe in 1987, and then UNESCO where France and Spain applied in two stages and with two different procedures. So it will be for the Via Francigena. The idea is to start the process in Italy and then extend it over time to other countries (Switzerland, France, and UK) that would like to participate.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA FROM FIDENZA, HOME OF MUSIC, HISTORY AND CULTURE

Francesco Gazzetti - Counselor, Tuscany Region

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A UNIFYING SECTION FOR MANY COMMUNITIES
- A GREAT INSTRUMENT FOR PEACE
- A BRIDGE TOWARDS A STRONGER AND MORE COHESIVE EUROPE

Beginning with the national anthems of the four countries that the route crosses has been a very beautiful and important choice because it brings us back to the meaning of things that belong to us and unite us, like music. As we listened to them, somebody started humming and I saw one of

our guests surprised by the fact that some of the Martian words I managed to intonate. This is to say that in the end **we already have things that unite us, music and history**. This beautiful and important theater is called Girolamo Magnani, the great cinematographer of Giuseppe Verdi. That eagle that appears on the Fidenza gonfalon exits thanks to Charlemagne and above all to Federico Barbarossa. Here the story is home, the music is home, the **culture is home**. The **Via Francigena is another unifying trait for many communities** at European and Italian level and we hope that this can be recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for Humanity. It is necessary for UNESCO to recognize this infrastructure as a **great tool for peace**. Peace is one of those concepts that we only realize is necessary when it is no longer there. When we walk, we ask who we are alongside of, what is their religion, what brings them, what is their past, where do they want to go? But we only ask if they want to come with us and share a stretch of the route together. I believe that this is the true message of the Via Francigena. We must set a goal: looking towards the future of the Via Francigena, how it will be in twenty or thirty years and how we must build upon this. We must be able to look at these challenges with enthusiasm, as that is as Garibaldi would do, and that is strongly European. We do not have to ask where we are starting from but where do we want to go, always aware that we want to go as far as possible.

THE MIDDLE AGES, DETERMINANTS IN THE FORMATION OF THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Anna Benvenuti- Professor at the University of Florence

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- CHANGES DIRECTIONS THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY
- FULL OF ROADS, MEDIEVAL CENTERS AND CITIES THAT ASTONISH
- AN EXERCISE OF PARTICIPATION AND IMPROVEMENT

History has become a living entity and is source of identity. An identity that has been cultivated by the newer generations that search to transfer their ideas of the past as heritage. It is a heritage that divides instead of unites, but even in this profound metabolism of consciousness of the newer generations we understand an important step for the future. The **Via Francigena** is not only a road that was conceived prevalently during the medieval period between thousands of occurrences and thousands of diversifications, but it is a **direction** that the past has affected with its historical variables. A medieval road is a seasonal road, different in the summer in respect to the winter, and different in the confines according to the periods. The choice of this itinerary justified many polemics between scholars, I, also, affirmed that in all cases of Italy, we had the right and need to call the roads that went to Rome, *romee*. It was legitimated by the problem of valorizing the side streets that generated the wonderful medieval towns and try to construct an **element of attraction**. The viability of this extraordinary network formed in the medieval era has astonished many because of the discovery of a dense network of cities and medieval villages, even more than the Alps. When universities mold students to have an interest in rediscovering

territorial history, they form youth who can contribute in the transferring of a system of theoretical consciousness into a system of consciousness of the territory. This becomes **a consciousness to appreciate locality, a volition to participate and improve.** Medieval Europe is one of the few Europes that has something in common and is not Maastricht's Europe, but it is a Europe of Benedictines and cluniacenes. It is a Europe of a grand territorial organization whose leader was also the head of the ecclesial organization thus, making Italy a natural point of reference because the religious headquarters was centralized in Rome. Italy has been chosen as this point of reference because it is liberated and decontaminated from all confessions and leaves on its journey a series memories, stories, documents, artworks, architecture and cultural routes.

RESTORING DIGNITY TO ONE OF THE LARGEST CANALS OF COMMUNICATION IN CHRISTIANITY

Riccardo Nencini – Vice Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation MIT, Rome

THE VIA GRANCIGENA IS:

- AN EXTRAORDINARY OCCASION TO OFFER A DIVERSE FORM OF TOURISM
- EXISTS WITHIN A MAGICAL COUNTRY FULL OF MONUMENTAL AND ARTISITIC PRESENCE
- ONE OF THE ELITE ROUTES OF MEDIEVAL COMMUNICATION

The **Via Francigena** is one of the great routes of communication in Christianity, which are an elite network of communication routes. It is unfortunate that the Via Francigena's significance is only being recognized as of lately. The recognition of its operative value is fundamental to transform the Via Francigena into a success, such as the Santiago Way. Now we are lucky for two reasons, the first is that contemporary society travels very fast, and **who travels very fast often has the need of some moments of solitude and a slow moving pace.** The second is the there are always more pushes from the organized tourism industry that attempt to remain outside the traditional Italian tour consisting of Florence, Rome and Venice in six days of which a third of the course is in a shopping *outlet*. If there is a part of tourism that searches for situations and conditions decisively different, we should create the possibility to offer it, which is exactly what the Via Francigena represents and presents us with the extraordinary occasion to do so. **One eats well, lives immersed in extraordinary and emotive landscapes and all within a magical country full of monumental and artistic presences, making it the perfect sum of ideal conditions that often difficult to reach anywhere.** The delay hurts the organization of the 900 km section of the Via Francigena in Italy and pushes me to suggest an initiative to valorize the Francigena. It is necessary to connect the consciousness and mobility of the Via Francigena to the Jubilee, connecting the Via to the principle articulations of Italian communications and

supplying visitor information about the opportunities on the Via Francigena therein including events that take place on every single section of the Via Francigena. There are two small novelties that should be quickly shared. The first is that **we are working with all of the Italian Regions who are in agreement with the program to examine the infrastructure and mobility.** If the interested regions insert the theme of the Via Francigena into their packet of initiatives for the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transports, it would be much easier to identify potential funds for the Via Francigena in the immediate future. **In the law of stability 2016, there are funds destined for project designs regarding tourism by foot.** The ideal would be that the interested Regions or for the less interested communes of Rome to work in synchrony to make requests for funds for projects related to the Via Francigena. Europe will always finance more environmentally friendly projects. In fact, the European Union is concerned about how to construct future habitations and civic buildings that ecologically sustainable. There is concern on how to finance the purchasing of ecologically sustainable materials such as iron instead of tire, and also to finance for stronger environmental protection in order to safeguard and valorize country sides and cause less atmospheric pollution. The European Union will most likely continue to push these initiatives, which will impact states' civic organization and various governing measures. These are opportunities that are already offered by the Law of Stability 2016 and should be seized. A final consideration, 10 days ago, the first train from China arrived to Lyon. It is the first contemporary example of a **new Silk Road.** The Chinese and Mediterranean merchants generally must travel for 50 days via sea, but with this train, it takes just 14 and a half days. It is the tendency, imposed by contemporary technological society, to move faster and accelerate. Witnessing these sort of cases should encourage further valorization of local identity and its roots before it is no longer possible to fill the gap. Understanding that the mission of those who govern and the destiny of this Europe is that the China-Lyon trains will multiply over the years, **we must reinforce and valorize the civic identity that has represented the origins of European Christianity.** This, along with the more material reasons of tourism and landscapes, is the ultimate value that we should put rapidly in action. The advice is to utilize both the Law of Stability 2016 and the agreement between MIT and the Regions to present a packet of indications. It becomes very simple to give a positive response when there is synergy and coordination, as harmonious as possible, between the communes and the Regions found along the Via Francigena.

THE VIA FRANCISCA OF LUCOMAGNO THE VIA OF EMPERORS AND A BRANCH OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

Giuseppe Costa - Lombardy Region

Paolo Bertocchi - Province of Varese (Lombardy)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A MOTHER OF NUMEROUS ROUTES THAT CONVERGE WITH THE VIA FRANCIGENA
- A CONTINUATION OF THE FRANCISCA OF LUCOMAGNO

- AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF WALKS FOR YOUTH

The province of Varese has always been a land border between Latin Europe and northern Europe. **It is an itinerary, a road and channel of communication between different worlds, languages, cultures.** For years our land has been shaped by the ability and willingness to confront the outside world not as an enemy but as an opportunity for a wealth of possibilities: possibilities of confrontation, discussion and growth. In recent times, thanks to the work of local cultural associations, a curiosity and **desire to rediscover our deep historical roots** has been reborn. The project on the Via Francisca, which we will be presenting on Saturday, sprouted from local associations and people who wanted to dig deep into our souls and henceforth found institutions willing to collaborate, believing in one of the best things, cross-border cooperation. Via Francisca del Lucomagno or Via of the Emperors starts at Lake Constance where Canton Ticino has actively participated in the initiative thereby giving its cross-border character. It is an ancient road that crosses the Lucomagno pass, which is the first alpine passage used by pilgrims and commercial caravans before the Gotthard. Then it crosses the provinces of Varese and Milan before entering Pavia where it joins with the Via Francigena. The territories of the Varese province have a history of medieval monasticism and have maintained and safeguarded these ancient ways in such a way that today we can present a project that 90% is already safe. Thus, with a spirit of novices we face this cultural challenge. We ask now that **all border regions recognize their duty to open roads, build bridges and lower walls. We ask if we can walk with you and if you can accompany us with your experience, passion, competence and concreteness.**

THE VIA FRANCIGENA AS AN OPPURTUNITY FOR THE SYSTEMATIZATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CAMPANIA

Nadia Murolo – Campania Region

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP TERRITORIES
- A STRATIGIC OPPORTUNITY FOR TERRITORIES ALONG THE VIA
- A CHOICE THAT THE CAMPANIA REGION MADE AND CONSOLIDATED

For the past 18 months we have been proceeding along a **journey of consciousness, experience and the formation of territories** around the theme of the Via Francigena. The choice, that the regional *Giunta* (regional governing bodies) made and consolidated within the past year, was completed due to two good deliberations and the creation of a **working group that brings together all of the regional offices.** They measure territorial impacts by making constant comparisons, which is a great interest for the Campania Region. These are measures that we read as integrated actions, which will allow rural territories to systematize cultural heritage. The Region intended to invest funds from different sources because there is **willpower by the**

system. The region puts together offices of diverse departments, a choice that makes it become a fundamentally regional program looking towards a strategy to integrate territories. The region also concerns itself with the development of the southern part of the Via Francigena and weaves a connection within the fabric of the already developed Via Francigena in Sergeric's time.

