

Cultural Heritage as a key resource for EU's future Cohesion Policy

Brussels, 26 March 2018 – EUROPA NOSTRA, the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe and founding member of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3, calls on the EU institutions and Member States to provide sufficient resources in the next multi-annual financial framework (MFF) for a strong EU Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 and, within that framework, to explicitly recognise cultural heritage as a key driver of sustainable development and social cohesion in Europe.

In 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage coincides with the 30th anniversary of European Union Cohesion Policy and the preparation of the next multi-annual financial framework and future EU funding programmes beyond 2020. Over the last programming periods, numerous heritage-led regional development and urban regeneration projects supported by EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), have led to creating jobs, growth and investment and, thus, contributed to the priorities of the Juncker Commission, thereby revitalising regions and cities across Europe and contributing to the quality of life of their citizens and communities.

Concretely, almost EUR 5 billion were invested in cultural and cultural heritage projects under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the programming period since 2014 (1). In comparison, the Creative Europe programme co-funded heritage projects with a rather modest sum of EUR 27 million. (2) It is therefore surprising that culture, and more specifically cultural heritage, are not mentioned as relevant areas in the European Commission's draft 7th report on cohesion policy. For the future, Europa Nostra urges EU Institutions and Member States to communicate in a much more visible and convincing way the success stories made possible thanks to EU funding for cultural heritage related projects. As an illustration, let us mention that in 2017, 5 out of 28 laureates of the prestigious EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards had been made possible thanks to ERDF support. (3)

The multiple benefits of cultural heritage for Europe's economy, society and environment have been demonstrated by numerous studies - most comprehensively in the 2015 report 'Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe' (4): its 10 key findings convincingly show how investing in cultural heritage contributes to addressing policy challenges across areas such as competitiveness, tourism, job creation, innovation, climate change, education and lifelong learning, integration and social cohesion. Moreover, they show how well-planned investment in cultural heritage, through promoting a continued use or intelligent re-use of existing sites and built heritage, contribute to sustainable development and to social cohesion.

To sum up, on the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, Europa Nostra calls on EU leaders to ensure that the EU's next MFF provides the necessary financial framework and resources for tapping into the full potential of cultural heritage for the benefit of Europe's regions and cities, citizens and communities. Europa Nostra therefore calls on EU decision-makers, Member States, as well as on local and regional authorities to recognise publicly how investing in cultural heritage has contributed to successfully address key policy challenges, such as reducing regional disparities within and between EU regions as well as reducing unemployment and promoting social inclusion. All this is vital for fostering a sense of shared ownership and belonging among citizens across Europe.



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References

- (1) See reply from European Commissioner Crețu to the Parliamentary Question of MEP Diaconu of 5 February 2018, esp. annex;
URL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2017-007807&language=EN>
- (2) See publication “Creative Europe: Rediscovering our Cultural Heritage” (2018), p. 5.
- (3) According to information provided by laureates to Europa Nostra in the application phase. In addition, a further 8 laureates had benefited from other EU funding or EEA / Norway grants).
- (4) See background information, full report and executive summaries available in more than 10 languages online: <http://www.europanostra.org/our-work/policy/cultural-heritage-counts-europe/>.