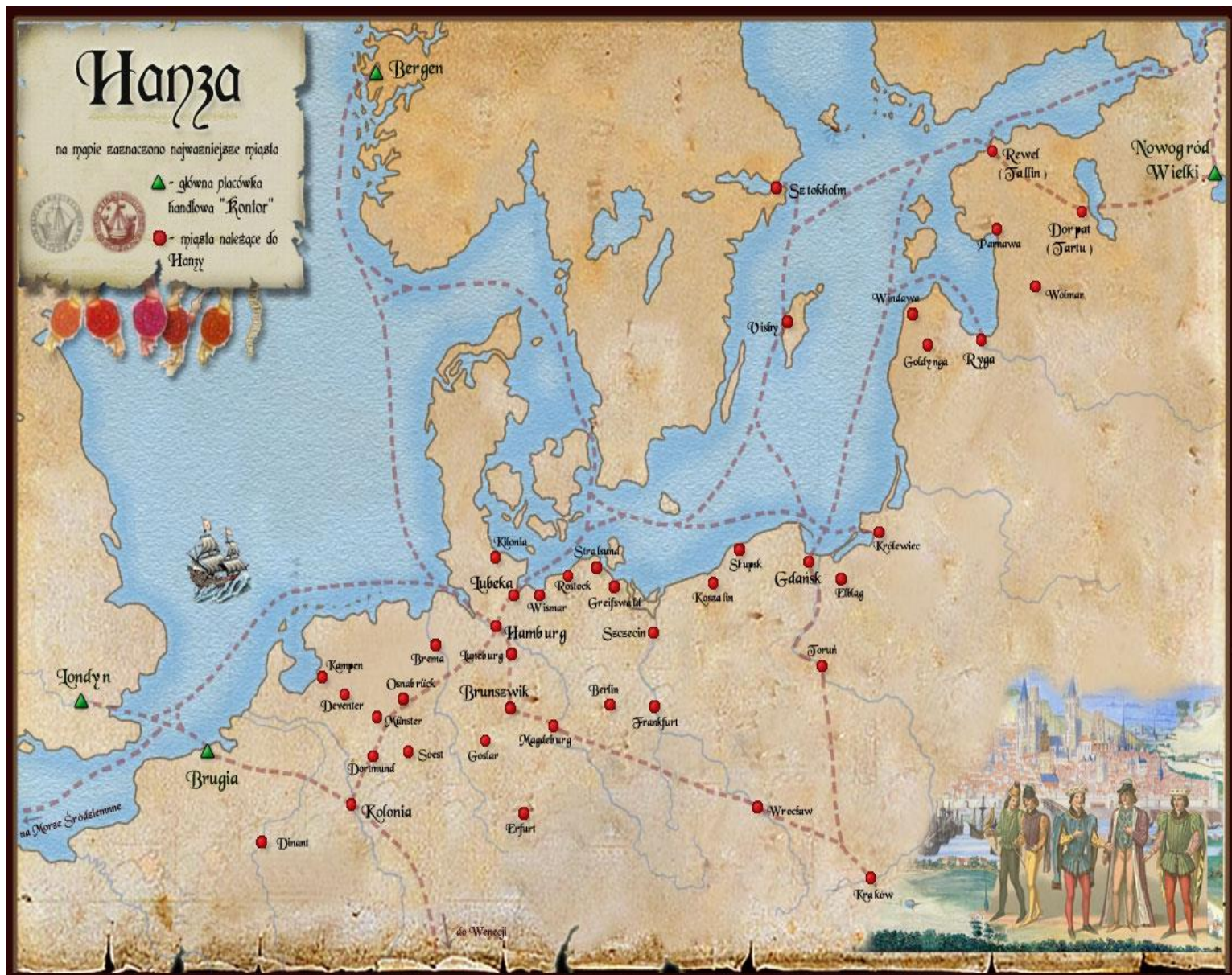


The Hansa Cultural Tour

Executive summary



Key facts

The Hansa Cultural Route is a thematic transnational route whose aim is to make the powerful medieval Hanseatic League revive through the recovery and valorization of the common cultural heritage shared by cities and towns which in ancient times belonged to that association of merchant towns or used to have lively trading exchanges with it. It appears to be a large network of cities (181 member towns and cities in 16 European countries) based on an well-established historic brand rather than a linear route. It was founded in 1980 in the Dutch town of Zwolle and since then it has become the world's largest voluntary association of town and cities. In 1991, it has been incorporated into the programme "The Council of Europe Cultural Routes" and in 2004 has been certified as a major Cultural Route.