15 YEARS OF THE AEVF PASSED WITH WISDOM, HARD WORK AND FORESIGHT

Tiziana Albasi – Councilor for Culture and Tourism, Commune of Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- AN INCLUSIVE VISION THAT EMBRACES CIVILITY, CULTURES AND TRADITIONS
- A REFERENCE POINT IN A DELICATE TIME OF HISTORY
- GOOD PRACTICES TO EXTEND FROM TOSCANY AND OTHER TERRITORIES

The European Association has celebrated 15 years, I believe, passed with wisdom, hard work and foresight. Thus, onwards we go, the road is long and we are not yet old but I believe that the work that has been so far carried out with great effort. The auspicious in these three days of work, starting from yesterday and ending tomorrow at the Borgo San Donnino - a domination that recalls a very important *toponomastica* (toponymy) - is that it continues to work with the spirit that emerged during today and yesterday and that, I am sure, will also be there tomorrow. This implies an **ecumenical and inclusive vision, capable of embracing different civilities, cultures and traditions.** The **Via Francigena** represents **an opportunity and a reference point in a delicate moment of history.** I invite all to return and visit Piacenza, seeing that today you all are present and attentive, because there are many gems to discover. I encourage you all to return to the territories of Via Emilia, from Rimini to Piacenza that have significant intersections with the Via Francigena, the Via Postumia and another paths. I thank my colleagues and administrators coming from Italy and Europe. **The Region of Emilia Romagna has much to do for the Via Francigena, availing from the example of the Tuscany Region that has worked very hard in this department, demonstrating optimal results.**

PILGRIMAGE AS A MOMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Paolo Dosi - Mayor of Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A CENTRAL THEME FOR TOURISM, CULTURE AND AGGREGATES

- A EUROPEAN TERRITORY ALMOST FREE FROM CONFINES
- TO PASS PEACEFULLY THROUGH A TERRITORY THAT WE RECOGNIZE TO BELONG TO MANY PEOPLE

I also had the chance and fortune in the previous mandate to act as councilor of culture and tourism and as such be able to follow the theme of pilgrimages and the centrality of our territory for the pilgrimage paths that characterized Europe over the years. During that role I have seen how the **Via Francigena acts as a central theme for tourism, culture and aggregation and has aspects that speak to each of us**. These aspects motivate so many people to travel on the Via Francigena but, as on other pilgrimages crossing Europe, they are mysterious and very intimate, and accordingly we must treat them with extreme respect. We, as a local territory, propose the opportunity to use the theme of **pilgrimage as a knowledge building moment** and not as a matter of closing the territories. On the contrary, we want to convey the perception of a borderless area in Europe. **Pilgrimage grants one the reason to cross peacefully and spiritually - for many cases - a territory that we recognize to be so diverse** that many who speak different languages but all recognize the same ultimate goal to be achieved. This is why the centrality of the Piedmont area on the Via Francigena is valued in Europe. For this we are grateful to the European Association and we look forward to be able to continue patiently working towards further development. The fact that the number of pilgrims is progressively increasing is not only a quantitative but above all qualitative figure that drives each of us, despite the difficulties, **to invest more and more and to improve what the walk has to offer**.

THE PROVINCE OF PIACENZA, FROM 2001 WORKING WITH AEVF

Francesco Rolleri - President of Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A MAJOR IMPACT ON PLACES' REPUTATIONS
- A TOURIST PROJECT WITH A STRONG CULTURAL VALUE
- COMMON PROJECTS IN AN INTEGRATED LOGIC OF TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Tourism along the Via Francigena reaps returns not so much in numbers but in its reputation and image of the places where pilgrims and walkers live and cross. It is a cultural project with a strong cultural value. Hence, the Province of Piacenza has always believed in the potential of Via Francigena and is among the founding members of the European Association in 2001, which has the primary objective to qualify and improve structures and services along the way. As a Province, we have particularly promoted the Via Francigena and involved the local Piacents to work on not only the official itinerary that takes place on Via Emilia, but also those that are on alternative routes forming an integrated logic of territorial development. We had a joint project

with the Province of Parma to raise awareness and accreditation of accommodation facilities through: the selection of the operators, the organization of meetings, the signing of an accreditation discipline and the granting of the brand and also activities of web marketing with proposals for educational tourism. Today, the picture has changed, the provinces have become second-tier institutions as representatives to the expression of municipalities and with important coordination and support tasks, but with much lower human and financial resources than the past. The function of tourism has been returned under the control of the Region and, although delegated to our institution, no longer provides for chapters in the provincial budget. Despite these difficulties, it is the intention of the Province of Piacenza to stay alongside the European Association of the Vie Francigene, its initiatives and projects that have an international dimension and which contribute to giving visibility to the itinerary and to our province.

THE STRONG LINK BETWEEN PIACENZA AND PILGRIMAGE

Gianni Ambrosio - Bishop of Piacenza - Bobbio (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO WALK, MEET AND GO TOWARDS THE IGNOTE
- TO ASSUME THE STATUS OF PILGRIM
- TO REDISCOVER THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A PILGRIM

I would like to congratulate this initiative for rediscovering the importance of walking and being pilgrims, which has been a part of European history. At this time, I believe that Europe needs to find some of itself and its soul through, I hope, the Via Francigena. Then, Europe can recover true cooperation and union alongside its diversity of interests and languages. I would like to emphasize **three important signs of Piacenza's relationship with the Via Francigena**, walking and being a pilgrim. A pillar of our majestic cathedral has a **form dedicated to the pilgrim**, represented in the traditional way, with a pilgrim's dress. It is an important sign that reminds us of the Piacenza community's bond with the pilgrims of yesterday and today. I would also like to recall that a few centuries before the Via Francigena gained notoriety, **a Piacenza pilgrim** wrote an itinerary on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is a very important travel journal that was popular in the middle ages, but we have almost forgotten today. This example also expresses the link between our city, our territories and the pilgrimage from a geographical, spiritual and cultural point of view. We can often distinguish the spiritual aspect from the geographic and the cultural ones, but the gesture or the sign has the ability to conceal in itself a variety of other motivations that only arise when walking, meeting and going towards the unknown. I also forget to speak on Saint Colombano who, accompanied by some monks, came from Ireland to Bobbio by crossing Europe. Last year was the celebration for 1400 years since his death and there was significant participation from all the communities affected by his extraordinary pilgrimage. We must rediscover all the importance of the journey, the pilgrimage and the Via Francigena, without obviously excluding other ways, because the **pilgrim has a**

special status. I assure you that when I meet a pilgrim, I stop to talk if I can and I also welcome them to my home as if they have already visited.

THE ECONOMY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

Paolo Rizzi - Catholic University of Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- CULTURE, HISTORY AND SPIRITUALITY
- THE ITALIAN ANSWER TO DISNEYLAND
- A TOURIST OFFER THAT ITALY MUST PROMOTE

This session is titled "the economy of the Via Francigena." We have seen from the international speakers the **touristic and economical aspects of the Via Francigena**. I want to show the title of a book that we organized with the municipality of Fidenza and the President of AEVF a few years ago. It was titled: "Cultural Tourism and the Via Francigena: The Italian Response to Disneyland." When we proposed it, many of our colleagues smiled. But what is the meaning of this title? Orlando's Disneyland Park is the most visited site in the world with over 30 million visitors a year. Disneyland parks are numerous in the world, there is also the Paris one who receives a huge number of tourists. It makes one wonder what kind of tourism it represents. An interesting form of tourism related to recreation and play. However, it is different from the type of **tourism that Italy and Europe can offer**, which is not only leisurely but also **cultural, historical and spiritual**. This is the difference and so, as the first speakers have already guessed, the title of a new version of the book will have to be slightly corrected to: "The **European** Response to Disneyland."

THE VIA FRANCIGENA BY TRAIN

Orazio Iacono - Director of Regional Passenger Division, Trenitalia Spa, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A NEW MODE OF MOBILITY IN THE COUNTRY
- 21 REGIONAL RAILWAY LINES THAT FOLLOW THE VIA FRANCIGEN WAY FROM THE AOSTA VALLEY TO ROME
- TRANSFRONTAL COOPERATION ALONG RAILWAY

When we received the invitation from the President of the European Association of the Vie Francigene, Ing. Massimo Tedeschi, as a Company we decided to immediately join, as we are very committed to building together a **new way of mobility in Italy**. We are living in a moment of great transformation for the railway company. Since 2014, the revival of regional transport, a sector which experienced great suffering, is underway. I once read "Ancient Roads, Walkers and Modern Pilgrims," and I thought, "Well, we too move along this route, because the regional railway lines, although well maintained, have had a few years and the trains are not new." Nonetheless, we are working to modernize and renovate them as we want to offer new services. There are **21 regional lines along the Via Francigena pathway** in the Valle d'Aosta, Piedmont, Lombardy, Emilia, Liguria, Tuscany, and Lazio. So we have been involved with our clients, i.e. the Regions, since Trenitalia has started the service that they ordered. The impression is that they are all excited because the Via Francigena gives us the opportunity to increase the average load of trains running in less crowded times and consequently, to accommodate walkers and pilgrims, which is a great pleasure for us. We have over 2000 daily connections along the 21 regional lines along the Via Francigena route; the most logical and simple thing is to start utilizing the means we already have. For example, if one is traveling in a group, they can use the group discount. Also, thanks to an agreement with the AEFV, a single walker or pilgrim will also have access to the same discount given to groups. This will not only **allow us to create a strong and concrete alliance that will give us the opportunity to have more passengers on our trains but also, give pilgrims the possibility of using a means that does not pollute and is available all year round**, offering Via Francigena pilgrims a different and better service. Another step we will take, always in close collaboration with AEFV, is to promote the initiative through our media such as radio, web site, app to which we will share the stations located along the stretches that are alongside the Via Francigena. This morning I also talked to our colleague in charge of regional transport in Switzerland and we agreed that the same operation will be carried out on the lines along the Via Francigena in Swiss territory. **The commitment we take today is to continue to work closely with the AEFV and the Swiss Federal Railways**, who have made themselves available to contribute in this by offering this service also in Swiss territory. We are delighted to be able to provide new trains that will start in Emilia Romagna this year thanks to the efficient work completed last year. But we need to renew the fleet across the country, a thousand trains are used for 6500 regional trips made every day. Of these only 40% are new, therefore we still need more than 500 new trains for which work is already underway. On April 5, the bids were presented and in a few weeks we will find out who will be the suppliers of the new trains that we will begin running in 2018. 600 new regional trains worth more than 4 billion and a half will bring the average age of our stock to the quality level of our Swiss neighbor that represents the average value we are aiming for in the near future.

