

Alghero Declaration

Adopted by EUROPA NOSTRA at the end of the Round Table Conference "Dossier Sardinia" in Alghero, Sardinia on 2 October 1998

1. EUROPA NOSTRA - pan-European federation of associations working for the protection and enhancement of the built and natural heritage in Europe, for high standards of town and country planning, and for the improvement of the European environment - took the occasion of its meeting in Sardinia on 2-3 October 1998 to study the problems confronting the different authorities responsible, as regards the Island, for finding a sound balance between economic development and tourism on the one hand, and the protection of the natural and built heritage, and of the physical environment, on the other.
2. To this end, EUROPA NOSTRA organised a major Round Table Conference at Baia di Conte on 2 October, attended by some 250 people. It was opened by HRH the Prince Consort of Denmark, President of EUROPA NOSTRA. It took place under the auspices of the European Commission, and under the patronage of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia, of the Province of Sassari and of the Commune of Alghero. The Conference was addressed by Mr Walter Veltroni, Vice-President of the Italian Council of Ministers and Minister for Culture and Landscape Heritage. Speakers included not only many Italian experts, but also people with experience of comparable problems at European level, and from other European countries. Because EUROPA NOSTRA saw the problems of Sardinia as closely related to those of other large Mediterranean Islands, the speakers included also persons from the Balearics, Corsica, Cyprus and Malta. They included politicians, journalists, industrialists, administrators and academic or other experts from a great variety of disciplines. Besides the speakers and panellists, the participants included persons from most European countries. The moderator of the debates was Mr Piero Angela, the well known Italian television journalist.
3. EUROPA NOSTRA was thus able to analyse the current problems in Sardinia and the way they are being tackled; and to set them in a wider European context.
4. In assessing the situation, EUROPA NOSTRA had much in mind its earlier recommendations, and notably one concerning the need for special protection of Coastal Areas; and another, adopted in Madrid in 1997, concerning the importance to Europe's citizens of careful management of Protected Areas; i.e. National Parks, Nature Reserves and other statutorily protected areas. In Madrid EUROPA NOSTRA underlined the enormous importance of good management in terms of Society's duty to pass on to future generations a world in which the never-ending pressures of economic development are more effectively controlled, so that the flora and fauna do not disappear or deteriorate, and so that city dwellers can still experience the beauties and values of unspoilt nature and the countryside. It likewise stressed the need for a much greater effort of environmental education to be addressed to many different groups.
5. EUROPA NOSTRA saw Sardinia as an Island of exceptional natural beauty, and with a wealth of historic buildings and sites, some of them unique; and thus as part of the cultural heritage not only of the Islanders themselves, and of the Italian Republic, but also of Europe as a whole. It noted that, whilst development pressures have clearly been less great than in some other Islands and coastal areas in the Mediterranean, they have recently been increasing. It welcomed the information received about the wide range of measures so far taken by

national, regional and local authorities to protect Sardinia's natural and built heritage. But EUROPA NOSTRA was convinced that these measures now need substantial reinforcement.

6. The proceedings of the Baia di Conte Conference will be published, and EUROPA NOSTRA hopes they will be of value to the national, regional, provincial and communal authorities concerned, in considering what further measures could usefully be adopted.
7. In the meanwhile, however, EUROPA NOSTRA wishes to draw especially to the attention of those same authorities, the following specific points concerning Sardinia:
 - a. the need for good co-ordination, in handling heritage and environmental problems, between the different levels of government - national, regional and local;
 - b. the need for the national authorities to provide clear directives for the protection of the landscape and of the environmental heritage; and for effective enforcement by regional and local authorities;
 - c. more particularly, as regards already designated Protected Areas, the need to ensure that implementing regulations are adopted and put into force;
 - d. the need to weigh carefully the balance between tourism - which should always be on a sustainable basis - and the heritage;
 - e. the need for special vigilance as regards protected areas and coastal zones, and in this context the urgent need to put in place a permanent structure for the protection of the Island of Asinara, a truly unique place;
 - f. the desirability of increasing the extent of protected areas within the Islands
 - g. the need for a policy with regard to sewage disposal which takes full account of the conservation of the natural heritage;
 - h. the need to set in hand a process of rundown of granite quarrying, so deleterious to the landscape, involving re-training of workers and restitution of the quarried areas;
 - i. the need to ensure good training in heritage and environmental protection for the regional and local staff concerned with these issues, so as to ensure that they are handled with great professionalism and sensitivity;
 - j. the need to devote resources to educating local communities about the value of the heritage;
 - k. the need to ensure control of fauna, especially non-indigenous species, which is causing damage to agriculture;
 - l. the need for new forms of employment to be identified and encouraged, especially in rural areas, which should be sustainable and also appropriate to the area where they are developed.