



**PRESS KIT**  
**ITER ROMANUM**

**2022**

## INTRODUCTION

The dense transport networks crisscrossing Europe today are grounded in history, with roots firmly embedded in ancient routes.

The **Roman Empire** was the first society to encounter the need to design and build roads throughout its entire empire, creating a network of **more than 300,000 kilometers of transport routes**. This immense network connected its capital, Rome, with the rest of its territories, from the large cities to the small towns and villages in outlying areas.

Roman engineers rigorously chose the routes that **Roman roads** were to follow. Taking into account slopes and other conditions, optimal layouts were always sought and carried out with such a degree of precision and accuracy so as to yield maximum functionality, which still amazes modern engineers.

The thousands of kilometers of roadway built followed a meticulous construction technique that enabled them to be preserved for centuries, as well as having a remarkable impact on the landscape.

The network of Roman roads freed vast areas of the empire from isolation and enabled economic, cultural and social exchange between very different societies, while also lending them elements of cohesion.

Many European towns and cities today have existed since Roman times and many others were founded and flourished at the road intersections connecting the former.

After over 20 years of working on the tourism and cultural promotion of the Vía de la Plata Route, in 2017 the **Cooperation Network of Towns on the Vía de la Plata Route** broadened its scope of action to promote the creation of an international association concerning Roman routes in Europe: the **Cooperation Network of the Heritage of Roman Roads – Iter Romanum**.

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Under the power of Rome, a network of roads was designed which for the first time was able to connect places separated by great distances while also organizing the lands these routes crossed.

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## **COOPERATION NETWORK OF THE HERITAGE OF ROMAN ROADS – ITER ROMANUM**

The Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage - Iter Romanum was set up in 2018 with the mission of **promoting and disseminating** both the tangible and intangible **heritage linked to Roman roads** in order to stimulate development in those areas which were once outlying territories of the Roman Empire and promote European cultural identity.

The vision of the Cooperation Network of the Heritage of Roman Roads – Iter Romanum is to constitute a large network of sites to jointly organize the tourism and cultural activity of Roman destinations in what were the outlying areas of the Roman Empire.

To this end, the Cooperation Network of the Heritage of Roman Roads – Iter Romanum considers its main priorities to be:

- Promoting dialogue and the exchange of good practices with other European cultural itineraries in terms of enhancing the “Iter Romanum” route.
- Furthering the collaboration of public administrations and private organizations to promote joint actions related to this route.
- Promoting and launching educational activities about the Roman roads and sites making up the itinerary which are aimed at young people in order to strengthen their knowledge of their roots and consolidate European identity.
- Coordinating those cultural and tourism activities that take place in the areas where Roman roads and sites are found in terms of sustainable development.
- Exchanging knowledge and information on the management of archaeological sites.
- Promoting connections with cultural and creative industries.

**Any Council of Europe state preserving Roman remains which are open to the public may be members of the Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage - Iter Romanum. Middle Eastern and North African sites fulfilling the same criteria may be included as well.**

The following are currently partners in the Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum: the Cooperation Network of Towns on the Vía de la Plata Route (**Spain**), the city of Arlon (**Belgium**), the Alésia Museum and Archaeological Park (**France**), the Aquileia Foundation (**Italy**), the city of Braga (**Portugal**) and the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Sremska Mitrovica (**Serbia**).

## THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE VALUES

The Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum partners foster the values of the Council of Europe in all their actions.

The route drawn by Iter Romanum shows the **archaeological heritage of the road system** as one of the means by which the different peoples who once inhabited the European continent integrated into a greater political structure, which we have inherited. This rich heritage presents the origins of the coexistence of initially diverse societies within the framework of the Roman Empire, creating a core of **common values** that identify us as Europeans who respect democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

In the past, just as today, Europe and the Mediterranean sought a **balance between unity and diversity**.

The Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum's commitment to highlighting the value of outlying European areas, as well as their connection to and integration with other parts of Europe, is in itself a promotion of these values. In this way, it aims to defend the **cultural heritage** of these areas and turn it into an asset for the **sustainable development** of rural areas and medium-sized cities.

References to these values are both explicitly and implicitly made in all the activities organized by the Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum and by its partners. The Network's cultural and scientific activities form a sphere highlighted by the importance of the **respect for democracy and human rights**, including **access to knowledge**.

The Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum and its partners are governed by regulations which adhere to the principles of national and European laws, principles that extend to all activities: aspects related to cultural and environmental heritage, urban and land use planning, sustainable tourism and the promotion of rural environments.

In addition, the Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum puts into practice its **educational objectives** in its many activities with young people, where special emphasis is placed on the need to appreciate and respect these values.

Finally, the **right to a clean environment**, recognized by the UN as a human right, represents one of the Cooperation Network of Roman Road Heritage – Iter Romanum's points of special concern when developing its concept of "traveling in a relaxed, leisurely way".

## ITER ROMANUM: ITINERARY

The roads that Rome began to build more than two thousand years ago, which enabled thousands of people living in **peripheral or secondary areas** of ancient Europe to be connected, currently allow us to rekindle a way of life and of traveling that is more environmentally friendly and closer to nature.

The Iter Romanum offer invites you to **leisurely travel** and discover the rich, diverse heritage of Rome in terms of its architecture, engineering and culture, **linking people and places with a shared history and heritage**.

The Iter Romanum route maps out a geographical arc which was far away from both the capital, Rome, and the most important cities during Roman times. It ranges from the settlements located on the fringes of Tarraconense (one of the largest western provinces), such as **Braga** and those along the **Vía de la Plata Route**, to the sites located near the eastern Pannonian Limes, i.e., **Sirmium**, as well as the Roman Belgian territories of **Arlon**, **Alesia** and **Aquileia**.

## EXCEPTIONAL MONUMENTAL SITES

Via the network of Roman roads, **Iter Romanum** links **exceptional monumental sites from our Roman past**, which were considered **peripheral or secondary settlements** in Roman times. These sites were founded, grew and evolved thanks to them branching off from the Roman road network, a connection which allowed them to follow the cultural, architectural and social trends emanating from the capital, Rome, as well as from the large cities of the time.

Each of the different destinations making up Iter Romanum was, in Roman times, quite far away from what was considered the epicenter of the Empire. All of them, however, stand out for having common defining components and various special features that link them together. All benefited and grew from the creation of the Roman road network. All used Roman infrastructures to facilitate the transit of armies and people, transport merchandise, take root and consolidate Roman power in the area.

We also find special features in each of the sites that enable us to explain various characteristics of **our Roman past**.

## CURRENT MEMBERS OF ITER ROMANUM

**SPAIN** > [Cooperation Network of Cities on the Vía de la Plata Route, project leader](#)

In the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, construction began on a road running north-south through the west of the Iberian Peninsula. This road connected the Cantabrian and Galician territories with Lusitania and Baetica, passing through important Roman or Romanized cities: Hispalis, Emerita Augusta, Cáparra, Brigaecium, Legio, Gegionem, etc.

**BELGIUM** > [City of Arlon](#)

Arlon is among the oldest cities in Belgium. Its origins stem from its location at the crossroads of two important Roman roads: Metz to Tongeren and Reims to Trier. This position was the cause of its economic development and why the town prospered during the first three centuries of our era.

**FRANCE** > [MuseoParc Alesia](#)

Alesia is where the famous battle took place in 52 BC between the Roman army of Julius Caesar and the Gallic tribes led by Vercingetorix, who tried to stop the Roman general's advance. After a failed attack, Vercingetorix sought refuge in Alesia's *oppidum*, the fortified settlement of the Mandubii tribe.

**ITALY** > [Aquileia Foundation](#)

Aquileia was one of the biggest cities in the Roman Empire, as well as one of the most active early Latin-Christian communities and one of the most important ancient ports of the Adriatic, starting point for the main commercial, cultural and military roads towards northeastern Europe.

**PORTUGAL** > [City of Braga](#)

Founded around 16 AD, Bracara Augusta is one of the three urban centers in the northwestern region of the peninsula. As the capital of the *conventus iuridicus*, it had important judicial, fiscal, administrative and religious functions. Under the rule of the Flavian dynasty, it experienced tremendous growth which justified its rising to the status of capital of the province of Galecia.

**SERBIA** > [Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments in Sremska Mitrovica](#)

Archaeological remains of the ancient city of Sirmium lie beneath the present-day city of Sremska Mitrovica. A settlement already existed before the Roman conquest, inhabited by the native communities of Amantines and Sirmienses, from which the city received its name. Its history began at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and lasted until its conquest by

the Avars in 582. Sirmium was the capital of the province of Pannonia Secunda and, after Diocletian's reforms, (after 293), it became one of the most important cities in the Roman Empire.