THE PUBLIC REAL ESTATE HOLDER FOR THE VIA FRANCIGENA PROJECT

Roberto Reggi - Director of the Demanio Agency, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY

- ROADMAN'S HOUSES AVAILABLE TO PILGRIMS
- VALORIZATION OF THE REAL ESTATE HOLDINGS OF THE STATE BY "ART BONUS" AND "SBLOCCA ITALIA"

The Agenzia del Demanio has the task of managing the State's real estate. A share of this heritage is not strategic for governmental use and can therefore be made available to initiatives aimed at **promoting the cultural offer and competitiveness of our country through the lever of sustainable tourism**. Last year, we launched the "**Valore Paese Dimore**" project, with the aim of enhancing the historical heritage less so for governmental strategies, but to develop the tourism, art and culture sectors, thereby **contributing to the country's economic development**. This project is part of the program of paths and hikes linked to slow circuits and soft mobility. They are organized around topics of historical, cultural, religious, social, and sporting character and consistent with the program of cultural itineraries of the Council of Europe, Europe. The MiBACT has declared 2016 as the national year walks and in this context we have organized together with them, MIT and ANAS, the first **project for the valorization of the roadman's houses**. There are about 1300 invalORIZED along the streets of our country and using the Art Bonus of 2014 we have developed a design for the first block to be completed. We will present the first project that will in essence define, for each roadman's house, the necessary aspects to have in order to provide hospitality, food, accommodation and support for walkers and pilgrims alike. It is a way to recover public goods that are likely to degrade but also to **provide secure, equipped meeting places in a standardized and recognizable manner**. Starting from the Via Francigena, we will start experimenting on the first block of thirty, then extend the model to other paths and cyclist paths. The aim is to include all the roadman's houses and all public buildings, even local property, that are no longer governmentally strategic but can be made available to further strengthen the tourist offer for all potential users. The scouting started yesterday with a letter signed together by the treasurer and all the municipalities over 10,000 inhabitants. It asks to report real estate to be valued for the benefit of walkers, pilgrims, cyclists or simply history and culture enthusiasts. **The goal is to build a network that provides a standard tourist offer** and simple logistical support for walkers and pilgrims that we hope will further grow. The standards issued over the last two years should act as the polar stars to guide local governments to quickly make these goods available. **Art Bonus promotes and accelerates the issuance of permits** that will allow private individuals to obtain a public good for a period of up to 18 years, with minimal investment, giving the opportunity to pay a fee which is smaller the bigger the investment. This will give the private investor a quick return by providing services to those who will walk the way. **Articles 24 and 26 of the law, called "Sblocca Italia" ("Unlock Italy")**, allow local and state administrations, by simple resolution, to make available to individual citizens, associations, entrepreneurs an unused item for which there is no project of valorization so that they can develop initiatives for tourism, social, entrepreneurial and cultural promotion. Last year, a similar initiative addressed to municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants brought in more than 750 real estate assets, including social and cultural assets, to various types of valuations. This year, we lowered the threshold to 10,000 people and therefore we expect a greater number of questions. **Any commune that has a good along the Via Francigena**

can signal it already with this specific vocation and then find along with A.D. a way to coordinate the actions needed to enhance it.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN THE SIENA TERRITORY

Raffaella Senesi - Mayor of Monteriggioni and Councilor of the Province of Siena (Tuscany)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- THE VALORIZATION OF SMALL MEDIEVAL TOWNS AND RURAL COUNTRY
- THE VALORIZATION OF LOCAL ENTITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE ALONG THE WAY
- INCREASE OF TOURIST ARRIVALS AND TOURIST PRESENCE

The AEVF's 15 years of life have been fundamental since effective developmental work has been carried out not only for the benefit of the Via Francigena but for the whole country. I believe that this **engine was powered up by President Tedeschi's and others' stubbornness and insistence to the project that was still only a dream in 2001**. In regards to the province of Siena and the municipality I am currently administering, our commitment began in 2004, when the Tuscany Region conducted a test with six municipalities believing in the project and decided to invest a certain amount. The **Via Francigena has a strategic role** as it represents rurality, territory, development, sustainability, value-building, maintenance and security. Rurality refers to the valorization of forgotten villages and villages; territory references the valorization of local authorities along the way; development comes from the utilization of all the infrastructures that were previously disused. Since 2010, Tuscany has invested **16 million euros**, which has produced **150,000 overnight stays, 400 people employed in new facilities and 24 million euros of GDP**. The province of Siena was also one of the first in Tuscany to take action on the Via Francigena. The Region and its municipalities have secured 380 km of paths. **The Via Francigena is the backbone of a bundle of streets**, which are used when the main course changes according to the season, or there is a presence of impediments and other various circumstances. The Santa Maria hospital at the Scala of Siena was the symbolic place for pilgrims to leave their possessions and then reclaim them during their return, which did not always happen, as the way, as Roudit abbot remembers, is has always been an unknown. In this project we have made a shot in the dark and today we are getting the return. The province of Siena has recorded in the last 10 years (2005-2015) an increase of + **29% of arrivals**, attesting to 1,719,000 and in 2015 an increase of + **17% of participants** at 5,178,000 in the same year. To this is added an increase of + 18% of foreigners and a slight decrease of Italians (-2.76%). Monteriggioni in 2015 had an increase of + 2.26% of arrivals and an increase of + 4.79% of overnight stays with the average stay index rising close to three days. All this is a clear and obvious demonstration that the investment from the Region and of the municipality has produced great results. The UNESCO Recognition procedure for the Via Francigena views the Province of Siena at the forefront of the project and as having a peculiar mode and methods of analyses. This project has been relatively simple for the Province of Siena to establish, having already 4 UNESCO sites on its territory and because the portion of Via Francigena on its territory is

relatively small. The bodies responsible for carrying out this relay have relaunched a route that will, in a few years, lead to a result. **It is very important to have a maintenance governance and equal standards in all regions.** If the route is not maintained, even in a single kilometer, it will negatively affect the reputation of the entire Via Francigena. I believe that all together we can truly make the **Via Francigena a European cause.** As Professor Benvenuti recalled, the middle Ages is the historical period that brought together Europe and I believe this theme can still be developed. I propose that the next AEFV meeting be organized in France in order to engage the weak link of the project. And on the example of what we have done in Italy in the past 15 years, it is now possible to pay attention to the Via Francigena abroad where it needs it the most.

NUMBERS ON THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN TUSCANY

Enrico Conti - Regional Institute of Economic Planning in Tuscany (I.R.P.E.T.), Florence

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- ON THE JOURNEY TO DEVELOPMENT LIKE THE SANTIAGO WAY
- INVESTMENTS THAT ARE MEASURED IN GDP AND NEW WORKING PLANS
- A DRIVER FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

When we measure the impact of tourism linked to the Via Francigena, we measure a number of different things: we consider pilgrims who take the journey for strictly spiritual reasons, traveling the entire route or a large part and staying in the infrastructures along the path; or we can consider those who travel only one part and are interested by a particular attraction along the path. Depending on the fact that this optic is widening or shrinking, the number of visitors changes the economic impact. For this reason we have made two types of estimates. One looked more closely at to the effects of investments in relation to restoration work on the Via Francigena, trying to identify the specific differences triggered by new works. The other certified the impact of tourism visiting and staying on Via Francigena. We therefore used a "counter-factual" approach in the first case and a geographic method to delimit the area concerned in the second, where we considered the one-kilometer band from the path as a limit to calculate the number of attendance attributable to the Via Francigena. Our objectives were:

- to carry out a **socio-economic analysis of areas crossed by Via Francigena**, mainly hilly and mountainous, which are less interested in economic development, in which this type of tourism is a driver of development;
- to reconstruct the investments of the Tuscany Region and to assess what has so far happened in the territories crossed by the Via Francigena, compared to those common with the same characteristics, contiguous with those crossed by Via Francigena, but who did not have the Via Francigena itself within the territory;

- **assessing the economic impact of GDP** and the impact of more workers employed thanks to the investments and stronger tourist attractions;
- **propose 4 evolutionary scenarios** based on a technique that uses benchmark cases of similar tourism and experiential products such as Santiago's Way, English Cotswold and the "*Chiantishire*" in Tuscany.

Tuscany is crossed by 375 km of the Via Francigena, which results in quite an extended area, causing it to be the most interested region of the route. There are 38 municipalities, some of which are major cities such as Lucca, Siena, Massa, and Carrara. There are also common beaches such as Camaiore and Pietrasanta and some famous villages such as San Gimignano. Using the "counter-factual" approach, we removed from the group of 38, the 11 municipalities already affected by tourism development and the big cities, then we compared the trend measured in the remaining 27 municipalities crossed by the route with the extracted trend of the 38 municipalities. We have attributed the difference between the years 2009 and 2012 to Via Francigena. Looking at the overall dynamics of the two areas, the 27 municipalities in the Francigena group and the 38 communes of the benchmark group, at the beginning the differential is none or is slightly negative for the Via Francigena municipalities. While, **since 2004 the differential becomes positive and in 2012 it stood at 34%**. This difference persists in the 2012-2014 three-year period and further increases. If in the three-year period 2009-2012 the difference translated to about 64,000 in more attendance, in 2014 the number of attendance was estimated at **238,000 compared to 2012** and the contiguous territories of the benchmark group. Regional investment has created a GDP of around 6.2 million, of which 64,000 tourists have added an additional 4.6 million euros of GDP, totaling to **more than 10 million of GDP**. If we evaluate the 690,000 actual tourist arrivals found around one kilometer of the Via Francigena, the activated GDP would approach **50 million Euros** with an 880 additional units of work. We have built 4 forecast scenarios until 2022 based on different background hypotheses. Our baseline scenario, the most pessimistic scenario, sees growth from the current 690,000 to just under one million in 2022. The **most important scenario is of Santiago's early years**, which, shows us a trend that is more similar to our own situation. We will if this will stay constant depending on the data we will register between 2015 and 2016.

THE SANTIAGO OF COMPOSTELA PHENOMENON

Martina Lucarno - Catholic University of Milan

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A WALK THAT COULD BRING DIFFUSED BENEFITS
- TO DEVELOP A SUCCESSFUL MODEL BASED ON SANTIAGO WAYS ORME
- A LINEAR TOURIST REGION TO PUT UNDER A COMMON AUTHORITY AND ONE SINGLE MARKET

The purpose of my research is to understand the profitability that the Way of Santiago has been able to make in recent decades. Santiago has received tremendous impetus in recent years and there have been many significant appearances since 1989, the year in which Pope John Paul II made the pilgrimage. The development is also due to the diffusion of literary and cinematographic works and fashion that has been developed over the years and **added a new spiritual layer**. There have been peaks in the number of pilgrims in the Jacobian years when San Giacomo's day falls on Sunday. Such a phenomenon can be applied to the Butler model, which describes the evolution of a touristic region in terms of a life cycle, where the Santiago Way is positioned at the **"start-up" phase**. In August 2014, an online survey was conducted via a questionnaire launched on the web as well as posted on several blogs and 150 pilgrim responses were collected. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part concerned the characteristics of the pilgrim, such as age, profession, and mode of travel. The collected data confirmed those already released by Santiago's "*oficina del peregrino*" (peregrine office). The second part concerned a personal assessment on the quality of services. The pilgrim was asked to evaluate the pre-receptive services, receptive structures and the complementary facilities. For **receptive and pre-receptive services, the score was 7.7** on a scale of 1 to 10, on average good. There were some recorded difficulties about public facilities that have lower prices and therefore have a higher crowding, resulting in management difficulties. Complementary services have also been relatively well-judged with some exceptions in hospital service and tourism offices, especially in small places, where staffing shortages were found. With regards to **hospitality**, the final judgment was very positive with **peaks of 9 and 10 along the entire route**, except for the last 100 kilometers that are those traveled by most pilgrims, constituting the minimum requirement for Compostela. The high number of people pushes the local residents in the last section to be less welcoming and to have more business-related attitudes. The last part of the questionnaire was an economic analysis that asked respondents to declare their daily expenditure, average total per-capita spending, total number of days traveling and the total number of kilometers traveled. This method was used in order to make an initial estimate to calculate the viability of the Santiago Way. The first rough estimate was obtained by multiplying the average per-capita expenditure obtained by the questionnaire with the number of registered pilgrims in 2013. The figure calculated was around **111 million euros**. Subsequently, we attempted to further verify the figure obtained by applying a flow-gram and taking advantage of the fact that when the pilgrims arrive at Santiago they are required to also give their date of departure. By pooling the pilgrims by starting point and multiplying this number by the km traveled, we were able to obtain a value of pilgrims / km, i.e. how many total km were traveled by all the pilgrims who made their way in 2013. The flow-gram obtained shows that most pilgrims walk on the French section and to a lesser extent the Portuguese section and with the most traveled on being from Lugo to Sarria to Santiago de Compostela, since it is the cumulative tract of all the previous ones, where the pilgrims who are departing from Sarria. At this point, by dividing the total number of kilometers traveled by the medium of the total number of km daily traveled, received from the questionnaire, we obtained a total amount of days. The total number of days multiplied by the average daily expenditure, also obtained from the questionnaire, made it possible to calculate a total profitability of approximately **77 million**. This figure differs from the previous one because the questionnaire collected a pilgrim sample that traveled a greater

number of kilometers and included many Italians, who generally walk the way in its entirety. We can say that **the figure is between 77 and 111 million**. The development policies adopted in Spain, thanks to a **common authority and a single brand** in which the pilgrim identifies, have led to the development of a successful model that can be applied to the Via Francigena. In addition, **the wealth that the journey has attracted** has not focused solely on the final destination, but has been subdivided equally throughout the entire linear tourist development region.

