

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR  
INTERREGIONAL TECHNICAL  
COORDINATION ON  
THE VIA FRANCIGENA



VIA  
FRANCIGENA  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



GUIDANCE ON EUROPEAN COMMON  
PATH AND ACCOMMODATION  
STANDARDS ON THE VIA FRANCIGENA  
CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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## **This guidance is a project of the European Association of the Via Francigena - the European Committee for technical interregional coordination**

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# FOREWORD

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The Via Francigena, a cultural route of the Council of Europe, is a major cultural and tourist infrastructure facility which develops along a trans-national path marked by historical and artistic works of art bearing tangible witness of long-lasting connections and living communities animating the territories. The European Association of the Via Francigena (EAVF), is the lead network habilitated by the Council of Europe for the enhancement of the cultural route for its work of boosting networking among concerned bodies through multi-level synergies and shared initiatives while supporting sustainable territorial development.

An historical route of dialogue and encounter among people of different origins, today the Via Francigena also represents a means of preservation and enhancement of local cultural identities, thus becoming a tourist product which entails specific action plans.

This Guidance sets out the shared and common quality standard which are essential to guarantee safety and access throughout the whole route. This Guidance provides guidelines for planning and implementing the route, for its maintenance-related activities, its signposting and the organization of the accommodation along the route, within a participatory planning framework which is respectful of the levels of responsibilities among the bodies concerned.

This document results from the joint work among EAVF and the European Regions of the European Committee for Technical Interregional Coordination of the Via Francigena, in close cooperation with national and local associations which are constantly committed in the route enhancement.

## **CONTENTS:**

- MINIMUM STANDARDS TO BE ASSURED ALONG THE HIKING, BIKING, HORSE-RIDING AND DRIVING ITINERARY
- SIGNAGE IN EUROPE ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA: GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND SIGNPOSTS TYPOLOGIES
- MINIMUM STANDARDS TO BE ASSURED IN THE ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA



## INTRODUCTION TO PATH AND LEGS DEFINITION

The Guidance provides general quality criteria concerning the choice of the itinerary, including its cartography and the methodology for outlining the itinerary while ensuring its safety and regular monitoring.

The cartography of historical routes, such as the Via Francigena, the roads to Rome and other pilgrimage routes, firstly implies a careful examination of existing bibliographic and historical sources to identify the historic itinerary through a philological approach.

This analysis allows one to identify a primary route (practicable in four modalities: on foot, by bike, on horse, by car) and verify at the same time the existence of other defined and practicable routes in the same area in order to bring possible improvements. More specific information on this phase of the itinerary development are provided in the paragraph "Mapping the route".

The route is to be defined taking into account the necessity that it has to be open to public throughout the year, except the Great St. Bernard Pass which is generally close from October to June due to snowfalls. During this period the Great Saint Bernard Pass is accessible only by car through the tunnel.

Concerning the identification of legs, the historical analysis of the stops (submansiones), noted down by the archbishop Sigeric on his travel diary during his journey back from Rome to Canterbury were matched with the legs indicated by the European Association of the Via Francigena and its partners in England, France, Switzerland and Italy and approved by the Council of Europe. The general table of historical and modern legs is available here below:

Sigeric Submansiones		Modern practicable leg <sup>1</sup>	
Historical Toponym (AD 990)	Modern Toponym		
?	Canterbury	Canterbury	
?	Dover	Dover	
		Calais	
LXXX Sumeran	Sombre	Wissant	
LXXIX (?)			
LXXVIII Gisne	Guïnes	Guïnes	
		Licques	
		Tournehem la Hem	
		Wisques	
		Delettes	
LXXVII Teranburh	Thérouanne	Thérouanne	
		Amettes	
LXXVI Bruwaei	Bruay-en-Artois o Bruay-la-Buissière	Bruay La buissière	
	Bruay La buissière	Ablain St Nazaire	

<sup>1</sup> The legs of the route in Hauts-de-France Region and in Great East Region (France) comply with the path approved by Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre. In Borgogne-Franche Comté the path is under evaluation by FFRP therefore the path was communicated by Champlitte municipality, in cooperation with the related departmental Committee of hiking trails.

LXXV Atherats	Arras	Arras	
		Bapaume	
		Roquigny	
		Péronne	
LXXIV Duin	Doingt	Doingt	
		Cartigny	
		Trefcon	
		Saint Quentin	
LXXIII Martinwaeth	Seraucourt-le-Grand	Seraucourt-le-Grand	
		Tergnier	
		La Fère	
		Cessières	
		Monts en Laonnois	
LXXII Mundlothuïn	Laon	Laon	
		Vosges	
		Chamouille	
LXXI Corbunèi	Corbeny	Corbeny	
		Berry-au-Bac	
LXX Rems	Reims	Reims	
		Verzy	
		Condé-sur-Marne	
LXIX Chateluns	Châlons-en-Champagne	Châlons-en-Champagne	Historical leg: Châlons-en-Champagne
		St-Germain-la-Ville	Historical leg: St-Germain-la-Ville
		St-Amand-sur-Fion	Tappa storica: Nuisement-sur-C.
		La Chaussée sur Marne	
LXVIII Funtaine	Fontaine-sur-Coole	Vitry-le-François	Historical leg: Faux-Vésigneul Fontaine
		St-Remy-en-Bouzemont	Historical leg: Coole
		Outines	Historical leg: Dampierre
LXVII Domaniant	Donnement	Chavanges	Historical leg: Donnement
		Rosnay l'hôpital	
		Precy-Saint-Martin	Historical leg: Precy-Saint-Martin
		Saint Léger sour Brienne	
		Brienne le Château	
LXVI Breone	Brienne-la-Vieille	Dienville	Historical leg: Dienville
		Dolancourt	
LXV Bar	Bar-sur-Aube	Bar sur Aube	
LXIV Blaecuile	Blessonville	Baroville	
		Orge	
		Chateauvillain	
		Richebourg	
		Mormant	
		Faverolles	

