



## PRESS RELEASE

### European experts put forward action plan to rehabilitate Patarei Sea Fort in Tallinn

**Tallinn / The Hague, 12 December 2016** - Europa Nostra, the leading heritage organisation in Europe, and the European Investment Bank Institute issued today a report comprising an **action plan** to restore and develop **Patarei Sea Fort in Tallinn**, listed among **The 7 Most Endangered heritage sites in Europe in 2016**, following a nomination submitted by the **Estonian Heritage Society**. The European experts acknowledge the efforts to rehabilitate this “exceptional heritage site” made by the Estonian State, through its company State Real Estate (RKAS). However, the independent specialists do not support the company’s proposal to sell the entire complex to the private sector and recommend the national authorities to retain overall control of the site and undertake further preparation in investigations and studies before implementation of the sale.

The technical and financial action plan was formulated on the basis of the outcomes of the four-day mission in Tallinn undertaken in September 2016, during which experts from Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute visited Patarei and took part in working meetings with national authorities – including the Minister of Public Administration **Arto Aas**, the Minister of Culture **Indrek Saar** and the acting Mayor of Tallinn **Taavi Aas** –, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

“Patarei Sea Fort is an **exceptional site** that must be preserved as an integral part of the development of Tallinn city,” highlights the report led by **Peter Bond**, Technical Consultant appointed by the European Investment Bank Institute. Built in 1840, Patarei is the largest intact classical style building in Estonia, remarkable for its architectural value, being one of the biggest defence complexes to survive as a whole unit in the Baltic Sea Region. Historically and culturally, the site represents a comprehensive overview of Estonia’s history in the 19th and 20th centuries and serves as a monument to the tens of thousands of political prisoners detained therein during the Soviet and Nazi occupations.

Despite its rare historic and heritage value, the monument is in an **advanced state of decay** due to lack of maintenance for several years and inadequate funding from the owner, the Estonian State. The **redevelopment costs** as proposed are estimated to be over **100 million euros**, spread over several years.

“Proceeding with **the sale of the entire complex to private developers** – as proposed by the State Real Estate company – **is not supported**. Very little detailed information is available especially on restoration costs which suggests any sale is premature with considerable associated risk. The financial viability of the whole development for the private sector appears very doubtful without a large injection of equity or grant. This is because of the high comparative cost and lower revenue potential of the heritage buildings which outweigh the more profitable new multi-functional developments. This raises concerns that the restoration works as opposed to the new buildings may not proceed in a timely manner or may even be omitted. There is no objection that some parts may be sold to the private sector but, if so, these should be under the **strict control of the Administration or its representative**,” the report concludes.

According to the European experts, if the national authorities wish to proceed with the **State Real Estate’s proposal**, the following **key recommendations** are put forward:

- 1) carry out a preliminary **financial study** to ascertain if there is a credible “business case” that would interest potential private bidders. A decision on how to proceed should await this initial check study;
- 2) make **emergency repairs** on the most damaged parts of the roofs;
- 3) ensure that any **contract** must absolutely guarantee that the Fort and its **heritage** buildings are restored to clear criteria together with a firm timetable;
- 4) introduce a **pre-selection stage** for the tender in order to ensure the quality of bidders and especially to gauge the depth of valid interest before launching the tender;
- 5) form a **Steering Group** to advise on actions and progress. This should comprise not only the State Real Estate’s team but also other potential partners, such as the Tallinn Municipal Technical Department, the Estonian Heritage Society, the organisation SA Kalaranna Patarei and other NGOs as well as representatives from the local community;
- 6) undertake as early as possible a **comprehensive technical survey** of the Fort and other existing buildings. This should not only identify the present condition but also outline proposals for reinstatement, including preliminary cost estimates. Pilot tests may be appropriate to confirm the restoration techniques; and

7) establish an **experienced team** of professionals to manage the whole process and perhaps reinforce the State Real Estate's team in some specialist areas.

However, if the **alternative approach** put forward by the report is adopted, in addition to the recommendations listed above, the following actions should be implemented:

8) conduct **further detailed studies** on the potential users and uses notably for museums (the Estonian War Museum), hotels, restaurants, offices, workshops and dwellings to assess their potential and the detailed needs;

9) on the basis of these new data, undertake a **financial study** to understand the real needs and options and then begin to optimise the financing, including seeking funds; and

10) prepare a **sound development strategy** in agreement with the NGOs and other parties, and then proceed to implementation.

**Financing** should be sought from various sources: "A mixed solution will probably be the most suitable, ideally with a significant grant from European Union, perhaps enhanced by a loan from the European Investment Bank or other financial institution and with some contribution from the private sector, all topped up with Government support," notes the report.

Following the expert missions to other sites listed among **The 7 Most Endangered 2016**, Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute will announce at the beginning of next year the technical and financial actions plans for the Archaeological site of Ezerouk and the village of Ani Pemza in **Armenia**, Helsinki-Malmi Airport in **Finland**, Colbert Swing Bridge in Dieppe in **France** and the Kampos of Chios in **Greece**. The working meetings related to the Convent of St. Anthony of Padua in Extremadura in **Spain** and the Ancient city of Hasankeyf and its surroundings in **Turkey** will be held in the coming months.

## [Read Report](#)

## **Background information**

**'The 7 Most Endangered'** programme identifies endangered monuments and sites in Europe and mobilizes public and private partners on a local, national and European level to find a viable future for those sites. The programme was launched in January 2013 by **Europa Nostra** with the **European Investment Bank Institute** as founding partner and the Council of Europe Development Bank as associated partner. 'The 7 Most Endangered' is not a funding programme. Its aim is to serve as a catalyst for action and to promote "the power of example". 'The 7 Most Endangered' has the support of the **Creative Europe** programme of the European Union, as part of Europa Nostra's networking project 'Mainstreaming Heritage'.

**Europa Nostra** is the pan-European federation of heritage NGO's which is also supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals. Covering 43 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a structured dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. **Plácido Domingo**, the world-renowned opera singer and conductor, is the President of the organisation.

The **European Investment Bank Institute** promotes European initiatives for the common good. It was created as part of the European Investment Bank Group in January 2012 to act as a catalyst for social, cultural, educational and research activities directed towards economic and social development in Europe. Detailed information on the activities of the Institute can be obtained from its website: <http://institute.eib.org/>

**Creative Europe** is the EU programme to support the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014-2020, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals.

**Estonian Heritage Society** acts for the preservation of national heritage in Estonia through involving all interested organisations and individuals into its activities and through supporting civic participation in safeguarding cultural and historic heritage.

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## TO FIND OUT MORE

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[Photos](#) in high resolution of the mission  
[Photos](#) in high resolution of Patarei Sea Fortress  
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