ITINERARIES AS A FACTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Flavio Boscacci – Polytechnic of Milan

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- ADDED VALUE AND NEW EMPLOYMENT
- A NETWORK OF SMALL CITIES THAT MOVE SLOWLY WHICH INTEGRATES AND COMPLETES THE NETWORK OF BIG CITIES THAT MOVE AT HIGHER VELOCITIES
- TO AVOID DEPOPULATION OF SMALL VILLAGES AND CITIES

I was greatly stimulated by the recent studies on the economic evaluation of case studies applied and documented and I also appreciated the participation of Trenitalia and Agenzia del Demanio. An important novelty that has taken place through organizations, such as the European Association of the Francigene Roads, who are pioneers in stimulating the development of Via Francigena. An itinerary that is **witnessing an increasing demand for pilgrims and those who want to rediscover historic routes** and create concrete economic outcomes, which we are beginning to appreciate thanks to **the added value and employment created by the Via Francigena**. My multidisciplinary research group and I, at the Politecnico di Milano, research historical walks and slow gentle mobility in general. We are trying to observe the relationship between historical heritage, territory, city and economy. I would like to give a snapshot about the theoretical foundation of our research. In the last few decades, we have developed a system that we call “high speed and big cities,” which we can see in Europe and in the world. This has become inevitable after the opening of the general market because big economy polarizes in the big urban areas of the world, which are only like so because they are perfectly connected with all the fast means. High-speed, now widespread, works so well that territories that are out of the big circuit often suffer. Medium and small Italian and European cities feel cut off from high-speed binomial cities. Therefore, once you have completed the panorama of high-speed, you need to switch to low speed and small cities. It is also a combination that works from an economical point of view and can be applied to many different areas including the recovery of historical and cultural heritage, by renouncing the high speed mobility of the car, aircraft and train in favor of

the gentle and sustainable mobility. We focus on this because we believe that the low speed segment and small cities **have great potential for development and we imagine that the two networks must be integrated with each other**. We must therefore build a low-speed network that links to the high speed network of train stations, highways, ports and airports. This is why it is important that the railways and state property administration also enter this circuit and that there are strategic investments made in the Via Francigena to collect quantitative and qualitative results. Faced with the big circuit of large, high-speed cities that adversely affects some of the regional areas, depressing them, they may react by engaging in a complementary integrated network that we must promote with great force, stimulating everyone, starting from below above all. Then they can understand that their territory is worthwhile that can also produce an economic result. **It is also necessary to stimulate large organizations, large organizations, national and European governments and large utilities**. With regard to the Via Francigena, we have made a specific territorial reasoning. The Via Francigena in Lombardy passes from Pavia and arrives in Piacenza; Milan is connected to Pavia via slow mobility along Naviglio. We have developed a path along the Lambro which borders Milan and reaches Orio Litta. We have called it “*Cammino dei Monaci*” (“Monk's Way”) because it traces over medieval monasticism through grandiose testimonies, like passing through several abbeys. The goal is to **add a pilgrim and tourist demand for the Via Francigena from Milan**. Milan and the Lombardy Region have not yet properly developed this type of tourism, which has great potential. It can accumulate walkers from the great metropolitan basin and other routes further north, such as St Peter's Martire and the Queen's journey, directing pilgrim flows to the Via Francigena. The “*Cammino dei Monaci*” is therefore trying to reconstruct the missing ring of a European network, so that it will eventually become a complex of low speed and small cities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COMPANIES ALONG THE ROUTES

Gianluca Bambi - Department of GESAAF (Agrarian, Food and Forestry Management Systems), University of Florence

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A POSITIVE MECHANISM FOR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
- TO GET AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS INVOLVED TO JOIN IN ON THE BENEFITS OF FRANCIGENA
- TO RAISE ATTENTION ON RURAL AREAS USING THE AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURS AND THEIR MAINTENANCE THAT THEY CAN OFFER

We talk about restoration, development of marginal areas, rural areas, possibility and new opportunities for farms. In so many projects that written about this, sometimes they use improper

terminology and show a **lack of knowledge about the correct concept of rural tourism**. A majority of routes that get developed are in rural areas and landscapes that have typical products and rural structures. They are motivations that push to launch the route and are directly or indirectly linked to the rural world that lives and produces. We wonder what the Francigena would be in Val d'Orcia if the Val d'Orcia was not the Val d'Orcia with its wonderfully cultivated fields. Try to imagine a landscape without the one who works in it, without the one who manages it. Not even in the most beautiful national park is the landscape is natural; there is someone who manages it, there is a forestry farm that manages the forests, breeding and farming. If there were not these sort of people for the Via Francigena and other paths, would they have the same success? For example, in Italy, **the concept of rural tourism is unclear because there is no national law**. Only a few Regions have legislated and defined rural tourism, others have "ghettoed" them at the farm. Rural tourism and farm holidays, farm holidays and hospitality are not the same. An agritourism can be an agritourism without catering or hospitality. **The same rural tourism is not agritourism, agritourism is only a component of rural tourism**. So what benefits can these routes really bring to farms? The Francigena and the paths are not only for pilgrims but there are positive mechanisms for projects. In Tuscany we have lessons on the Via Francigena for children in schools, we have families and groups that go on the Via Francigena. We must not think of the routes as only for the pilgrim who departs someplace to travel long days; **the walks are products that can be revived in rural areas**, day tourism and involve schools, and in this context we go back to the farm whose main mission is to produce, breed, cultivate land and wood. Here the farm can be reintroduced to the pilgrim and the tourist through the direct sale of farm-related products. Furthermore, the farm has the opportunity to do farm related activities such as tourism, hiking, horseback riding and bicycle tourism, catering and a didactic farm, provided under the predominance of agricultural activity. Potentially farms could then access the market of the thousands of people who crossed the Via Francigena in Tuscany. Some problems do remain, including receptivity. Many farmhouses say, "I do not have low-cost rooms for pilgrims because if I had to rent a room to a pilgrim in the high season, I should ask for 80/90 euros and it's unlikely that they would pay that much." From an entrepreneurial point of view, they are right, since you cannot be constrained by the possibility that a pilgrim passes by for only one night when they could sell it for longer and at a higher price. Legislation does not help since many rooms have insufficient size and light to accommodate two people. But one could find a solution with the walker who knows that in 16 square meters there can be three bunk beds, providing hospitality to six people. A number that, at 10 euros per person, could entice the agricultural entrepreneur to switch from hosting farm holidays to working in pilgrim tourism. The other issue concerns the didactics. In Tuscany the didactic farms are also spread along the Via Francigena. This is a great tool that should induce the **Via Francigena to be included in school programs**, and not just that. National law or local norms should give these **farms** this possibility; they can also be used for the **maintenance of the Via Francigena**. **Ultimately, farms are resources that we need to utilize**.

THE FILM "I VOLTI DELLA FRANCIGENA"

Fabio Dipinto - Videomaker

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- CROWDFUNDING FOR A POTENTIAL PROJECT
- A FORMATIVE AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCE
- THE FACES OF THE PILGRIMS WALKING ON THE WAY

The production of the film "*I Volti della Francigena*" ("The Faces of the Francigena") was made in the summer of 2015 in collaboration with Alberto Conte's SlowWays. I had the opportunity to shoot by joining a trip they did to update the route's signposts. The French Association of the Vie Francigene **sponsored and contributed to the production of the film** that I was able to finish through **reverse crowdfunding**, where I received much positive feedback from many people. I'm here today to announce that the film is complete. We have finished processing for about a month now and there is a need, now more than ever, for a good push to get it in motion. I'm trying to push it as much as possible around Italy in broad-based initiatives such as festivals, schools and universities. Beyond its artistic value, I am convinced that this project is very **interesting at both the formative and social levels**. For this reason I would like as many people as possible to see the movie, through which they can get in touch with the world of walking and **understand its value as a journey and experience**. I'm actually a walker and I made the movie a month and a half of the way from the Great St. Bernard to Rome last summer. I wish all of us to work together to further enhance the film for the benefit of the Via Francigena.

THE EUROPEAN FRANCIGENA MARATHON

Alberto Bambini - Mayor of Acquapendente (Lazio)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- MEDIEVAL DINNERS, SPECIAL OPENINGS OF MUSEUMS AND GUIDED VISITS IN THE TERRITORY
- A LEVER FOR DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE SMALL REALITIES
- ENTERPRISES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND COLLATERAL SERVICES

The "European Francigena Marathon" has become our flagship with this year's fourth edition to take place next June 5th. It is an initiative that fully captures **the spirit of the Via Francigena**, with Acquapendente as the entry point to the rest of Lazio on the Via Francigena. We are responsible for the quality of services to continue from those offered in Tuscany to throughout Lazio. The affected section in Lazio crosses the municipalities of San Lorenzo, Bolsena and arrives at Montefiascone, exactly 100 km to Rome. Four municipalities are collaborating in the Lazio Region, which has returned to invest in the walks, the Pro Loco, the CAI, and the European Association of the Vie Francigene and Radio Francigena in order to make the entirety of the Via Francigena become a **European** marathon. In the first edition we collected only a few hundred entries, this year we are around 2000 inscriptions and we will be forced to suspend some to avoid problems with the collateral services. Two thousand people is already significant but the added value of the events is the beauty of the Via Francigena in the stretch of Lake Bolsena. Municipalities have various side initiatives such as **medieval dinners, meetings, museum openings, guided tours**, etc. that confirm how the Via Francigena can be used to exploit small realities like ours. The town of Acquapendente has in terms of **rural and religious tourism** a great **lever of development**. It has the fortune of hosting in its cathedral the most ancient reproduction of the Sacello of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem. The numbers on the Via Francigena, thanks to the Jubilee and the investments of the Region of Lazio, are growing. Therefore the territories and their directors have the responsibility to direct this process into a 360 ° development tool, building businesses for young people and collateral services, i.e. **the future of our lands**.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE RADIO FRANCIGENA

Alberto Pugnetti - Radio Francigena

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN DIFFERENT REALITIES
- MULTILINGUAL RADIO TRANSMISSIONS
- RADIO LISTENERS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Thanks to Massimo Tedeschi and the European Association for this partnership that honors us. Ten months ago we did not exist, indeed ten months ago I was angry with Massimo saying "*dobbiamo fare qualcosa*" ("we have to do something"). And something we did: we are a web radio and we have **loyal listeners in all countries not only Europeans, many in North America**. At midday, the first **broadcast in Spanish**, run by the Spanish association, was aired **on the Italian, French and English broadcasts**. A radio does not have to recount itself, so instead I made a tiny video of voices over these past ten months, in which there is a bit of all of you and a bit of all of us.

