

THE GREEN AND CITIZEN BELT

Discover, share and pass on

As part of the activities of the Council of Europe's Cultural Route, the European Federation Saint Martin Cultural Centres is working on the development of the Via Sancti Martini in terms of European and sustainable development. The concept of a Green and Citizen Belt is being tested on part of the Via Sancti Martini (2,500 km) between Szombathely (the town where Saint Martin was born in Hungary) and Candes-Saint-Martin (the town where he died in France). The aim is to develop a 20km-wide Green and Citizen Belt (10km on each side of the route) along the Via Sancti Martini, promoting slow-paced, citizen-based tourism based on the value of Sharing. The Green and Citizen Belt can be walked in both directions: it is designed so that any section can be taken from one station to another, thereby helping to combat global warming through travel management. Walkers can choose sections of the route for a weekend, a week, ten days or a fortnight. It's a real journey across Europe, discovering natural sites that are more confidential than the traditional major sites.

The aim of the Green and Citizen Belt is to encourage the emergence of practices that go beyond those commonly developed around hiking trails. The aim is to make this trail a path for the 21st century: exemplary, ethical, social and environmental... a place for locals and passers-by to share and exchange ideas around concrete projects that are structured in relation to people and nature. The European Federation Saint Martin Cultural Centres has initiated an experiment in France (in Touraine), duplicated in other regions and countries crossed by the Via Sancti Martini (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary...).

The Green and Citizen Belt is a space for observing and practicing sustainable tourism of common interest. It supports organic farming, encourages the protection of biodiversity and the environment, the preservation of water, the improvement of air quality, the renovation of buildings in an environmentally-friendly way, the development of 'soft' transport, the growth of renewable energies, the fight against visual and noise pollution, thus contributing to the promotion of slow tourism and citizenship based on the value of Partage citoyen.

We are increasingly in search of meaning, spirituality, values, encounters, closeness to nature... The ambition of the European Federation is therefore to develop local identity in the face of global homogenization, to work to reduce the loss of biodiversity and to encourage the social, economic and cultural conditions essential to the viability of sustainable development, to encourage exchanges around walking and the discovery of villages or sensitive natural areas, to connect and promote those involved in building viable and innovative economic models for the future, to raise awareness of these changes among walkers, pilgrims, tourists and sports enthusiasts, by giving meaning to and participating in a project of general interest. The Green and Citizen Belt encourages a new kind of tourism, broken down into as many individual approaches: hiking tourism, sports tourism, cultural tourism, pilgrimage tourism, green tourism with associated values (sharing, hospitality, ...).

Walking the Green and Citizen Belt is a way of getting together, taking the time to meet and talk to other people, taking an interest in the culture of the regions crossed, rediscovering one's European roots, preserving nature and the local historical and cultural heritage, being in contact with nature, discovering local produce, eating healthily, consuming fairly, taking part in the surveillance and cleanliness of the route, and defending the values associated with the route. The Green and Citizen Belt is a tool to help communicate the value of Sharing, which is inextricably linked to sustainable development.

The Via Sancti Martini reconnects with ethics and spirituality. It enhances our shared heritage and promotes awareness of the interdependence between humans, animals and nature. A different way of travelling, in perfect harmony with the man who inspired them, Saint Martin.

Promoting sustainable and responsible eco-tourism

The Green and Citizen Belt promotes a new model of tourism: participatory tourism (the desire to share experiences and emotions, to take part in voluntary work on the paths, etc.), fully civic and educational, based on values (paths of solidarity linking family and friends, paths of meeting and exchanging, of discovering simple things, etc.).

A space for developing the social economy

The development of the project is based on the notion of sharing and cooperation, at the heart of sustainable and participative tourism. The Green and Citizen Belt embodies a value: Sharing, of which today's walkers are the ambassadors. It helps to educate future generations about citizenship. With this in mind, the Saint Martin Federation is highlighting the emblematic figure of Saint Martin of Tours, known for his itinerancy across Europe and his actions to help the most vulnerable.

The main objectives

- to promote a new form of tourism along a long, trans-European route
- to raise public awareness of the eco-civic principle and the values of sharing;
- to capitalize on, pool and share resources and experience between the partners;
- to harmonize actions to promote sustainable tourism in a given area;
- to encourage collaboration between local players, associations, civil society and walkers.

The Green and Citizen Belt promotes the four dimensions of sustainability:

- economic (efficient use and sustainable management of tourism resources),
- environmental and ecological (preservation of natural tourist resources),
- socio-cultural (guaranteeing cultural diversity and local values),
- political and institutional (development of participatory, democratic and civil society mechanisms).

The digital platform, technological support for the Green and Citizen Belt project

The concept of the Green and Citizen Belt is based on the principle of geolocation, which materializes the belt. The digital platform will make it possible to geolocate the routes and obtain contextualized multimedia information on the environment, heritage, etc. from a smartphone.

It will promote exemplary and ethical projects undertaken in the Green and Citizen Belt along the route: biodiversity education, promotion of short circuits and organic produce, eco-construction projects, animal protection. The platform will provide pilgrims with information about the various players along the route (accommodation providers, restaurant owners, shopkeepers) and the heritage, as well as promoting the exemplary and ethical projects undertaken in the Green and Citizen Belt along the route.

Youtube: [la bande verte et citoyenne.wmv](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3v3)

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