LXIII Oisma	Humes	Langres	
		Culmont	
		Rivières le bois	
		St-Broingt-le-Bois	
LXII Grenant	Grenant	Coublanc	
		Champlitte	
		Dampierre	
LXI Sefui	Seveux	Seveux	
		Vellexon	
		Bucey les Gy	
LX Cuscei	Cussey-sur-l'Ognon	Cussey	
LIX Bysiceon	Besançon	Besançon	
		Mamirolle	
		Ornans	
		Lods	
LVIII Nos	Nods		Historical leg: Les Premiers Sapins
		Mouthier	
LVII Punterlin	Pontarlier	Pontarlier	
		Les Fourgs	
		Sainte-Croix	
LVI Antifern	Jougne	Yverdon-les-Bains	
LV Urba	Orbe	Orbe	
		Cossonay	
LIV Losanna	Lausanne	Lausanne	
LIII Vivaec	Vevey	Vevey	
LII Burbulei	Vouvry	Aigle	
LI Sce Maurici	Saint-Maurice	Saint-Maurice	
		Martigny	
L Ursiores	Orsières	Orsières	
XLIX Petrecastel	Bourg-Saint-Pierre	Bourg-Saint-Pierre	
		Colle del Gran San Bernardo	
XLVIII Sce Remei	Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses	Echevennoz	
XLVII Agusta	Aosta	Aosta	
		Châtillon	
		Verrès	
XLVI Publei	Pontey	Pont Saint Martin	
XLV Everi	Ivrea	Ivrea	
		Viverone	
XLIV Sca Agath	Santhià	Santhià	
XLIII Vercel	Vercelli	Vercelli	
		Robbio	
		Mortara	
XLII Tremel	Tromello	Garlasco	
XLI Pamphica	Pavia	Pavia	
XL Sce Cristine	Santa Cristina	Santa Cristina e Bissone	
XXXIX Sce Andrea	Corte San Andrea	Oriolitta	
XXXVIII Placentia	Piacenza	Piacenza	
XXXVII Floricum	Fiorenzuola d'Arda	Fiorenzuola d'Arda	
XXXVI Sce Domnine	Fidenza	Fidenza	

XXXV Metane	Medesano	Fornovo di Taro	
XXXIV Philemangenur	Felegara		
XXXIII Sce Moderanne	Berceto	Cassio	
XXXII Sce Benedicte	Montelungo	Passo della Cisa	
XXXI Puntremel	Pontremoli	Pontremoli	
XXX Aguilla	Aulla	Aulla	
XXIX Sce Stephane	San Stefano di Magra	Sarzana	
XXVIII - Luna	Luni	Massa	
XXVII Campmaior	Camaiore	Camaiore	
XXVI Luca	Lucca	Lucca	
XXV Forcri	Porcari		
XXIV Aqua Nigra	Ponte a Cappiano		
XXIII Arne Blanca	Fucecchio	Altopascio	
XXII Sce Dionisii	Borgo San Genesio		
XXI Sce Peter Currant	Coiano	San Miniato	
XX Sce Maria Glan	Santa Maria a Chianni	Gambassi Terme	
XIX Sce Gemiane	San Gimignano		
XVIII Sce Martin in Fosse	Ponte di Aiano	San Gimignano	
XVII Aelse	Gracciano		
XVI Burgenove	Abbadia a Isola Monteriggioni	Monteriggioni	
XV Seocine	Siena	Siena	
XIV Arbia	Ponte d'Arbia	Ponte d'Arbia	
XIII Turreiner	Torrenieri		
XII Sce Quiric	S. Quirico d'Orcia	S. Quirico d'Orcia	
XI Abricula	Le Briccole		
X Sce Petir in Pail	San Pietro in Paglia	Radicofani	
IX Aquapendente	Acquapendente	Acquapendente	
VIII Sca Cristina	Bolsena	Bolsena	
VII Sce Flaviane	Montefiascone	Montefiascone	
VI Sce Valentine	Viterbo	Viterbo	
V Furcari	Vetralla	Vetralla	
IV Suteria	Sutri	Sutri	
III Bacane	Baccano	Campagnano di Roma	
II Johannis VIII	La Storta	La Storta	
I Urbs Roma	Roma	Roma	



# GENERAL CRITERIA TO DEFINE THE HIKING, BIKING AND DRIVING ITINERARIES

## DEFINING THE HIKING ITINERARY GENERAL PROVISIONS AND CRITERIA TO DEFINE THE ITINERARY

It is of fundamental importance defining the itinerary by giving priority to rural roads, low-traffic roads and streets closed to traffic. In case there is no alternative to paved roads it is essential to place signs limiting the speed of vehicles wherever one cannot guarantee a good level of safety.

The itinerary should allow pilgrim/tourist/traveler to travel safely and swiftly throughout the entire Via Francigena, while giving the opportunity to be in contact with the territorial context and its distinctive natural, historical, artistic, gastronomic features.

A safe hiking itinerary firstly implies the separation of the hiking route from driveways and prevent hiker from falling. Therefore where the hiking itinerary runs along driveways new paths or sidewalks should be planned along with fences protections and infrastructures for hiker's safety in all weather conditions (c.f. reflectors, drains, etc.). The hiking path width should gua-

rantee a safe walk and should be accessible in all its part. For this reason bridges and board walk should be set wherever necessary, in accordance with the relevant law provisions.

It is also important to identify and indicate the level of difficulty of each leg (very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult), according to the characteristics of each itinerary. It is also important to take into account and inform about the length, the climb and possible gauges along the legs<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>2</sup> In Aosta Valley (Italy) the hiking signage indicates the following levels of difficulty: Touristic "T", Hiking "E", Expert Hikers "EE", Expert Hikers/Mountaineer "EEA".