THE FRANCIGENA EXPERIENCE, THE SLOW TRAVEL NETWORK AND VISIT.FRANCIGENA

Alberto Conte - ItinerAria - SlowWays

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTICIPATED AND SHARED IN
- A PASSION FOR WALKING, CONCRETE WORKING OPPORTUNITIES
- TO DIFFUSE WEALTH AMONG INVESTORS

Just 10 years ago, with Luca Bruschi and Carla Cropera, we presented here in Piacenza the first official route of Via Francigena and I had just made it to my first 1000 km on the Francigena, which I had the honor to certify for the first time. **I was one of the first person to work on the Via Francigena.** Since then, the Via Francigena has changed my life decisively. In those days I had also created the company I currently run, ItinerAria, which has much developed since then. On the Via Francigena you can combine the **passion for the journey and concrete opportunities for work.** The growth of Via Francigena has been slow and manageable. We have passed by a few hundred people a year to the thousands but never have we seen as many people traveling along the route as we have seen this year. Parallel to the route itself, a **large network of micro-enterprises** has developed. Fortunately, the Francigena Way is reconciled in a few hands, following the common rule of economic development at the international level, generating instead **income for those who are keen and persistent in investing.** As far as we are concerned, we started out as two and now, at our two companies, ItinerAria and SlowWays, we are about ten people, 5/6 of them full time, young people who were previously unemployed jobseekers who now work in a team - and this allows us to also have fun. We manage, on behalf of the European Association of the Vie Francigene, the **visit.viefrancigene** website that has also contributed to the promotion of micro-businesses in the territory. Inside the tourism section of the official visit.viefrancigene site, receptive activities, guides and tour operators are advertised. We started from scratch in February 2014 and we are now at over 20,000 monthly visits with the prospect of **30,000 visits** by August.

THE FIRST OFFICIAL GUIDE OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

Miriam Giovanzana – Editor of Terre di Mezzo, Milan

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A GREAT COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE
- A WALK THAT IS EXPERIENCING A *BOOM*
- RELIABLE “WALKED” AND UPDATED GUIDES

This morning I started on a journey and I asked myself, “**When do trips begin?**” In the biblical tradition, a **journey starts with the heart**. I believe that walkers’ experiences show us that the beginning of the journey is when one begins to record themselves, read and listen to stories or the radio. The journey also begins **when you have a guide in hand**; I walked Santiago for the first time in 1999, but used a guide that I had bought in high school. The guide was a reproduction of Book V of the Calixtino Code, one of the first pilgrim guides written in the twelfth century. As we are on the road, guides help the walker **to know and develop a deeper understanding and may I even say, they also serve to narrate the journey**. Ours is a time that needs narrative. In collaboration with the European Association, we want to create a **great collective narrative**. It will certainly also be technical because as a publishing house, we have specialized in walking paths and therefore are **leaders in our country** as well as Europe. We plan to publish part of the guide (in Italian) of the Italian section of the Via Francigena in June and in English by the end of 2016 to complete the major European itinerary. Terre di Mezzo’s strong point is the **reliability of the guides**, as a result of asking our own authors to walk and because we try to update frequently. The Via Francigena, which is experiencing a **boom**, must emphasize the narrative of the journey. Just as there are "before the trip" and "on the trip" components, there is also a "post travel" section and the narrative is done by those who are walking. The people of the Via Francigena also produce a narrative for the connected territories, which is why we are among the founders of the Italian Association of Responsible Tourism and where we strongly believe in economic and cultural development. I think the promise of keeping together different experiences and narratives is fruitful and can bring us far.

ELEVEN YEARS OF THE MAGAZINE "VIA FRANCIGENA AND THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTES"

Carla Cropera - Municipality of Fidenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- RELATIONSHIP ECONOMICS, CONTACTS AND CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS
- DECLARED AND CONSOLIDATED GOVERNANCE OF AN INSTITUTIONAL AND EUROPEAN PROJECT
- A VISIONARY ASSOCIATIVE VENTURE

In recent years the European magazine of the Vie Francigene has developed its **management of relationships**, public relations, and connections between public and private sectors, which today is very visible but at its beginning was not. The magazine is a pass-partout that has brought us into places of excellence linked to the Francigena: Canterbury, Reims, Santiago, Paris, Saint-Maurice, Monteriggioni, Siena and many others and allowed us to introduce to the institutions

what 15 years ago was merely a fascinating and a little visionary project by President Tedeschi. **The common path between the magazine and the European Association has meant that much of the life of the latter has been faithfully summed up in texts, images and testimonies** of famous and less famous people: parliamentarians, ministers, undersecretaries, presidents of regions and provinces, Mayors of large and small cities, all important for the development of this great project. With subsequent restyling, the passionate and competent publishers of **Guidotti studio** have moved from a provincial-level editorial product to the forefront of the Italian Ministry and the Council of Europe. By browsing the 15-year publication of AEVF's life, it is noted that what is now a **declared and consolidated governance of a European and institutional project** has been accepted at the highest levels. Great paths are always done step by step and so it has gone for this exciting and **visionary associative venture**. This magazine has given us the great honor to meet Jacques Le Goff in Paris, who defined the Via Francigena as "Via delle Culture" (Via of Culture) and a project leader among the cultural itineraries of the Council of Europe. I want to recall what he wrote about Europe: "Europe is a great hope that will only be achieved if we take account of history. A Europe without history would be an orphan and miserable, because the present is a descendent of the past and the future will be the fruit of the past. "

THE OFFICIAL MERCHANDISING OF THE AEVF

Raffaele Chiappa - IdeaMarketing, Rivergaro di Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A MEMORY TO ALWAYS CARRY WITH YOU
- COLLABORATION BETWEEN COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES, PRO LOCO AND IAT
- MERCHANDISING FOR TERRITORIES' MARKETING SERVICES

The merchandising project started off a couple of years ago with ambitious goals that we have the intention to further develop. The world of merchandising around the Via Francigena is still quite fragmented, but the opportunity we have been given to be **the sole vendors on the Via Francigena strengthens and inspires us to be the first market for the entire way**. The project is primarily aimed towards those walkers who wish to carry souvenirs. But we also address our activity to the communes and institutions interested in **territorial marketing and territorial valorization** that ultimately lead to commercial activities, such as shops and enterprises who will take advantage of the opportunity to sell our products along the route to pilgrims and walkers. We have **three current vending schemes**, including the web that addresses consumers who **want to buy something before embarking on the journey or, as I mentioned before, during or after the journey**. Along the route there are stores selling our discounted products. It is also opening up an area for creating ad hoc products for groups, associations and co-marketing operations alongside the official logo of the proposing body. The presence of the official AEVF brand on all products will make them become the sole recognizable products. The initial difficulty was mainly to understand how to market the products. That's why I brought three

examples of **formats that worked for the purchase**. The first is that of Pontremoli where all the business activities have been grouped and they have made a single purchase and then they divided the purchase in order to sell each part of the products individually. Monteriggioni, on the other hand, made a single purchase through IAT, and then distributed and sold the products directly. Fiorenzola, was Pro Loco by making the purchase through implementing a crowdfunding and then selling the products directly with a fair margin.

DECENNIAL COLLABORATION ALONG THE ROUTE OF TASTE

Michele Berini - Parmigiano Reggiano Consortium, Parma (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- UNIQUE AND PRECIOUS TASTES SINCE MEDIEVAL TIME
- COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE IN BENEDICT AND CISTERCIAN MONASTERIES
- A THOUSAND YEAR OLD COLLABORATION ALONG A ROAD SYSTEM

I bring you the testimony of a **long friendship between the Via Francigena and Parmigiano-Reggiano**, cemented in the collaboration with the magazine "Via Francigena and European Cultural Routes." It is a journey that began many years ago with the "Corriere Romeo" which then evolved into the magazine "Via Francigena." The most important elements of the collaboration have taken us from 2007 to Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela, Rome, to mention the main centers that Francigena connects, but also to Italy to the cities Fidenza, Bologna, Colle Val d'Elsa, Siena; In Switzerland to Saint-Maurice; In France to Strasbourg, Paris, Reims; In Belgium to Brussels and other parts of Europe. So why does the Parmigiano Consortium decide to follow the magazine and Via Francigena? Around the 11th century these plains were marshy, insalubrious and swampy. The Cistercian and Benedictine monasteries were the **only religious, political, economic leaders**. They decided to reshape these lands and make the bovine workforce beneficial. Thus, huge stables were made near the monastic complexes, the "bushes." They came to produce large quantities of milk that were transformed into a product that could last over time, be transported with the means of the era and were a tool of great economic value. Considering all this, it is with certainty that at that time **the pilgrims who passed through these areas already knew Parmigiano Reggiano**. Furthermore, we are sure that they could find this product also in other monastic presidencies, because of the exchanges between monasteries. It is therefore an ancient collaboration between the Via Francigena and the pilgrims, which has **lasted for 900 years** and certainly should continue.

