

## Declaration for a “European Green Network” Madrid, 11th of June 2010

Given that on December the 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 the Lisbon Treaty established a new reference framework for the development of the European Union, placing its priorities on sustainable development, the fight against climate change, employment promotion policies and the fight against social exclusion, as well as recognizing, for the first time ever, specific competences over tourism.

Considering that the institutions of the European Union and its member states need to strengthen the vertebration of a cohesive European community on a social, economic and territorial level, uniting its citizens beyond national borders.

Taking into account that the Declaration of the informal meeting of Tourism Minister held in Madrid in April 2010 emphasized the importance of promoting the exchange of good practices and information between European countries, reinforcing the existence of networks at a European level, promoting access to tourism for the physical or socio-economic disadvantaged citizens, and highlighted the need of reinforcing the image of Europe by proposing common policies complementary to those of its members, promoting the deseasonalisation of the touristic offer and promoting social, environmental, cultural and economic sustainability of tourism.

Considering that it is necessary to satisfy the needs of daily mobility sport, leisure and tourism with facilities and services designed for all citizens, without exclusion, and that the progressive aging of the population makes it necessary to face new challenges in the creation of leisure and tourism offers to favour physical and mental health in increasingly elderly citizens.

Due to the fact that society values the preservation of cultural and industrial heritage, by recycling for new social purposes those infrastructures and equipments that were in disuse.

Taking into account that non-motorized infrastructures are reaching an extraordinary development in Europe, especially in recent decades, as a response to a growing demand by citizens for accessible, safe and attractive spaces for their everyday use as well as for practicing healthy leisure and active tourism activities.

Since Greenways are a substantial part of Europe’s sustainable infrastructure, and the commitments and demands concerning them established in the “Declaration of Lille” in 2000 are still valid and are more necessary than ever to achieve a European Green Network.

Whereas the creation of greenways through the last decades in various European countries has proved to be an efficient strategy to favour sustainable mobility, rural development, active tourism, healthier leisure and, definitely, to improve the quality of life of citizens.

Given that greenways favour non-motorized commuting, thus helping to reduce the harmful effects of car traffic in cities, in terms of noise, pollution and occupation of urban space.

Considering that greenways contribute to the conservation of biodiversity and its associated ecosystems, and that they minimize their environmental impacts, as they develop preferably over pre-existing infrastructures, ensuring respectful access of citizens to natural environment, and facilitate the launching of environmental and awareness-raising educational activities.

Since greenways are, in themselves, open spaces suitable for use by all citizens, without restrictions concerning physical or socioeconomic conditions and are, therefore, places of public use, universally accessible.

Taking into account that the construction of non-motorized infrastructures in Europe is promoting cycling and walking as forms of sustainable and accessible mobility and enhancing the value of new territories for important population groups, such as families, youth, disabled and economically disadvantaged citizens.

We, as participants of the V European Greenways Conference held in Madrid on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2010, reiterate our willingness to develop a **"European Green Network" reserved for non-motorised users, comprising for the most part, and greenways and, to a lesser extent, lightly trafficked, low-speed roads. This network would provide continuous long distance itineraries as well as local networks for local journeys and leisure activities, and would offer a combination of services ensuring their reliability, continuity and attractiveness.** (Lille Declaration, 2000).

We request that the following definition of Greenways, established in the Declaration of Lille, is adopted for the appropriate purposes and for compliance of the present declaration, which is: **"Independent communication routes reserved exclusively for non motorised journeys, developed in an integrated manner which enhances both the environment and quality of life of the surrounding area. These routes should meet satisfactory standards of width, gradient, and surface condition to ensure that they are both user-friendly and low -risk for users of all abilities. In this respect, canal towpaths and disused railway lines are a highly suitable resource for the development of greenways».** (Lille Declaration, 2000)

The European Greenways Association commits to act in favour of the creation and promotion of a European Green Network, for which we propose:

1 .- The creation of specific funding lines for greenways in the different European Union bodies, its member states, regions and local authorities, and the inclusion of Greenways as resources to promote their policies and strategies.

2 .- The establishment of an advisory committee concerning Greenways at the European Union, entrusted to the European Greenways Association (EGWA), that will include amongst its most immediate actions:

- The development and progressively update of a European Greenways Observatory, in order to establish a Europe-wide standard methodology to assess the beneficial socioeconomic effects, and all other related aspects, of greenways on the population and local economies.

- The creation of a platform for sharing technical knowledge, experiences and future projects around Greenways at a European level, that will allow the exchange of information among experts and professionals related to these initiatives.

3.- The biennial celebration of a European Greenways Conference, organized by the European Greenways Association, that can allow the assessment of the “state of the art” on greenways, the exchange of best practices, and the promotion of coordinated and consensed actions amongst all interested stakeholders,

4. - The call of a European Greenways Award, promoted by the European Greenways Association, to recognize and disseminate best practices at a European level

5. - The development of national greenway platforms to promote and coordinate their creation, maintenance and promotion:

To achieve the aim of creating a European Green Network, the signatories of this Declaration request the European Union and its member states, regions and local entities, in the framework of their respective responsibilities and tasks:

- To promote the planning, construction and promotion of the European Greenways Network, enhancing coordination amongst the diverse levels, European, national, regional and local, and adopting master plans for territorial action, giving priority to those connecting sections that are considered strategic for the achievement and construction of long-distance routes.
- To consider greenways as tool of European policy to encourage non-motorised travel for journeys between home, work, school, services.
- To promote the harmonization of quality standards in the design and implementation of greenways, as well as in their signalling, to ensure maximum coherence in the development of the Network, and the progressive establishment of a Europe-wide voluntary quality tourism certification on Greenways and its annexed equipments, which could be coordinated and promoted by the European Greenways Association.
- To establish permanent funding lines for planning, construction, promotion and maintenance of greenways and to promote the consideration of greenways in the private sector through their strategies of corporate social responsibility.
- To consider greenways as strategic mobility facilities at a European scale, for their unquestionable positive contribution to the European policies concerning sustainable mobility, incorporating them into their tourism planning and strategies, and disseminating their existence through the most suitable and accessible means to users and tourism professionals.
- To promote awareness and use of Greenways by the citizenship, taking into account those sectors particularly benefited by these resources: local population, families, youth, disabled and economically disadvantaged citizens.
- To promote and finance innovation, research and information technologies for the competitiveness of a tourism industry and all the aspects related with Greenways and the European Green Network.

- To contribute to the dissemination of the concept of Greenways in those territories where there are disused linear infrastructures (railways, canal paths...) that can be reused as greenways, preserving and enhancing this historic cultural heritage.
- To promote, inside the companies and entities holding the ownership of rail lines and other communication infrastructures that are no longer in use, their preservation and reuse as non-motorized routes of communication, promoting, to this end, inventories at a European scale.
- To facilitate intermodal transport of greenway users with other public transport infrastructures, particularly rail, bus, ferry, and inland water transport, enhancing clean mobility schemes for citizens in their commuting, leisure and tourism trips.
- To promote international cooperation around greenways with other territories outside the European Community by promoting the transfer of best practices and exchange of experiences as well as tourism promotion of greenways in other international markets.

Madrid, 11<sup>th</sup> of June 2010