## LEGS DEFINITION

Based on Sigeric's travel diary (the historical source of the route to Rome), the legs are those approved by the Council of Europe following the approval of the dossier submitted by the European Association of the Via Francigena and its partners in England, France, Switzerland and Italy. Each leg should be on average 25 km long.

The itinerary should be planned so that each leg is achievable in a modular way: one can walk for the whole leg or a part of it (10-15km) in order to have some time to explore the surrounding area. The itinerary should be planned in order to assure the availability of food and beverage and accommodation facilities at the end of each leg as well as resting areas along the path.

## MONITORING AND MAINTAINING THE PATH IN GOOD CONDITIONS

Paths should be regularly maintained in workable and safe condition. For this reason checks should be planned regularly. Path and signage regular maintenance will be carried out by competent regional and local authorities in cooperation with specialized associations.



Some examples of safety infrastructure and path development in Tuscany (Italy).



Safety works of the Via Francigena in Latium territory (Italy).



Inauguration of a bridge along the Via Francigena in Valais (Switzerland)

## IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL SITUATIONS

There are many types of critical situations, criteria for their analysis and possible solutions that need to be considered (private property, dangerous paths, etc.).

However pedestrian crossings represent a critical issue worth particular attention: pedestrian crossings must be avoided especially when

paths would cross busy or high speed roads.

In these situations, there is no particular danger when roads are provided with pavements whereas different situations may arise where there is no sidewalks:

Situation of the course	Works
There is a pavement along the road that allows the user to walk safely	Delimitation of the footpath using the white line; make the path clearly visible and, if possible separate the pedestrian path from the road, regular cleaning of the walking trail; setting road signs indicating the path for hiker; setting road signs indicating to drivers the possible presence of hikers on footpaths; pay particular attention to the narrowing of the roadway (curves, subways, etc..).
There isn't a sidewalk along the road	On low traffic streets, it is however important to warn drivers on hikers presence; on high traffic streets it is important to indicate the route on the map as dangerous and at the same time planning structural solutions or recommending alternative routes



Paths and pavements construction on the Via Francigena in Lazio Region



## DEFINING THE CYCLING ITINERARY

### GENERAL PROVISIONS AND CRITERIA TO DEFINE THE ITINERARY

The biking itinerary must be as close as possible to the hiking itinerary while taking into account quiet lanes and minor roads. Moreover this itinerary should be tracked along paths of interest for their surrounding cultural context and variants to the main road can be suggested in case of less interesting or monotonous paths. As a rule of thumb the Via Francigena biking itinerary should guarantee the opportunity to travel safely along well signed routes, organized in regular legs and provided with technical assistance services and accommodation.

The cycle itinerary should be set along roads that are usually crossed by less than 1000 vehicles per day and by never more than 2000 vehicles in case of shared roads. Roads where cars do not generally access are to be preferred (roads without cars are to be intended those roads crossed up to 50 cars per day). The itinerary should have a width allowing two cyclists to travel side by side for most of the time. The differential speed among vehicles should be examined in order to limit it drastically wherever necessary. In urban areas and on high-traffic roads speed limit of 30km/h is generally a good solution.

Cycling routes are to be intended for intermediate-level bicycles whereas mountain bikes can use the hiking trail if bikes do not come into conflict with ramblers. In these cases proper signs should explicit the right of way of ramblers. Basing on path's characteristics at each leg, it is important to calculate and indicate the level of difficulty (very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult), as well as the length, the width, the difference in height and possible gauges along the

leg. It is also very important to indicate where bicycle workshops are located at each leg.

While defining the cycle itinerary one should take into account the existing cycle itineraries in the neighboring area as well as connection with official variants to the Via Francigena. More particularly, one should take into account connections with cycle routes belonging to the Eurovelo network of cycling routes managed by the European Cyclist Federation . More indication on cycling routes standards are provided on Eurovelo Manual edited by the European Cyclist Federation<sup>4</sup>.

### DEFINITION OF LEGS

Legs should be duly signed for cyclists in compliance with applicable legal standards. Cycle shops, cycle accessories retails and technical assistance workshops should be identified along the cycle route at each leg.

### MONITORING AND MAINTAINING THE PATH IN GOOD CONDITIONS

Paths should be regularly maintained in workable and safe condition. For this reason checks should be planned regularly. Path and signage regular maintenance will be carried out by competent regional and local authorities in cooperation with specialized associations

<sup>3</sup> [www.eurovelo.org](http://www.eurovelo.org)

<sup>4</sup> "Eurovelo Guidance on the route development process", European Cyclist Federation, 2011, Brussels.



## DEFINING THE HORSE RIDING ITINERARY

### GENERAL PROVISIONS AND CRITERIA TO DEFINE THE ITINERARY

Equestrian itinerary should be the same, where possible, as the hiking itinerary. Riding on paved roads should be limited to those roads leading to the hiking trail. However, given the modality of use of this itinerary, in some case it will be necessary to choose different roads in order to cross less populated areas. The choice of roads and legs will be also linked to the availability of facilities and services allowing horses and horse-rider to have a rest, eat and stay overnight at the end of each leg. Equestrian itinerary should follow low traffic routes. It is necessary to indicate the presence of water supplying points (free to access water points or private ones) and eventually set out them where needed. As a rule of thumb, the equestrian itinerary is conceived to allow those willing to take the Via Francigena on horseback to travel safely, find the necessary facilities for sustenance, accommodation and assistance to the horse-rider and the horse while enjoying the cultural and natural heritage along the route.

### DEFINITION OF LEGS

It is necessary to identify and duly sign the level of difficulty of each leg (very easy, easy, difficult, very difficult), according to the characteristics of the trail. It is also important to take into account and inform about the length,

the climb and possible gauges along the leg.