RECOVERY OF TERRITORIES ALONG CULTURAL ITINERARIES

Giulia D'Ambrosio - Urban Manufacture, Parma (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- URBAN RIGENERATION
- RECOVERY OF OPEN SPACES AND DISMISSED BUILDINGS
- PARTICIPANT DESIGN AND WORKSHOP- IN PROGRESS

"Urban Manufacture" is a nonprofit cultural association that deals with various themes, one of which is **urban regeneration**. It also involves the recovery of open spaces and abandoned buildings, combining this theme with that of **pedagogy**. We are a young association of 270 members with an average age under 35. We also deal with participatory design, technological research, territorial enhancement, promotion and support various initiatives. We organize **workshops where we combine the didactics with the recovery of historic buildings and artifacts** of strong cultural value. From the 4th to the 9th of July this year, we will have a one-week workshop project for the Via Francigena. This project, involving national and international students, will aid in the recovery of drywall along certain stretches of the route through the use of **ancient techniques that were likely to disappear** thereby, valorizing and promoting the historic road. We will also study designs of small landscape architecture elements that are built with natural materials that the woods recycles, further protecting the territory, landscape and the environment.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN TUSCIA

Renato Trapé - Councilor for Culture of Montefiascone (Lazio)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- WONDERFUL LANDSCAPES LIKE THOSE IN TUSCIA
- TO OPEN THE DOOR AND FIND YOURSELF ON ROMAN BASALT
- A MEETING POINT WITH THE VIA ROMEA GERMANICA TO MONTEFIASCONE

I would like to thank Alessandra Terrosi, Sergio Pieri and Loredana Smafora who are doing a great deal to promote the "European Francigena Marathon." It is a great event that allows us to

propose **Tuscia**, a region that barely appears on maps, as a **very precise reality** from all points of view: historical, geographical and traditional. The name "Tuscia" derives from the Latin word "Etruscans" and is a **quadrilateral shaped area containing extraordinary beauties** that goes from the valley of the Tevere to the Tyrrhenian Sea and from the Massif of Amiata to the Cimini Mountains. Along the Via Francigena in Tuscia we come to **Acquapendente**, known as the "Jerusalem of Europe" because of the cathedral's famous crypt. Then, **San Lorenzo**, with its incredibly modern eighteenth-century urban planning. **Bolsena**, the city of the 1263 miracle that gave birth to the Corpus Domini feast. **Montefiascone**, **one of the few cities of the popes** along with Anagni, Viterbo and Orvieto. Montefiascone hosted 32 popes, to our fortune and misfortune. To them we owe all of the city's blooming decadence. **Montefiascone is 100 km from Rome** and it's as if those who start from the hundredth kilometer did the entire journey solely for the purpose of obtaining the Testimonium. At Montefiascone the Via Francigena **merges with the Via Romea Germanica**, a great route from Stade, at the mouth of Elba to Hamburg, and crosses over Germany, Austria, South Tyrol, Trentino, Veneto, Romagna, Umbria and Lazio. This spring we organized a lot of events concerning the Francigena, involving middle and elementary schools, finding in the children and parents an unprecedented interest. **Most importantly the Via Francigena is belongs to those who live there.** We even still use a stretch of the original Roman road. There are people who opened their door and walked on Roman basalt without realizing it, until the Via Francigena gave us the opportunity to explain.

PRODUCTS OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA: THE CONSORTIUM OF TYPICAL PIACENTINI SALUMI

Roberto Belli - Consortium President Salumi Tipici Piacentini, Piacenza (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- GOOD TERRITORIES PRODUCING GOOD AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS
- PRODUCTS CERTIFIED BY PROTECTED DESIGNATIONS OF ORIGINS
- TO DISCOVER THE ENOGASTRONOMY OF TERRITORIES

I would like to thank the European Association for being involved in this wonderful initiative. Personally, I have to cross the Via Francigena every day, I live in Calendasco, where I meet pilgrims daily. Piacenza's salami are the fruit of an ever-growing agricultural area. Like all the good territories that produce good agri-food products, Piacenza also boasts protected designations of origin. The DOP is the highest certification recognized by the European Union for food and the Via Francigena certainly touches on many of these products. Piacenza is the only province in the whole of Europe that in the delicatessen sector can boast three products with a protected designation of origin: *coppa* (air-cured pork meat), *salame* (salami) and *pancetta* (bacon). You are invited to taste them and then thank the Vicobarone winery for our two typical

wines, Gutturnio and Malvasia Bianca Aromatica of Candia, which has recently been very popular for being remembered as the Leonardo da Vinci wine. Adding to list is the Grana Padano, another national pride and from the territory.

THE PLACES ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN PAINTINGS AND WATERCOLORS

Janina Veit Teuten - English painter

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A COLLECTION OF LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS FROM NATURE
- SMALL, MEDIUM, AND BIG CITY PLURALITIES
- AN ITINERARY EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND WATERCOLORS

In 1993 Don Amos Aimi, canon of the Cathedral of Fidenza, suggested that I **illustrate the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome with watercolors and drawings** and to then, put the paintings on show for the celebration of the year 2000 Jubilee. I was able to get my sister and another English lady involved. **I lived on the Francigena for seven years**, painting and making arrangements with various communes. So in 2000 I was able to show the Via Francigena in 23 places from Canterbury to Rome and I had the unexpected fortune to show the paintings for the first time in the Canterbury cathedral, thanks to the communications between Massimo and Lord Mayor of Canterbury. Later, we were able **to bring the exhibition to 23 other locations: small, medium and large municipalities, 9 of them in France, one in Switzerland and the remaining 13 in Italy**. Thus, the public was given a taste of what would then be the Via Francigena. The collection still exists today and is under the curation of the Civic Museum of Fucecchio, on the Via Francigena, because that was the last place where the exhibition was entirely set up. Today, we have brought 10 paintings that show the places in this very district.

THE LIFE-BLOOD OF THE VIA: SHARING AND ANIMATION IN THE EUROPEAN FESTIVAL "VIA FRANCIGENA COLLECTIVE PROJECT"

Sandro Polci - Artistic Director European Festival "Via Francigena Collective Project"

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- VISION AND MANAGEMENT CAPACITY IN A LARGE SETTING
- RELIGIOUS DIMENSION WITH AND VERSUS THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION
- A NETWORK OF FREE EVENTS

Nowadays the **discussion is bottom up**, it is born out of your stories and I would like it to start with the following literary binomials. This morning we saw the *vision*, studied management skills and made a broad picture. Now we would like things to become extremely concrete, even if making it at a 1: 1 scale they are often tiring. I refuse the definition of slow tourism because **tourism is slow for those who see it by traveling by car**, motorbike or train, but for those who walk, scale 1: 1 is by no means slow, indeed it is the maximum available. Speaking of these binomials, the first is the comparison of people's behavior that shows whether we prefer video or nature. Over the course of time we have reduced our time in nature by a fifth. Today we are talking about *outdooring*, but in fact we are very little in nature, we are constantly in front of our handheld device. There is a theme that is emerging with great force and that must be discussed today in the name of the Via Francigena, Via for Peace. It is a theme with a **religious dimension as opposed to the spiritual one**, a theme that fuels undeniable conflicts and each of our smallest steps goes one way rather than another. The other element is the **unpredictability** that brings us a bit closer to our footsteps, even though there are not many nor very adventurousness, they continue towards the unpredictable. The unforeseeable may be the unknown but that does not necessarily mean that it's dangerous, it's what lacks in our behaviors. In order to network all our events this year, the European Festival "Via Francigena Collective Project" exceeded the 500 events from last year. They are almost free events, a mode of sharing that is like an oxymoron that I like very much: the pilgrim is a lonely animal and great companion, who knows how to be simultaneously alone and to share significant moments with others.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN ENGLAND

Julia Peters - Pilgrim, Canterbury (Kent)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A GREAT MARKET TO BE EXPLORED AND TAPPED INTO
- CHALLENGES TO CONFRONT AND OVERCOME IN ALL TERRITORIES
- THE ANIMATION OF THE VIA AND LOCAL PROMOTION

I will talk about the English experience on the Via Francigena and, by English experience, I mean that lived by all Anglophones: English, Irish, Scottish, Australian, New Zealand, Canadian and American; **an enormous market that is waiting to be explored**. If we think of Anglophonic pilgrims, I think the lure of Rome begins in Canterbury. Many of these pilgrims are interested in traveling the whole itinerary just like me, others want to travel only short sections and for this, Anglophones are especially fond of Tuscany. Nonetheless, if the pilgrim decides to start the journey in Canterbury, they will have to face many challenges, especially in France, mainly related to hospitality. Many pilgrims who would like to embark on the journey always ask me the same questions: how did you do it? How did you plan it? Which maps, streets and hostels did you use? Unfortunately at **European level there is no source of information at this time**. **If, on the other hand, the pilgrim is interested in walking in Italy, the European**

Association of the Vie Francigene's website is very informative, providing information on hospitality and maps of the route. I would therefore like to suggest to the European Association to try **to disseminate more information, especially with regards to the not well-established routes in France**. If the European Association provided more information for pilgrims, I believe that many more pilgrims would decide to start the journey from Canterbury and travel all the way to Rome. The lack of information, above all, is stopping people. I currently live in Canterbury and work with Velia Coffey to promote the itinerary locally. On April 16th I organized a non-profit walk, which received an excellent response from the local population and demonstrates the great potential of the existing market. A small community on the route also wanted to provide refreshments to pilgrims on foot, and seeing 44 pilgrims walking together awakened a **great interest to improve services such as hospitality and the availability of the pilgrim's stamp**.

SIGERIC'S FORD

Francesco Ferrari - Vice President AEVF, Lodi (Lombardy)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO REDISCOVER OUR TRADITIONS
- TO BE PART OF AN EUROPEAN ITINERARY
- TO RETRACE THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST

The Sigeric ford, *transitum padi* (the Po's ford), is a very important point known by all pilgrims. The ford allows one to cross the Po, the largest Italian river that borders the Lombardy Region and the Emilia-Romagna Region. **The waterways were very important** and the River Po was one of the two rivers that all the pilgrimage routes from the north had to overcome in order to continue. The ford was strategic because it is located between Piacenza (Emilia) and Pavia (Lombardy), in Corte Sant'Andrea (Lombardy), stage number 39 of Sigeric's diary. In the past, **there were ports along the riverbanks in Lombardy and Emilia that provided for numerous trade routes**. This ford, of particular splendor, attracted many pilgrims who had walked past mountains, hills, and plains to find a point to cross the river that today, like in the past, is the most difficult point of the pilgrimage. In the tenth century, near the ford, there were boats and rafts that when asked, would do this route. For this reason between Corte Sant'Andrea and Calendasco (Emilia), we thought **to restore the ford and give pilgrims the opportunity to fulfill this important experience**. There is now **Sigeric's boat** that carries six people and carries out a call service, with all references on the European Association's site as well as in tourist guides and with walkers. The crossing is carried out safely and on both sides there are columns that symbolize the passage of Sigeric, and docks in order to be able to easily get on the boat. Nearby, local associations have opened up hostels, providing pilgrims the opportunity to stop, sleep and eat. We therefore expect you to visit Corte Sant'Andrea, a small hamlet to which the

Francigena Way has given it publicity, allowing it to rediscover its traditions and **a self-awareness of its place in the European itinerary.**

THE CONFRATERNITY OF PILGRIMS TO ROME

Brian Mooney - President of "Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome"

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO CONSTANTLY IMPROVE SERVICES FOR PILGRIMS
- TO INTERACT WITH THOSE WHO WALK THE VIA
- OVERCOME THE CHALLENGE OF INCREASING FLOWS FROM KM 0

I would like to congratulate Massimo Tedeschi and his team for the wonderful work they have done over the last 15 years to help promote the Via Francigena from above. I will share with you a few words about my experience on the Via Francigena that consists of two parts, two roads, the going and the return. In 2010 I had the privilege of walking the entire way starting from my English home to Rome and then, two years later, I had the privilege of returning home from Rome the same way. **I'm one of the few people still alive and crazy enough to have gone both ways.** During the seasons following I have continued to be involved with the Via Francigena and therefore, I know very well the progress that has been made and the challenges that still await. **Our fraternity in England is a nonprofit association that offers many services including the issuing of credentials, passports, publishing hospitality information** and being active on Facebook. We, like the European Association, face challenges. One of the biggest being **the signage from Canterbury's KM 0 in Dover, which is not as good as it could be.** What can the European Association do here in Fidenza and Piacenza? It should **communicate more with walkers** who really undertake the trip, walked and walk the way. The European Association is doing a great job, though signage is still very deficient in some places. Perhaps the real challenge is to increase the annual number of pilgrims who travel the Via Francigena in its entirety from Canterbury Rome, which is now probably between 1000 and 1500. In terms of the Po ford and for other numbers I refer to Danilo Parisi, who has been running the boat services since 1988, and keeps the most amazing travel log of the passages. He has so far registered about 4,000 people who have walked for a long distance, from Lausanne, from Holland, from Germany all the way to Rome. If the Via Francigena wants to be compared to Santiago's Way there is still a long way to go including: signposts, infrastructure and hospitality services.