Goals

The main purposes of this organization of cities may be summarized in:

- encouraging transnational collaboration and the promotion of the region's common cultural heritage
- revitalizing the spirit and the ideas of the European city/municipality
- promoting the self-awareness of the Hanseatic cities
- boosting economic, cultural, social and governmental unification of Europe.

Management structure

The Hansa Organization provided itself with a well-developed management structure which includes three bodies (the assembly, the commission, the council) and several institutions (the Hansa office, the Hansa Convention, some project groups, the Youth Hansa and, from 2004, the Hansa Guild). However every member town benefits from the freedom of organizing its own local Hansa Days and other activities without following the Hansa outlines, except for the implementation of the annual Hansa Day which must follow the Hansa guidance.

Funding sources

There is no membership fee for joining the Hansa. Each member town is responsible for funding its own activities bearing the costs for attending meeting and organizing events (annual Hansa Day included) while the cost of the Hansa Office is covered by the city of Lübeck. The only financial contribution expected of members is a one-off fee of € 80 for a link to the organization's website and € 30 per annum towards its running costs. No other funding are required.

Implemented Activities

- **Annual Hansa Day and Convention** combines the formal annual meeting for all the members of the Hansa with a three-day cultural festival designed to promote and celebrate Hansa heritage, which includes cultural events (concerts, theatre, music and dance), guided walks, exhibitions, lectures and talks, street parades, a children's programme; a market where each town promotes local business, cultural products and holds seminar on commercial themes; an art show "*HANSEartWORK*", and an environmental award.
- **Local Hansa Days**, held in several towns each year to celebrate and to maintain awareness of the Hansa culture and heritage, are smaller festivals usually incorporating city tours, cultural performances and local markets, and involving networks of smaller local towns (e.g.: Westfalian Hansa Association – www.hansebund.org) or included in more general cultural events (e.g.: a Medieval Week - www.medeltidsveckan.se).
- **Hansa Youth League** organizes projects to encourage intercultural links among youth organizations of different Hanseatic cities. (<http://www.hanse.org/en/die-hanse-today/organisation/youth-hansa/>)
- **Promotion of Hansa Tourism** through the development of cultural attraction (museums, heritage tours, cultural events), media and travel industry promotion. Funding has been secured by the German Government, the EU, and the Possehl Foundation.
- **Business Region Hanse** is a major three-year research and development project designed to identify market opportunities for key business sectors and encouraging the development of trade among the cities. It has been led by the city of Herford in partnership with the University of Applied Science in Munster, and has involved 24 participating cities from 9 countries.
- **Use of the Hansa Brand** by a wide range of businesses and cultural attractions, both prior to the revival of the Hanseatic League and as a result of its activities, even if the Hansa organization derives no economic benefits from the use of this brand since it is not "owned" or copyrighted.

Main partners

- The Hansa Association involves public-private partnerships among
- **Local municipalities**

- **few corporate sponsors:** *Air Baltic, Die Hanse Publishing House, Hansa Sails* in Rostock and *Scandline Ferries*
- **Private Tour operators:** *Via Hansa*
- **Institution:** *University of Applied Sciences* in Munster
- **NGOs** (e.g.: *Bonifatius Guild* in Estonia) and **SMEs** (e.g.: *Emajoe Barge Society* in Tartu, Estonia; *Het Hanze Huis foodstore* in Amsterdam) participating in Hansa Days

