WHY CULTURAL HERITAGE MATTERS FOR EUROPE

Europa Nostra
Calls for European Action

EUROPA NOSTRA

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1. Why Cultural Heritage matters for Europe

In periods of economic instability national considerations are overruling the process of European integration. Cultural heritage stresses the European-ness of Europe's citizens, communities and regions.

Cultural heritage is an integral element of a European set of values. Respect for heritage is vital for developing European identity.

Europe's cultural heritage is one of the engines that drive the process of the building of Europe.

But it requires a renewed vision and action to be jointly developed by all stakeholders at European level, and especially by the European Union and its Institutions[1].

Europe's historic environment is one of Europe's greatest assets and a most effective means of reconciling the needs of the citizens, the economy, the community, the environment, and society at large.

But we cannot take it for granted. Our heritage is **valuable** and **vulnerable**. Securing the benefits now and in the future demands continuous action and investment – from civil society, the heritage sector, all levels of public authorities (local, regional, national and European) and from all who care for Europe's heritage.

[1]In particular the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

2. What priority for Cultural Heritage within the European Agenda?

The European Union must develop a Cultural Heritage strategy.

As yet, the heritage programme is encompassed in the Cultural Programme 2007, where it does not show sufficient profile and cannot live up to its possibilities and challenges.

The European Union must demonstrate a clear vision and ambition to provide effective policy at European level with regard to Europe's cultural heritage, in line with the objectives of article 151 of the Treaty.

As the **European Union** embarks on the process of evaluating the current Programme related to Culture and preparing the new Programme for beyond 2013, full consideration must indeed be given to the cultural heritage component. The same is true for the current process of formulating the new work programme (2010-2012) of the **Council of Ministers** responsible of culture. Finally, in line with one of the important objectives of the European Agenda for Culture in the Era of Globalisation, the EU Institutions must embark - in a much more systematic and comprehensive way - on the process of mainstreaming of cultural heritage in all relevant EU policies.

3. What are the Benefits and Impact of Cultural Heritage?

In addition to its essential intrinsic value for Europe's citizens, cultural heritage has important, and still largely unused, potential for Europe's economy and society.

a) Examples of economical benefits and impact of cultural heritage:

- Creating jobs (Lisbon agenda)
- Economic factor (tourism)
- Catalyst of technical innovation
- Tool for transmission of knowledge
- Educational device (knowledge economy)
- Tool for regional development
- Energy saving
- Embodied energy (energy balance)
- Emissions

b) Examples of societal benefits and impacts of cultural heritage:

- Promoting sustainability
- Contributing to social cohesion
- Serving as catalyst of intercultural dialogue
- Forging local/regional/transnational identity
- Enhancing quality of life

4. What Aims for a European Cultural Heritage Policy?

A European policy for cultural heritage must:

- promote the knowledge and understanding of the European dimension of Europe's cultural heritage, and its positive contribution to the development of European citizenship and the building of Europe.
- use the cultural heritage potential for reaching wider goals with regard to:
  a) cultural diversity
  b) intercultural dialogue
  c) external relations of the EU
  d) sustainability
- encourage and stimulate the full deployment of the benefits of cultural heritage for Europe's economy, society and environment;
- enhance the intrinsic value of cultural heritage for the sense of belonging and pride of Europe's citizens and communities and for the beauty and quality of their life.

5. What Tools to be used?

a) Mainstream and coordinate all European policy with direct or indirect impact on cultural heritage, such as:

- Culture
- Education
- Research
- Information
- Tourism
- Environment/Energy/Climate change
- Regional Development
- Rural Development
- Maritime policy
- Judicial Cooperation
- Taxation
- Internal Market
- Enlargement Policy/Neighbourhood Policy/External Relations

b) Improve interaction and promote coordination of policy and action between all stakeholders:

- EU Institutions (namely the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee)
- National and regional public authorities concerned (through the Open Method of Coordination / the European Heritage Heads Forum / the various organisations bringing together regions and cities);
- Civil society (professionals, owners, associations, foundations, networks); and
- Business sector.

c) Continue to support and develop synergies between existing EU programmes of action, such as:

- European Capital of Culture
- European Heritage Days
- EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards
- European Heritage Label
- EU grants for heritage related projects with a European dimension
- Europe for Citizens Programme

6. What will Europa Nostra do?

In the coming years, Europa Nostra will give the highest priority to strengthening the organisation's necessary tools and resources in order to act effectively as a European lobby and a European Voice of Cultural Heritage.

a) In Winter 2009/2010 (when the newly elected European Parliament and the new European Commission have started to function), Europa Nostra will hold its 2nd **European Cultural Heritage Policy Forum** in Brussels.

The aim of this Forum is to bring together stakeholders who care for Europe's cultural heritage and who wish to contribute to:

- giving our cultural heritage a European Voice;
- shaping the European Vision for cultural heritage and
- developing meaningful and successful European Action.

b) Europa Nostra intends to open in the near future its liaison office in Brussels;

c) Europa Nostra will liaise more regularly with various European organisations and networks dealing with specific aspects and/or actors of Europe's cultural heritage in order to develop synergies and coordinate lobby action;

d) Europa Nostra and its member organisations will actively participate in various conferences, debates, forums, discussions and seminars organised nationally and internationally on relevant heritage issues;

e) The above-mentioned Forum will be followed by the organisation of another Forum, most probably in 2012-2013, in order to provide to its members and to the European policy and decision-makers a platform for regular dialogue with regard to the definition and implementation of a European Cultural Heritage policy.