Each leg should be provided with facilities allowing horses to have a rest, including a farrier and a vet clinic with the availability of an ambulance service.

### MONITORING AND MAINTAINING THE PATH IN GOOD CONDITIONS

Paths should be regularly maintained in workable and safe condition. For this reason checks should be planned regularly. Path and signage regular maintenance will be carried out by competent regional and local authorities in cooperation with specialized associations.





## DEFINING THE ITINERARY BY CAR GENERAL PROVISIONS AND CRITERIA TO DEFINE THE ITINERARY

Legs will be defined following Sigeric's historic itinerary. This itinerary will not necessarily be parallel to the hiking itinerary but will anyhow offer traveler the possibility to appreciate natural, religious, historical, artistic, gastronomic heritage along beautiful panoramic roads. Indeed, this kind of itinerary allows one to discover a wider territory compared with other modalities of journey along the Via, crossing new areas. Planning an itinerary by car can also be ideal to practice a combined use of different means of transport and ways to travel. The itinerary by car should follow ordinary roads, excluding motorways and highways and running along minor paved roads. Particular attention will be given to panoramic roads with significant landscape features.

It is worth underlining that this itinerary should provide the opportunity to park one's car and continue the route on foot. Therefore transfer service to the place of departure is particularly important to complete the offer.

### DEFINITION OF LEGS

The definition of legs must allow tourists to customize the itinerary and be able to link several legs. Moreover historical, architectural and cultural places of interest should be indicated at every leg.





## VERIFICATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES

While tracking the route it is important make sure that private properties are crossed by the itinerary only in case where there are no alternative solutions or to prevent the crossing of streets attended by motorized vehicles.

In these cases and when it is not too much expensive an agreement with the property owner concerning signage on the ground and the right of passage should be concluded.



## MINOR FACILITIES ALONG THE PATH TO IMPROVE THE USE OF THE ROUTE

It is recommended to assure regularly along the route the presence of minor facilities and services that are necessary for a smooth hiking travel experience. A list (a non-exhaustive list) of facilities aiming to improve hiking travel experience is provided here below:

- Resting area
- Water supply points (fountains, café)
- Canopy: to protect pilgrim from sun and rain during a break on the route
- Banks or cash machines (as many as the number of expected visitors)
- Litter bins
- Toilets: especially at the arrival of each leg and near parking areas

- Information and welcome desks providing assistance concerning the route and the surrounding territory



Resting areas along the Via Francigena in Tuscany



## ACCESSIBLE ROUTES

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Wherever possible it is strongly recommended the implementation of routes (or adjustment of the existing ones) so that they are truly accessible to everyone by paying attention to people with specific needs.

The European network for accessible tourism provide some general ethical tips, information and contacts concerning code of good conduct, facilities and services related to planning leisure time for people with specific needs ([www.accessibletourism.org](http://www.accessibletourism.org)).

The World Tourism Organization recommendations on Accessible Tourism provides a vision of Tourism for all as an opportunity and not just as a duty, in order to develop services and infrastructures universally useful, including seniors, families with young children, people with temporary or permanent disabilities.

Those who might not need these services would by the way benefit from the advantages they offer<sup>5</sup>.



## CHECKING THE TERRITORY

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A full-scale mapping was created by the Free Wheels onlus association for the Cammino di San Benedetto, from Norcia to Cassino. After having mapped the entire French route, publishing the first accessible guide of the route for Terre di Mezzo publishing company, they wanted to try it again in Italy. Many other maps are forecast in the future. A map of the entire European Via Francigena does not yet exist, but initial ventures are under development. Collaborating with the region of Tuscany and the Associazione Toscana Vie Francigene e Cammini, Free Wheels onlus conducted a census of Tuscan religious and municipal hospitality to highlight any issues and to suggest changes to make them accessible to all.



## ACCESSIBLE ROUTES

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Along a 2km-stretch of the Via Francigena in **Aosta Valley** (from Monastery Mater Misericordiae to Quart Castle), the **“Via Francigena for all”** project is being developed. Different works and actions are being implemented along this stretch of the Via to allow people with visual disabilities, slight mobility disabilities and intellectual disabilities access the route autonomously. A kerb has been placed along the route as a “guide” and safety works have been made along the canal that runs along the side of the Via Francigena in the area, a descriptive audio guide of the route and the Castle has been produced; a tactile panel with description of Quart Castle will be placed outside the Castle; a specific guide aiming at facilitating the reading by intellectually-disabled people will be also produced. Moreover, these works will have low impact on the surrounding environment.



The municipality of Capannori, along the Via Francigena in Tuscany, made part of the route accessible for blind people through acoustic signals communicating obstacles along the route. A traffic light provided with braille reading system and acoustic signal was placed on the route along with additional signs and crossovers without steps and thus accessible to cyclist and people who use wheelchair.



## GOOD PRACTICE ALONG THE WAY

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The region of Tuscany gave the go ahead to “Our Francigena”, which aims to involve all stakeholders in the structuring of a Homogenous Touristic Product – one which brings together 39 municipalities in four distinct environments with four leading municipalities: North (Pontremoli), Central North (Lucca), Central South (Fucecchio), and South (Siena). Each of these has approved an agreement, which, through the control of costs, management and planning of activities, aims to allow the practice of hospitality and tourist information on a supra-municipal level; to allow routine maintenance checks; and to allow promotion and communication of the touristic product and analysis and monitoring of tourism flow.

**Maintenance.** The excursion route has been divided into four categories: roads, white ways, dirt roads and trails. The necessary maintenance activities for each of these have been identified, as well as people to carry out the checks.

**Touristic Monitoring of the Product.** The constant evaluation of sustainability and competitors within hospitality and territorial organisation sectors through the inclusion of entities operating in the territory.