PROJECT ITALIAN WALKS

Claudio Nardocci - President of UNPLI, Union Pro Loco d'Italia, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO BETTER NARRATE OUR TERRITORY
- TO GROW A MOVEMENT OF WALKS AND WALKERS
- 6000 PRO LOCO TO HELP THE WALKERS OF EUROPE

The Italian Pro Loco are associations that promoted their places 100 years ago. Today, 6,000 are widely disseminated throughout Italy and provide help in many areas. Two years ago, we conceived the idea to help the routes and **to grow the movement of walkers in Italy**. We have created a project called "camminitaliani.it" because we are committed to being available to help. We have not created any new path instead we aid those that already exist. This project was funded by the social policies of the Italian government. We also have a historic walker called Francisco Sancho for Europe. He is now in Oviedo and has thus far walked 7600 kilometers. On Francisco's back is the UNPLI logo to promote our organization as one that can **help all the walkers in Europe**. We want to move towards a new communication for the walkers' territory, something important that we do not do well. Italian history has often been told better by others instead by us. In this case we want, with a specific training, **to begin telling the story of Italy well** to above all the walkers because they will absorb it better and then are will recount it. In October, as every autumn, we organized the week of Italian routes with conferences, initiatives and walks, inviting all the Pro Loco to arrange appointments. We considered it as a laboratory, and one of the initiatives was "**from Francesco to Francesco**" or from Assisi to Rome in 12 stages. We launched a contest to for Italians to share their walking stories and we invite you to see the "UNPLI immaterial memory" heritage on *Youtube* about Italian traditions. There are a thousand videos that recount our extraordinary tradition as though we would like to recount to all the walkers of the world.

THE PILGRIMAGE AND THE ROUTES OF FAITH IN PIACENZA

Domenico Ponzini - Diocese of Piacenza - Bobbio (Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A NETWORK OF ROUTES BRIMMING WITH HOSPITALITY

- MATERIAL AND SPIRITUAL HOSPITALITY
- CONTINUOUS EXCHANGE OF GESTURES OF FAITH

Piacenza's fortune was to be on **two very important routes** that have always served the passage of people. The Via Emilia, built in 220 B.C., connects Piacenza to Rimini and Via Postumia from Genoa, passes by Piacenza and, passing the Po, arrives at Aquileia. The Piacenza-Fidenza stretch became Via Francigena, while the stretch from Genoa, especially Casteggio, is important for pilgrims heading to San Colombano di Bobbio, arriving at the central point of Borgo square, and then continuing towards the church of St. Hilary. It is a Romanesque church that also had a hospice and in its architrave one sees Sant'Ilario. There is also the prototype of the pilgrim, Thomas, who is the patron saint of pilgrims. **Piacenza was very well equipped to welcome pilgrims.** Muratori wrote that in order to see what great attention was being paid to people carrying out gestures of faith, they had to go to Piacenza, where the innards were innumerable. It counts 80 between the city and its surroundings. Before Fidenza, the Via Francigena passes Fiorenzuola, where there were 4 places of welcome. From Fiorenzuola there was another road that reached the Via Francigena in Pontremoli. On that street is Castell'Arquato where there were 8 hospitals. There is then the Way of the Irish, Piacenza - Bobbio, and the Way of the Abbots that arrives in Pontremoli and is very busy. **Piacenza was a homeland to pilgrims and hosted important walkers.** There are still many things to say, but there is one point in particular that I must bring up now. That is my joy towards having the seat of the European Association in Piacenza. Since it has been the place where many have passed, it is very necessary to feel the presence of those who are currently working as our ancestors did so that the route is not just pleasant and useful, but also to highlight those work on this noble pilgrimage.

MONTERIGGIONI: THE HOUSE OF THE FESTIVAL

Eraldo Ammannati - Monteriggioni A.D. 1213 (Tuscany)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A TEAM UNITED THROUGH HARD WORK
- ABBADIA IN ISOLA, WITH ITS HOSTEL AND ITS SPACES AVAILABLE TO ALL
- A COMMON CONCEPT FOR RESEARCH ON IMPROVEMENT

In the celebration of the fifteen years of AEVF I would like to have join me, Raffaella Senesi, mayor of Monteriggioni, and Giovanni D'Agliano, director of Tuscany Region. We celebrate a **long work**, also aided by the Tuscany Region and the municipality of Monteriggioni, who invested money for a truly amazing job. The **Abbadia hostel in Isola** has been opened for 20 days and I invite everyone to visit it. We are already full of pilgrims and we have so many more reservations. I would like to share a few words on Giovanni D'Agliano and Andrea Carubi who have really done everything for this project. The festival's home is an idea by Raffaella Senesi

and Sandro Polci, which developed during Forum of Municipalities last year, during which the Scientific Committee of the European Association was established. There is also the *Slow Travel Fest* and other initiatives we are currently planning. **I always work behind the scenes, even in the European Association there are many who work behind the scenes** and today, with the license of Massimo who has adopted me in these 5 years of work, I want to present: Luca **Bruschi**, Sami **Tawfik**, Micol **Sozzi**, Silvia **Lecci**, Francesco **Ferrari** and others. It is necessary to also thank them because every day we call, hear and **work closely with each other, making them become like family to me**. I am deeply moved and thank you all heartily for what you do for the Via Francigena.

HOW WE HAVE MADE OUR PART

Andrea Carubi - Region of Tuscany

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- POLICY CHOICES TO CREATE AN ADEQUATE AND TECHNICAL STRUCTURE
- SPECIFIC INVESTMENTS FOLLOWING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL LOGIC
- AN EXERCISE IN COURAGE IN WHICH ONE CAN LEARN THE MOST NECESSARY VALUES IN THIS HISTORIC MOMENT

The Via Francigena section in Tuscany stretches 380 km and involves 38 communes, which I thank publicly, because during these past six years that we worked on the Via Francigena, they have been very **reliable and dedicated workers**. In only a few years we have been able to set up the Via Francigena, which is now a reality. How did we do it? First, **adequate policy choices** have been made, namely the creation of a suitable technical structure, well-managed by Giovanni D'Agliano. The second item was **invested resources, which amounted to 16 million euros**, used in a targeted manner: 8 million for security, 6 million for hospitality facilities, 2 million for various services such as pit stops and water points. We have moved from a logical approach to more entrepreneurial logic, working on a product. The present situation sees Tuscany in 4 paths that can be safely used: hiking, carriage, cyclotourism and equestrian. Another important part was the investment made in Wi-Fi, which covers almost all of the 380 km, alongside with the retrieval of an old railroad that has become a route used by pilgrims as well as citizens. Another action was to install coverings on traffic signs that provide street décor containing NFC technology that lets you download a smartphone app to access all the information in the area. The Via Francigena, having borrowed a number of values from the pilgrimage, has become a **journey of experience** and the Tuscan Region has worked on it as an experiential tourism product. The biggest problem is maintenance, where together with the Region, there must be a collaboration of the municipalities. I think the Via Francigena is an exercise of courage, where one learns the values they need in this historic moment.

SAN BENEDICT'S WAY: 300 KM FROM NORCIA TO SUBIACO, UP TO MONTECASSINO

Simone Frignani - President of the Association of Friends of the Way of St. Benedict

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- CROSSING AND VALUING PLACES OF ITALY "MINOR"
- AN INTEGRATION BETWEEN MULTIPLE EUROPEAN WALKS
- ALSO CROSSING BENEDICTIAN MONASTERIES

The path of St. Benedict was born in 2010, after three years of work, with the aim of joining three significant places that hosted important moments from St. Benedict from Norcia's life. He was a **Benedictine founder and is a patron of Europe**, recognized as an important figure, precursor, guide and light for Europe. In the middle Ages, the Benedictine world played a fundamental role in leadership and being a **cultural lighthouse**. Benedict was born in Norcia around the year 480. He studied in Rome and then moved to Subiaco where he remained for 30 years, living first as a hermit and then establishing monasteries and organizing monk communities. In Subiaco, Benedict gave order to the monks, who learned to live together by dividing their tasks. Montecassino was where he lived the last part of his life and fulfilled the rule matured in the years at Subiaco. The idea of St. Benedict's Way is very simple: to connect the **three most important places representing St. Benedict** - Norcia, Subiaco and Montecassino - via a trail of caravans and white roads. A pilgrim can learn about the figure of the Benedictine founder and much about the less-known history of Italy through this journey, such as the stories of characters Saint Rita from Cascia and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Saint Benedict is especially important in **Europe. The first idea of Europe is found under Benedictine auspices** and it is in the Carolingian Empire that all monasteries were organized, with the Benedictine rule. This culture spread in Europe by making the Benedictines fundamental to the cultural role and the transformation of the territory through recovery works on unusable land. This route welcomes Europe and so, in 2013 the association "Friends of the Way of St. Benedict" was formed with the aim of linking together the Benedictine abbeys of Austria and Slovenia with a well-structured itinerary.

THE NETWORK OF THE GERMAN ROMEA ROUTE

Rodolfo Valentini - Association Via Romea Germanica, Santa Sofia (Forlì-Cesena, Emilia-Romagna)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A CORRIDOR BETWEEN POPULATIONS
- A MEETING BETWEEN RELIGIONS AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN THEM

- AN OPEN EUROPE

The Via Romea Germanica is a **historic European path**. There is ample documentation that defines it as the **best route to go to Rome during the late middle Ages**. A document by Abbot Alberto of Stade, Germany, illustrates the route's sections. Giovanni Caselli, an archeologist and Florentine anthropologist, has done a great job of putting together the stages and recovering, where possible, the ancient path. **An ancient track that exists preserved** and has some kilometers of pavement visible near the Apennine valley and the Alps. During these years Foietta and I, from the Via Romea Germanica Association, joined Caselli to restore and trace the entire European itinerary. This was a great journey of **96 sections from Stade, near Hamburg, to Rome**. All the crossed municipalities were involved and the first "Pilgrims Crossing Borders," the largest European walk from Trondheim, Norway, to Rome and Santa Maria di Leuca, was launched. Out of this journey, I have written a guide about the Brenner to Rome tract, which will be published by the "Terre di Mezzo" publishing house of the Italian Via Roma Romeica. This path is very present as a **corridor between populations**. It also originates in predominantly Lutheran land and next year will be the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation. We will have **pilgrims of Protestant and Catholic confession to walk together** towards Rome and Jerusalem. There is talk these days of a possible closure of the Brenner crossing. It is something that goes against the logic of the routes. **Europe does not close itself and will not be trapped in cages. Europe must be open** and we must begin to see the walks as European and non-national pathways, as a form of networking and crossing bell towers.