Key data

Participating countries	Germany (101 cities/towns) Poland (22 cities/towns) Netherlands (15 cities/towns) Russia (13 cities/towns) Latvia (8 cities/towns) Estonia (5 cities/towns) Sweden (4 cities/towns) Belarus (2 cities/towns) England (2 cities/towns) Finland (2 cities/towns) Iceland (2 cities/towns) Belgium (1 city/town) France (1 city/town) Lithuania (1 city/town) Norway (1 city/town) Scotland (1 city/town)
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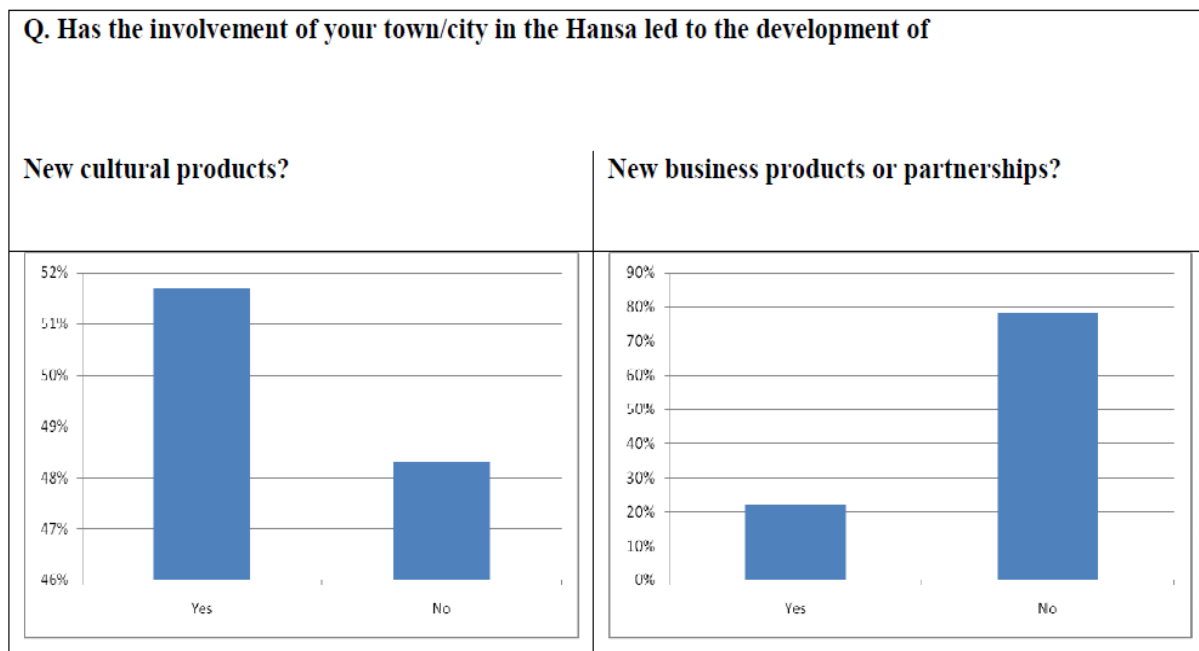
The impact of involvement in the Hansa Day

Nature of impact	Hosting an annual Hansa Day (%)	Participating in an annual Hansa Day (%)	Hosting their own local Hansa Day (%)
It has raised the profile of our town/city	76,5	85,2	74,1
It has led to an increase in visitor numbers	47,1	44,4	59,3
It has raised awareness about our Hansa heritage	82,4	72,2	81,5
It has led to a greater number of international links	29,4	48,1	Question not asked
It has had a positive impact on our business sales	35,3	20,4	33,3
It has led to an increased exchange and/or trade with other Hanseatic cities and towns	23,5	22,2	Question not asked

The annual Hansa Day attracts between 4 000 and 150 000 visitors over the three-day period.

E.g.: The annual Hansa Day, hosted in Tartu (Estonia) in 2005, attracted around 100 000 visitors generating a total of € 664 000 in income for local business

Impact of the Hansa on new product development



Essential aspects

- The impact of the Hansa can be seen largely through the **increased prominence given to Hanseatic heritage by many towns within the network**, and the **greater degree of dialogue and collaboration** between them. Nevertheless, since the route and the association are not well-defined and sometimes seem to overlap, it becomes very difficult to underline which one caused such a result while the fact of relying too much upon the ancient and well-established historical tradition, does not allow us to understand whether or not a Cultural Route was really necessary. As a consequence, the acceptance of the historical Hansa brand, on which the association is based, in the former eastern bloc countries seems to depend mostly on the historical events rather than on its appeal and potential
- Despite numerous examples of regional tourism collaborations there is **little or no evidence of joint products or joint marketing being developed through international collaborations** between members of the Hansa

- The Hansa case study highlights how **festivals** can be an excellent means of achieving an increased awareness of a common cultural heritage through a widespread community participation in cultural activities. From an economic point of view, they can also provide markets for small business products and contribute to increasing the profile and tourism revenues of a town, particularly where the tourism offer is limited. Where festivals are organized as a transnational event, as in the case of annual Hansa Days, they can also foster transnational collaboration and innovation.
- The impact of Hansa cultural activities seems to derive mostly from Hansa Days which are the only kind of event whose impact has been investigated (apart from the three-year research done by the University of Munster), and even in this case a basic economic impact assessment tool should be developed.
- A number of transnational projects have been developed independently of the modern-day Hansa organization, but based on the traditional Hansa brand and network:
 - i. an EU ERDF project, *The Hanse Parliament* (www.hanse-parlament.eu), trying to develop links between chambers of commerce and business support organizations in different cities (some of which are Hanseatic) in order to encourage transnational trading networks of SMEs
 - ii. several EU INTERREG projects focusing on the development of transnational links (e.g.: *Hanse Passage* – www.hanse-passage.net)
- There is a lack of a web platform which can boost dialogue and cooperation among members of the Hansa Route, and a promotion using social networks