**Accommodation.** The main aim is to create a network of hostels which enables planning of overnight stays through an integrated, digital booking system; a survey of religious structures that offer free hospitality for pilgrims; validation of minimum standards for private hospitality structures (location in a 1km range of the route and 5km of the cycling route; willingness to offer one night stays, with a preferential rate; washing and dryer services or access to a washing/dryer machine; offer of dinner with traditional local dishes and nutritional benefits at a preferential rate; availability of a kitchen area).

**Coordination and connection with other routes.** The completion of the whole project also includes working on connections with other routes, such as Via del Volto Santo, Via Romea Strata and Via Romea Germanica. Creation of a masterplan with rules and methods for each route which, following on from the Via Francigena, want to organise a route on foot, by bicycle or on horseback. The document identifies the characteristics of route security and usability, as well as rules for route organisation, maintenance and hospitality.





## PLANNING TRAIL AND SIGNAGE MAINTENANCE – SOME CASES

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Hiker, cyclist and horse-rider safety and – consequently- route infrastructure and a proper signage are of utmost importance for the cultural-tourist product development around the Via Francigena. Likewise trail maintenance should be included in a long-term and sustainable territorial plan in order to avoid that damage caused by the weather and the passing of time could lead to malfunctioning of the Via and waste of investments on trail development. Moreover, trail maintenance requires very little resources and can avoid far more expensive works. Trail maintenance usually leads to forms of public-private cooperation and to cooperation among municipalities, often small municipalities, while contributing to social and economic growth of the territory thanks to local territory enhancement and the promotion of a sustainable traffic during leisure time.

Some cases of good practices are reported here below for their capacity to rule and promote the Via Francigena trail and signage maintenance also through cooperation among public and private bodies:

- In Switzerland the federal law of 4 October 1985 on pedestrian routes and hiking trails (Loi fédérale du 4 octobre 1985 sur les chemins pour piétons et les chemins de randonnée pédestre LCPR) rules pedestrian routes and hiking trails organization and maintenance. According to this law municipalities (those crossed by the Via Francigena included) are responsible for infrastructure and maintenance of hiking trails in compliance with the provisions laid down by the relevant Canton and with the possibility of cooperation with specialized associations.
- Lazio Region, in Italy, promotes every year actions for the enhancement of the Via Francigena through the regional law n.19/2006. In the year 2014/15, a public notice was publi-

shed to invite municipalities to join together and cooperate with other bodies, such as universities, ecclesiastical bodies, associations, provinces with the aim to plan regular maintenance of the Via Francigena trail in Lazio and its related signposting. Eleven projects involving 103 municipalities were submitted.

- In 2015 Tuscany Region charged the European Association of the Via Francigena to carry out the work of monitoring and maintenance of the signs and trail whenever necessary. This activity was carried out in cooperation with the Tuscany Association of the Via Francigena.
- In France the Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre (FFRP) is delegated by the Ministry for sport and hiking. Namely it is in charge for ruling and maintenance of the network of national hiking trails, while establishing quality criteria and homologating every trail according to national classification. The Via Francigena in France is part of the Grande Randonnée hiking trails network (GR®) which are long-distances pathways. The Via Francigena is marked as GR145®. FFRP is responsible for tracking, homologating and upkeeping the trail, in cooperation with its well extended network of regional and departmental committees.



## INVOLVEMENT AND RELATIONS WITH ASSOCIATIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND SPORT GROUPS

Normally an area crossed by the itinerary involves the action of several organisations which plan, implement, develop and enhance cultural heritage along the route. In particular there are many associations, organisations and sport groups (trekking, hiking, cycling, mountain biking, V.T.T., equestrian sports, etc.). It is important to promote and facilitate all forms of cooperation with these organisations and groups working in the area of the historical pilgrim route and carrying out promotion and

communication on the Via Francigena. In addition, it is important to promote agreements and joint initiative with the regions and local institutions leading to the definition and promotion of the routes. The involvement of the associations is essential for the cultural activity along the route while ensuring route maintenance and assistance to the pilgrim.



## ➤ PHONE COVERAGE

Public authorities are recommended to provide wi-fi coverage along the whole route to allow travelers to use assistance services and facilitate the implementation of a safer route.

In case a complete wifi coverage is not possible it is recommended to assure connection with emergency telephone numbers

## ➤ PATHWAYS MAPPING METHODOLOGY

### **Cartographic survey execution**

The mapping of historical routes, such as the Via Francigena, the roads to Rome and other pilgrimage routes, concerns primarily a careful analysis of existing bibliographic and historical sources to implement a philological approach while marking the itinerary.

This analysis allows one to identify a primary route (a corridor for four typologies of travel: hiking, biking, horse-riding, driving travel as well as its variations to the main route; other routes to Rome, minor itineraries) and verify at the same time the existence of other defined itineraries in the same area in order to bring possible improvements or indicate variations to the main direction. The main route will be then marked on the main map. In this phase of trail definition it is of utmost importance assuring the identification of a safe and completely accessible route.

The cartography production implies a preliminary stage which included:

- Examination of the historical and bibliographical sources referring to the itinerary (Via Francigena of Sigeric, its historical variants, routes to Rome or minor itineraries), notes and marks historical routes according to these documents;
- Analysis of any modern or alternative existing routes which can be added to the final itinerary as possible variations or minor routes.

Some tips for the implementation of the preliminary steps aiming to identify good routes are indicated here below:

- Examination of the itinerary on a map

1:25.000 (road books or national official maps, if available)

- Checking the itinerary on a more detailed map (1:10.000 or 1:5.000, if available)
- Inclusion of available cartography on SPG equipment.

