



Creative
Europe



**Local Award Ceremony for Middleport Pottery in Stoke-on-Trent, UK
Winner of an EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2015
26 January 2016**

***Speech by Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović,
Secretary General of Europa Nostra***

*Your Royal Highness,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Colleagues and Friends,*

What a pleasure to stand here before you, as a representative of **Europa Nostra**, the pan-European Federation for Heritage. For over 50 years, the mission of Europa Nostra has been to save Europe's endangered heritage – on one hand – and on the other hand to celebrate and promote excellence. Since 2002, our European Heritage Awards are organised in fruitful partnership with the **European Union**.

Some describe those Awards as the 'Oscars' of the heritage world. I prefer to call them Europe's Nobel Prize for Heritage. I therefore recall with a particularly fond memory that sunny day in Oslo last June, when representatives of our 30 award-winning projects from all over Europe – and among them **Ros Kerslake** and **Peter Jenkins** – gathered at the stage of the Oslo City Hall, home of the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony.

But today, it is a special honour for me to be with you at Middleport Pottery to celebrate your own award and this in the presence of all the people who made this project possible, starting with the Founder and Patron of the Prince's Regeneration Trust, **His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales**.

Your project is exemplary in many ways.

First and foremost, because of the outstanding quality of conservation skills applied. Because of the jobs saved; new jobs created and valuable training provided.

Also, because of such vital involvement of the local community and the special care given to the preservation of the memory and the oral histories related to the Middleport Potteries.

Then, because of such a support by the private sector and such a fruitful collaboration of so many public bodies: ranging from the Stoke City Council, to Historic England and also to national bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Let us not forget the significant contribution of the European Union, through the European Fund for Regional Development.

And finally, let us praise a creative partnership, with a strong sense of common purpose, between a charity – The Prince's Regeneration Trust and a world-famous traditional pottery company Burleigh.

Investing in heritage pays off, as the Middleport Pottery shows!

This was also the key message of our Report entitled “Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe” which was inspired by “Heritage Counts” annual reports produced in your country. Our European Report – a copy of which I have brought as a special gift from Europa Nostra to His Royal Highness – provides convincing evidence that heritage COUNTS not only for Europe’s economy, but also for Europe’s society, for our culture and identity and also for our environment.

Europa Nostra therefore strongly believes that our numerous heritage sites could be the drivers and the carriers of a true creative Regeneration – I dare say Renaissance - that Europe so urgently needs.

A future and better Europe in which the United Kingdom has a vital and leading role, especially in the field of heritage.

Recently, during the opening of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, His Royal Highness reminded the World and the World leaders that we, the people of Planet Earth, hold the key to our own survival. With good leadership and wise decision-making we can indeed move mountains. We can transform a lost case into a success story, like it was demonstrated by the Middleport Pottery project. Just like the environment of Our Planet, the heritage of Our Europe indeed needs strong leadership and convincing champions.

On behalf of Europa Nostra’s President, **Maestro Plácido Domingo**, and on behalf of the European Commissioner in charge of Education, Culture and Youth, Mr **Tibor Navracsics**, please allow me therefore to thank His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, for his pioneering and farsighted role in promoting the value of heritage for our society.

Your Royal Highness, as you might remember, it was at the Prague Castle in 1994 that Europa Nostra presented to you one of its Medals of Honour in recognition of your outstanding service to Europe’s heritage. Perhaps our distinction has given you additional motivation with which, only a year later, you decided to set up the Prince’s Regeneration Trust? Your Royal Highness can today be very proud that with 20 years of experience, this Trust has become the leading charity in the UK and in Europe, to champion and demonstrate the benefits of heritage-led regeneration.

Please forgive me if I cannot name each and every person who deserves to be mentioned but please allow me to single out Ros Kerlake, the Chief Executive of the Prince’s Regeneration Trust, who has been responsible for this project from its beginning to the end. Dear Ros, I cannot miss this great occasion, to convey to you Europa Nostra’s congratulations on having been recently recognised in HM The Queen’s New Year’s honours list for your outstanding services to heritage.

Also many thanks for your highly valued contribution to our ‘7 Most Endangered’ programme!

Europe as a whole can learn so much from the experience of the Prince’s Regeneration Trust. Please continue to share this experience with other colleagues all over Europe and beyond.

To end, let me say how delighted I am that this and other awards have encouraged you to embark upon new ventures. We applaud you on the successful fund-raising, – including an imaginative crowd-funding campaign – which has allowed you to restore the William Boulton Steam Engine. And we congratulate you on the opening today of these Prince of Wales Studios.

Indeed, the best way to celebrate an award is to continue carrying out your mission. I can only express the hope that I may be back to Stoke to celebrate with you the opening of the fully restored Wedgwood Institute, and perhaps also – why not? – to present to you yet another European Heritage Award.

But for now, it is my great honour to present to His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, Founder and Patron of The Prince’s Regeneration Trust, our European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2015 in the category Conservation for the exemplary regeneration of Middleport Pottery.