

PRESS RELEASE

VOLUNTEERS FOR HERITAGE – WORTH THEIR WEIGHT IN GOLD!

Europa Nostra calls for more support for the millions of volunteers in Europe's heritage sector and for heightened awareness and respect for the immense social and economic benefits they bring us.

BRUSSELS/THE HAGUE, 18 JULY 2011 – Europa Nostra members adopted the **“Amsterdam Declaration on Volunteers as added-value for Europe's cultural and natural heritage”** during their 2011 General Assembly (11 June, Hermitage Amsterdam). This declaration reflects the conclusions of the **Europa Nostra Forum “Volunteers: added value for Europe's heritage”** held the day before at Felix Meritis, organised in cooperation with Bond Heemschut and Erfgoed Nederland.

Millions of volunteers give freely of themselves through their active participation in cultural heritage related activities, lending legitimacy to the existence of heritage organisations and showing the importance and relevance of cultural heritage to individuals and to society.

2011 EU Year of Volunteering was a chance for Europa Nostra to highlight the work of the millions of European citizens who volunteer for the benefit of cultural heritage in a myriad of functions and capacities. It devoted its annual Forum to discussing how important volunteers are for the heritage sector, as well as the concerns of heritage volunteers and the challenges of using their donated time, energy and skills in the most effective manner.

Referring to its own experience as a European organisation benefiting from the invaluable contributions by volunteers, the Europa Nostra General Assembly adopted the [Amsterdam Declaration on Volunteers](#), declaring that EU institutions, and national, regional and local governments should:

- recognise the central value of volunteers for Europe's heritage, as well as for the society and economy;
- appreciate, motivate and take care of volunteers and enhance their contribution to cultural and natural heritage;
- recognise the value of volunteering for developing Active Citizenship;
- invest in more comprehensive studies on volunteering, including an economic and social study of the impact of volunteering for cultural and natural heritage in Europe;
- create more funding opportunities for the education, engagement and management of volunteers and professionals working with them in the heritage field; and
- raise public awareness on the importance of volunteers for cultural and natural heritage and generate inspiration and passion amongst the citizens for volunteering.

More than **200 participants** attended the **Europa Nostra Forum** which included a **top line-up of [keynote speakers](#)** who gave an overview of the 'state of the art' regarding valuing and managing volunteers in the heritage sector.

Press notes:

More information on the Europa Nostra Forum on Volunteering including a summary of the keynote speeches can be found on our website:

<http://www.europanostra.org/coming-events/148/>



The Voice of
Cultural Heritage
in Europe

La Voix du
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A [Forum Reader](#) prepared before the forum, offers a general introduction on volunteering and cultural heritage and an overview of topics broached during the discussion sessions.

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