The operational phase in the field will follow the preliminary research,

- Calculating the entire route on the spot
- Verification of the course identified on map
- Eventual changes on the basis of problems encountered during the verification on the ground in relation to the route identified on the map
- Highlighting any critical aspects : climbs, pedestrian crossing on roads, rock fall, real or perceived dangers, crossing with private properties or other similar aspects
- Photographic documentation of the itinerary: hard passages, breakpoints/refreshment. Wildlife and landscape

The phase consisting of examination of data includes:

- Examination of the data collected by the satellite navigation system
- Control data GPS derived from cartography and compared with on-the-spot checks
- Control of routes with panoramic satellite views Google Earth or with the help of a similar program
- Data extraction geo referenced and development of an Excel table having all collected data
- Elaboration of altitude graph
- Elaboration of distance/time table of the route

The final phase includes:

- Preparation of a final report providing data on electronic supports as cd or dvd : cartography, photos and data SPG, any problems highlighted, recommended solutions, additional information on accommodation, cultural and heritage information
- Delivery of the final route of the courses on paper maps at scale 1 :25.000;
- If required, delivery of further report concern-

ning the positioning of signage.

It is recommended that each Regional administration crossed by the Via Francigena draws up a legislative act that rules and defines hiking trails to promote a systemic policy in this field.

## MAPPING

Cartography must be made on a scale of 1:10.000. Paths must be mapped in the regional technical maps. The complete routes and especially the intersections and the variants of the routes should be geo referenced.

The paths of the itinerary must be marked with a continuous line (green for the walking route; blue for the bicycle route; brown for the equestrian route; sky blue for the route by car). When the paths of pedestrian and bicycle route go over public roads they must be marked in yellow, to ensure safe crossing.

Paths of identified itineraries that are considered dangerous for the safety of users must be marked with a continuous red line. Paths that are deemed dangerous and are not recommended are to be marked with a red broken line.

Paths marked with a continuous red line and dotted line require urgent measures and structural interventions for the reduction of risk and danger.





## PROCEDURE OF APPROVAL OF VARIATIONS TO THE MAIN ITINERARY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

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The cultural route of the Via Francigena certified by the Council of Europe is the result of a dossier which received the endorsement of a scientific international and multi-disciplinary committee along with a shared territorial planning by local stakeholders in England, France, Switzerland and Italy. The European Association of the Via Francigena and its local partners are committed to enhance and preserve the approved itinerary while fostering the regular practicability of the route.

Variations to the main itinerary, or alternative routes which disconnect and join the main itinerary or converge into to the main itinerary can be examined and approved by the European Association of the Via Francigena. These variations need to be historically relevant within the network of the historical pilgrimage routes to Rome. In case the original historical route could not be entirely included in the current accessible route, specific signs can inform on the original route.

The General Assembly will examine the application of approval of variations to the main route

by evaluating the following criteria:

1. Approval from the competent territorial authorities;
2. Safety conditions improvement;
3. Shorter route ;
4. Philological improvement of the main itinerary (for instance a variant may include the historical *submansio* indicated by Sigeric, or ancient hospital or place of worship);
5. Improving the surrounding conditions (for instance less traffic, crossing significant cultural and landscape areas);
6. Better accommodation and services (hostels, restaurants, fountains, breaking areas, etc.);

When the variation to the main itinerary is approved it will be communicated to the Council of Europe.





# SIGNPOSTING ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, FRANCE, SWITZERLAND AND ITALY

## GENERAL PROVISIONS ON COMMON VISUAL STANDARDS FOR THE SIGNPOSTING ALONG THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTE OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

The route to be way marked has to be exclusively the one downloadable on EAVF website as well as on the websites of national bodies managing the hiking route. Eventual temporary modifications to the route should be notified to EAVF and to the national bodies managing the hiking route and should be communicated as a temporary change. Signposting should be placed exclusively by authorized people in cooperation with the concerned municipalities.

The European Association of the Via Francigena (EAVF), preserves and promotes the official Via Francigena route, as certified within the framework of the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme" while exploiting the cultural, tourist, experiential and emotional dimension of the itinerary.

As a consequence EAVF registered the "pilgrim brand" (owned by EAVF), for institutional, trade purposes as well as for signage-related activities. The use of the aforementioned brand should therefore be authorized by the EAVF. For more information on the Regulation for the use of the brand and logotype owned by EAVF, it is possible to consult the website [www.viefrancigene.org](http://www.viefrancigene.org).

Signage is ruled differently in the four countries crossed by the Via Francigena, therefore different characteristics feature it in every country. Nevertheless common visual elements can be used as they are in compliance with national laws while providing a European visual coherent image.

The European Committee for technical interregional coordination recommends the use of common visual standards for European signposting of the Via Francigena, as specified here below:

### ROAD SIGNS:

- Name of the cultural route "Via Francigena" or
- The yellow pilgrim logo (with the CoE flag)

### HIKING SIGNS:

- Name of the cultural route "Via Francigena" or
- The yellow pilgrim (with the CoE flag) or black pilgrim symbol

### STICKERS, PAINTED SIGNS AND OTHER SIMPLE SIGNS:

- Acronym of the cultural route, "VF" or
- The yellow or black pilgrim symbol or
- Complete name of the cultural route "Via Francigena".

At the entrance of every municipality crossed by the certified route, the Committee recommends the use of the signpost "City on the Via Francigena".





## SIGNAGE ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN ITALY

“The Manual on signage along the Via Francigena in Italy” produced by the European Association of the Via Francigena in 2016 illustrates technical characteristics and modalities of use relating to signposts whose typologies are listed here below.

### 1) WAYMARKING AND SIGNPOSTS



#### Aosta Valley Region

##### YELLOW METAL SIGNPOST.

The Via Francigena in Aosta Valley Region is marked with the waymark 103 placed within a rectangular.