SIENA FRANCIGENA AND FRANCIGENA KIDS

Sonia Pallai - Councilor for Culture and Tourism in Siena (Tuscany)

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- INVOLVING CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO LEARN THE HISTORY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA
- REDISCOVERING THE ANCIENT PATHS IN THE HISTORICAL CENTER
- VALORIZING TYPICAL PRODUCTS OF THE TERRITORY

The City of Siena enhances the Via Francigena for the benefit of the city and all the municipalities belonging to the European Association of the Francigene Roads. The city is trying to work towards highly technical targets. We want draw focus to the complex of the **Santa Maria della Scala, one of the oldest hospitals in Europe**, which was actually born to welcome the pilgrims to Rome. Next Sunday as part of **Siena Francigena**, there is hike from Porta Camollia - which looks towards Canterbury - to Porta Romana - which looks towards Rome. It will cross through the city and pass the Santa Maria della Scala. Here we will deliver the pilgrims' *bisaccia* (sack lunch) made from local products, where we will then stop and consume

in a particular place in the city. This is the third edition. The Siena Francigena Kids was born from this product. After attending a meeting of the European Association of the Francigene Roads and interviewing on how to participate with the families, I have proposed this product for children and families. We welcome children and families to Santa Maria della Scala with a nun, one of the figures in the frescoes of the Santa Maria pilgrimage. The nurse is an experienced guide who uses kid-friendly language to entertain children with the **history and anecdotes about the Via Francigena**. Then the guide accompanies them to get a pilgrim's backpack, inside which they find a ham sandwich, enabling us to promote **the importance of healthy and proper nutrition**. At this point the children walk on a small stretch of the Via Francigena to Porta Romana. There we teach them the ability to read the road signs. We have already planned Francigena Kids for next winter and the events will be held every Saturday, from the first Saturday of December to the last Saturday of February.

ARRIVAL TO THE ETERNAL CITY

Anna Maria Cerioni - Superintendence at Capitoline for Cultural Heritage, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- A REALITY TO COMMUNICATE TO THOSE WHO LIVE ON THE VIA
- TO ASSIST PILGRIMS ALSO NEAR THE FINAL DESTINATION
- TO INVOLVE YOUTH AND ALLOW THEM TO DEVELOP THEIR IDEAS

Using jubilee funds, the City of Rome committed 900,000 euros for a project aimed at **improving the northern section of Francigena**. In addition, within the framework of a civil service program, we have developed the project “**Roma Accoglie il Mondo**” (“**Rome Welcomes the World**”), where we have included a section dedicated to Via Francigena. We have formed a group of 8 volunteers aged 21 to 28, who have been introduced to the Via Francigena and helped us create the event that we will propose for the European Via Francigena Collective Project. The first problem was that of where to host these young adults and the only minimally equipped enough place was the **La Storta station**. Within a month these young people have been trained to receive pilgrims. Some serve La Storta, especially on public holidays. Others research and have already met Indian, Spanish, and various groups in the area. Another difficulty in the districts crossed by the Via Francigena is that none of those who live there are aware that the Via Francigena exists. For this reason, we are organizing activities at schools and at the municipal level **to inform the local inhabitants about the importance of this route and what it could represent for their future**. These youth searched for Rome’s reception centers and they went to find the contacts of groups arriving on the Via Francigena to Rome. They then prepared a book to collect the testimonies of the pilgrims. Last year we participated for the first time at the European Festival and the challenge this year was to involve the youth in the “**Seguendo Sigerico**” (“**Following Sigeric**”) event that will take place in four moments: the first is “Pellegrini che Lasciano il Segno” (“Pilgrims Leaving a Mark”) to Porta San Sebastiano; The

second is the “Caccia a Sigerico” (“Sigeric Hunt”), in the small hamlet of Isola Farnese; The third will be “La Francigena Naturalmente” (“The Francigena Way Naturally”), which will consist of some visits within the two reserves of the Insugherata and Monte Mario and the last will be “Sulle Tracce di Sigerico” (“On the Traces of Sigeric”).

VIA ROMEA STRATA

Raimondo Sinibaldi - Pilgrimage Office, Diocese of Vicenza (Veneto), Via Romea Strata

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- ACTIVE COLLABORATION WITH OTHER WAYS
- THE REDISCOVERY OF ANCIENT WAYS AND ITS BRANCHES
- TO SHARE CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION AND MANAGEMENT OF A WALK

The intention of the Pilgrimage Office of the Vicenza Diocese is to rediscover some pilgrimage routes that cross the northeast of Italy. Our research has highlighted **7 pilgrimage routes** that connect north, northeast, Eastern Europe to Rome, Jerusalem and Santiago de Compostela. The streets are branched. If the Via Francigena is one then the **vie romee highlighted show the multitude of routes and paths**. Via Romea Strata, as we call it, is made up of eight sections: the Via Romea Vicezia, which descends from the Brenner and passes through Vicenza; The Via di Alemagna, which from Tarvisio goes to Concordia Sagittaria; The Via Aquilense, which from Mira to Slovenia goes to Concordia Sagittaria; The Via Annia from Concordia Sagittaria to Abbadia Polesine. There is also a small stretch of Via Porciliana from Verona to Montagnana and Via Postumia from Verona to Vicenza. Lastly, there is the Via Longobarda, which takes the Via Modena Romeo Nonantolana onto the Francigena Way in Fucecchio creating an important and significant synergy. The route has been completely mapped under the same criteria as the Via Francigena. It involves **159 municipalities, 4 regions, 15 provinces**. An operative group coordinates these activities and at the transnational level, we are currently in contact with: Via Romea Germanica, the reality of Carinthia, where there are 5 pilgrimage routes that cross to Tarvisio, the Cirillo and Methodius road coming from the Czech Republic St. Martin's Street in Tours, the Jacobeo Way. The route is now available to see on the website www.romeastrata.it. We started only three and a half years ago and presented the road at regional level in Veneto but we will now present it at national level. We are supported by the Pontifical Council for Culture and the Ad Limina Petri Association and our other relevant partner is the AEVF.

ANIMATION OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN TUSCANY

Sandro Santini - Tuscan Association of the Vie Francigene

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- CONSTANT MAINTENANCE TO SUSTAIN THE WAY
- ANIMATION OF THE TERRITORY AND YOUTH EDUCATION
- TO LOVE YOUR TERRITORY AND TAKE CARE OF IT

The Tuscan Association of the Vie Francigene has been present for some time in the Tuscan territory and is a kind of minor child of the European Association of the Vie Francigene. The Tuscan Association seeks to provide timely services as the **vital lymph node of the way**. By a vital lymph's node I mean vivacity, which is especially impactful if presented to middle school children and teenagers. We work to inform about the intentions for the Via Francigene. We go to **school seminars** so that the kids become pilgrims themselves and thus, become people who will travel on, maintain and promote the Way. **The kids are taught both how to walk the via and vital nutrition**, utilizing products of the territory. They are taught how to maintain the road. They are instructed to reposition signage and interpret it. Turning the attention to the interventions made by Jacques Guy and Albert Fobe who spoke about school experiences. We talk about animation and animation on the road is made when it is viable. We want to propose ourselves as a solution for road, signage and maintenance management. It is true that when a road is created all the conditions are created for it to be safely traveled upon. Travel should happen without any sort of problem, signage or otherwise. However, if maintenance is not done, the road will die. Therefore, maintenance should be carried out, perhaps by **those who live in the territory**. Every single European citizen who has the Via Francigene outside their house must **love maintaining** the Way in order and in safety and signal problems. We work to ensure that the Via Francigene has a uniformity of maintenance, signage and management throughout the Region.

HOLY LAND: WALKING FROM ROME TO LEUCA

Alberto Alberti - Pilgrim Crossing Borders and Associazione Gruppo dei Dodici, Rome

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- TO ABOLISH BORDERS BETWEEN THE STATES
- BRING MESSAGES OF PEACE

- TO INVOLVE POPULATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WAY

I belong to a walking group and our relationship to our walking route has a meaning that goes beyond the route itself. We propose to unite half of Europe. Last year a group left Trondheim, Norway, crossed Denmark, Germany, on the Germanic Way, Austria and arrived to Rome and then to Santa Maria di Leuca. This year there are walks in all these countries because what matters is that pilgrims are **crossing borders. There are no boundaries for pilgrims** and our paths unite many countries. In Italy, the route that goes from Brenner to Rome is handled by the Via Romea Germanica Association. Our section goes from Rome to Santa Maria di Leuca and is organized by various associations. It is important that those who walk do not walk only alone for themselves or for their association but involve the communities. When we walk, people around us join our group because we think it's just as important to talk to people as much it is to acknowledge the route. Even more important is to **involve the institutions**. The stretch from Rome is a journey of great spirituality, touching Monte Sant'Angelo on the Gargano, arriving in Leuca and then hooking with the route to Jerusalem, connecting it to Europe. We are on the way of the crusaders, where half Europe walked with weapons in their fists to start wars whereas we arrive and bring peace. We will change our social life system and the thousands of people who join will change us and thus, will continue to produce tensions. Some refuse this relationship and understanding, they refuse to change. We must accept it, we are in a crisis but at the same time there must also be those who carry a message of peace. I have realized as the phenomenon of pilgrimage increases that we can have a great influence. We must only bring a message of peace in all that we do throughout our journey and in our inner growth.

THE WAY OF ABRAHAM

Elsi Rizvanolli - Project Manager of the Abraham Path, The Netherlands

THE VIA FRANCIGENA IS:

- NETWORKING AND EXPERTISE EXCHANGE
- AN INTERNATIONAL PARTNER NETWORK
- TO NOT CROSS BORDERS BUT REGIONS AND COMMUNITIES

The path of Abraham is a long-running itinerary that crosses the Middle East. The path incorporates **Abraham's values**: generosity, kindness to foreigners and hospitality. That's why we support it. It is very important for us to believe in the possibility that we can bring a message of peace across the Via. I am first of all very passionate about the work I do. We work in the Middle East, a place that is moving westward to Europe and where we encourage people to go and walk. What we do is **counter-tendency**, but I think we should do it. In our work there are essentially three levels of intervention: **developing the path** through the creation of infrastructures, promoting the path at local and international level and opening the way for new collaborations. We want to use Abraham's path as **a platform for learning**, to inform people all

over the world of its various aspects: anthropological, archaeological, social, and spiritual. Similarly to the Via Francigena we have groups of friends everywhere and an international network of partners. Through our partners in these territories we can make infrastructural investments. We do not like **the definition of a transnational path because it refers to the concept of frontiers**. When you walk in nature, it is not good to only see boundaries to cross. We seek to develop **Abraham's Way as a crossing of regions and communities**, promoting hospitality and further expanding a welcome to more and more pilgrims. The path extends along 2000 km that follow Abraham's steps as described in biblical scriptures. It hits part of southeast Turkey then moving into Syria, which we know is going through a civil war, and then, arriving in Palestine, where it overlaps with the Jesus trail. **We admire the Via Francigena** and its results. In 2010, we established a partnership with the European Association as we want to relaunch Abraham's Way through an exchange of expertise, mutual promotion and networking.