#### Piemonte, Lombardia, Emilia Romagna, Liguria, Toscana, Lazio Regions

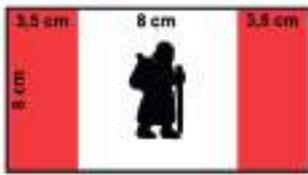
##### BROWN METAL SIGN

indicating the direction of the route on foot/by car/by bike/on horse. This sign is placed in areas where motorized vehicles can circulate.



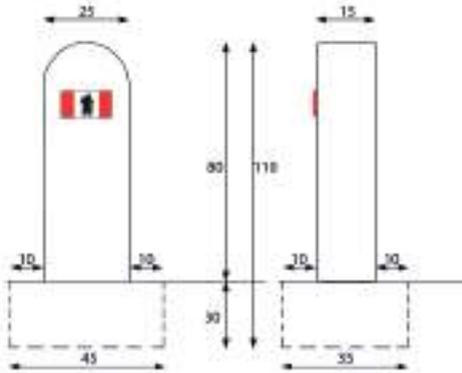
##### RED AND WHITE METAL SIGN

placed on hiking and rural path, not allowed to car. The complete name of the itinerary as well as the final direction of the itinerary is indicated (Canterbury – Rome-Jerusalem) basing on the north-south direction and the stretch where the sign is placed. The EAVF logo is placed on the side.



### METAL PLAQUE

It is used as waymark to confirm the direction. Colour: red and white with the black pilgrim.



### BORDER STONE.

It is sometimes combined with other waymarks.



### RED-WHITE STICKER

including the black pilgrim symbol

PHOTO ©: Itineraria



It is sometimes combined with other authorized stickers, featuring the direction, the black pilgrim symbol and the destination.



### PAINTED WAYMARK

with the black pilgrim symbol or with the "VF" acronym.

PHOTO ©: Itineraria



PAINTED WAYMARK TO CONFIRM THE DIRECTION

## 2) INFORMATIVE SIGNS

Some examples of informative panels where information on historical-territorial Via Francigena features in the area are described.

In 2016 the "Manual on the signage along the Via Francigena in Italy" common national lay-outs of informative panels are proposed to describe the leg, the territory and the place.



## 3) SIGN "CITY ON THE VIA FRANCIGENA"



**Brown metal sign** with the complete name of the route "Via Francigena" placed at the entrance of the leg of the itinerary.



**Balisage "Commune sur la Via Francigena"**



## SIGNAGE ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN SWITZERLAND – HIKING ROUTE 70

### Signalization of the Swiss Mobile hiking trails

In Switzerland the Via Francigena runs along official hiking trails and is marked with Suisse Mobile signage (route 70). Hiking trails and Suisse Mobile itineraries are marked consistently throughout Switzerland. The Signalization in Switzerland is ruled by a national norm concerning the signalization of non-motorized traffic (SN 640 829). It is the only national norm in the word establishing common standards on the signalization for non-motorized traffic within the network Switzerland mobility. Each route has a

numeric code depending on the national classification, as national routes (one number), regional routes (two numbers), local routes (three or without numbers).

The Via Francigena in Switzerland corresponds to the hiking route n.70<sup>6</sup>.



The Via Francigena signalization is a **yellow sign**, with a panel including the route information : the numeric code "70", as a regional route, in a green frame, the complete name of the route "Via Francigena" and the yellow pilgrim.

<sup>6</sup> Source: [www.wanderland.ch](http://www.wanderland.ch) last access 23/10/2015



Gran San Bernardo. Ph: Pays du St-Bernard

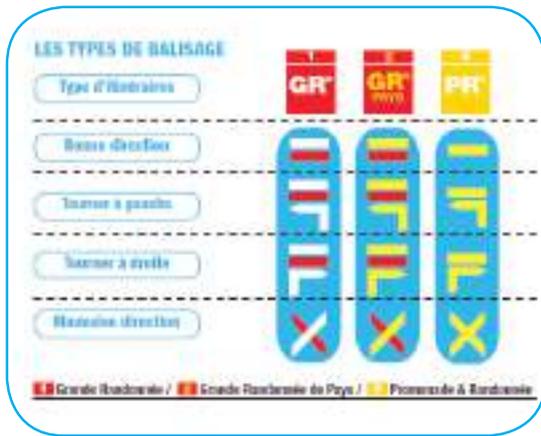


## SIGNAGE ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN FRANCE – GR®145

The Via Francigena is standardized as *Grande Randonnée* 145 in Hauts-de-France and Great Est Regions whereas in Bourgogne-Franche Comté Region the route is in course of being standardized by Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre.

Where standardized, the route signs are red and white (in compliance with the official charter for GR® hiking trails in France). This signalization is sometimes combined with additional panels illustrating the historic route and the EAVF logotype.

The official Charter on signage (« Charte Officielle du balisage et de la Signalisation »), edited by Fédération Française de la Randonnée Pédestre in 2009 provides technical information on use of the hiking signage in France.



### White and red sticker and painted signs for GR® hiking routes (Grande Randonnée)

Different symbols indicate a curve, the correct and the wrong direction of the official route.



A sign which is generally yellow, including the route name, the white and red stripes for hiking routes in France and, sometimes the EAVF logotype.



## SIGNAGE ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA IN THE UNITED KINGDOM – NORTH DOWNS WAY

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The Via Francigena in the United Kingdom is part of the National Trails of England and, in particular, from Canterbury to Dover is part of the route “North Downs Way”.



**Wood sign**, including the name of the route “North Downs Way” and, sometimes the EAVF logotype.





## MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ACCOMMODATION ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA

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Along the cultural route of the Via Francigena low cost accommodation for pilgrims are available, such as religious accommodation, hostels, and guest houses. One can also stay overnight in tourist accommodation such as hotels, B&B, agritourism, etc.

The European Committee for technical interregional coordination of the Via Francigena has agreed the minimum standards that accommodation facilities along the Via should fulfil in order to be labelled as "Via Francigena friendly accommodation". The list of accommodation is promoted through the web and specialized guides and magazines. This action aims to meet pilgrims' and tourists' demands when they travel on the Via Francigena.

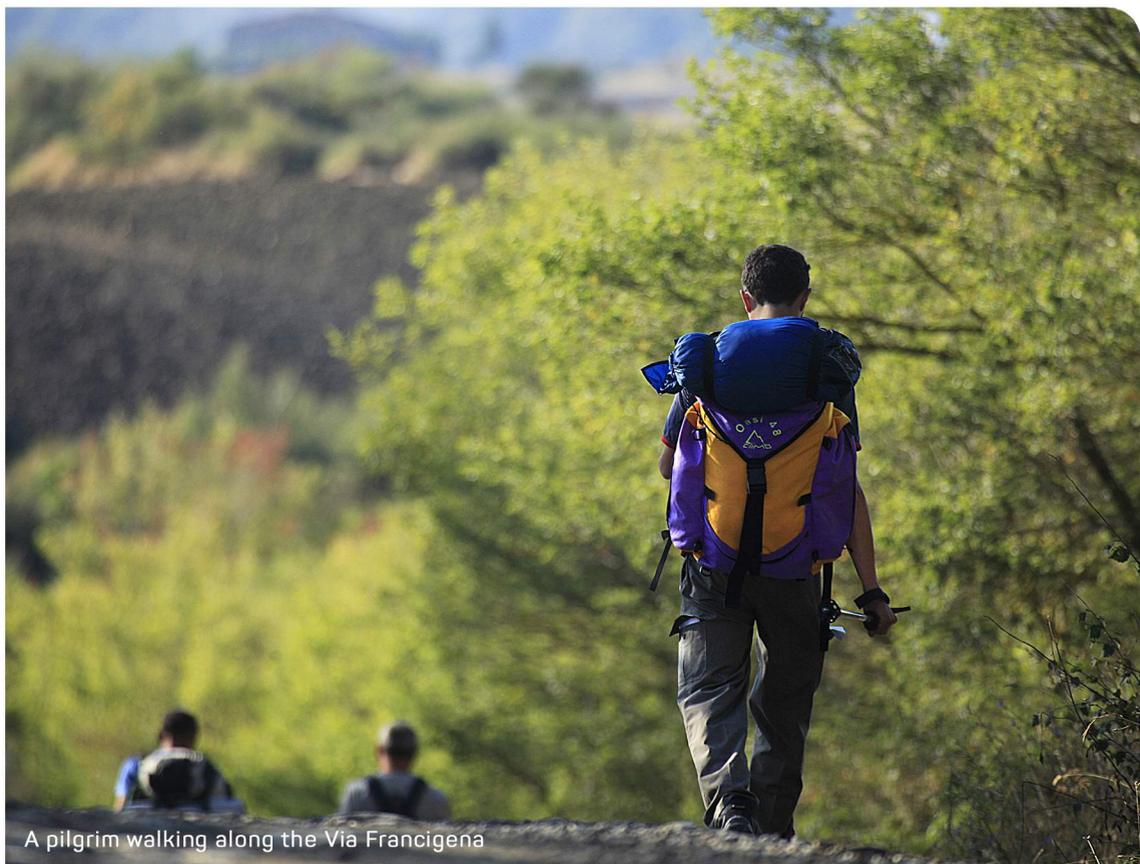
The essential standards for hikers and bikers travelling along the Via Francigena are listed here below. The criteria targeting tourists by car are those including only cultural-tourist aspects and not slow mobility-related features.

1. The accommodation should be located within 1km from the hiking trail and 5km from the biking route;
2. Availability of a stamp for the Via Francigena pilgrim's passport;
3. Possibility to overnight (at least) one night at a special rate for pilgrims holding the pilgrim's passport;
4. Washing and drying machines for cloths and equipment (also in agreement with external services within 100mt range);
5. Availability of a safe room or area to drop-off one's shoes and park the bike provided with an area and tool-kit for basic maintenance of the bike. Availability for sale of useful material for bikes (cables, inner tubes, etc);
6. Dinner on the spot, proposed as a "pilgrim menu", with dishes of local tradition and with the right nutritional value at a special price. Alternatively, a kitchen and place to have dinner should be open to pilgrims (optional);
7. An info corner with multi-language information on the Via Francigena (information on the following and earlier legs, maps, guides to be consulted); cultural-tourist information on the territory, including accommodation on the following legs, specialized newspaper and literature for pilgrims, hikers, bikers;
8. Baggage transfer: shuttle service to transfer baggage or bikes from a leg to the following one, in agreement with external service also (optional service);
9. Emergency: service of picking pilgrims up when they are in difficulty (optional service);
10. Information on trains and other local public transport, weather forecasting, pharmacy and other technical assistance services useful to repair bikes (telephone numbers, timetable);
11. Free access to internet via WIFI or by means of a computer available for guests, in order to allow

- them download and consult maps and news and eventual alerts from the itinerary's website;
12. Information on registered tourist and environmental guides to book guided visit in places of interest or to walk along the route;
  13. Guest book with remarks and comments on experience along the Via Francigena made by other tourists;
  14. Bike and accessories renting: good quality bike or accessories available for renting or information on shops renting bikes in the nearby (telephone number and rates).

Ph: Sophie Martineaud.





A pilgrim walking along the Via Francigena



The European Cultural Route



A hostel along the European Route



The bidirectional signs to Canterbury and to Rome



VIA  
FRANCIGENA

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR  
INTERREGIONAL TECHNICAL  
COORDINATION ON  
THE VIA FRANCIGENA

[www.viefrancigene.org](http://www.viefrancigene.org)