

**“Strengthening European Identity through our shared Cultural Heritage”
Statement by the EUROPA NOSTRA COUNCIL
ahead of the EU Social Summit in Gothenburg**

The Hague, 16 November 2017 – EUROPA NOSTRA, the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe and the Coordinator of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3, welcomes the initiative taken by Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, to convene a lunch debate with EU leaders dedicated to Education and Culture on the occasion of the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth which will take place in Gothenburg on 17 November 2017. Europa Nostra applauds such a strong political signal that Education and Culture can play a larger role in promoting the much-needed stronger cohesion in Europe. Therefore, we encourage EU leaders to develop a much more ambitious European Agenda for Education and Culture.

EUROPA NOSTRA also congratulates the European Commission and its President, Jean-Claude Juncker, on the highly welcome document entitled “Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture”, which was published on 14 November as EC’s contribution to the discussions at the Social Summit in Gothenburg. We fully support the key messages of this document, especially the ones which refer to Europe’s cultural heritage as a key vehicle for promoting European Identity and Unity based on common values and memories; for encouraging active citizenship, in particular among the youth, and for providing a positive force for a more cohesive and inclusive Europe as an antidote to divisive and dangerous forms of populism and nationalism.

There is ample evidence that due respect to and investment in cultural heritage generate multiple benefits – cultural, social, environmental and economic. These benefits contribute to sustainable development and enhanced social cohesion at the local, regional and national levels¹. In addition, our cultural heritage reflects many cross-border movements of people and ideas and cross-fertilisations over the centuries of shared history, which ought to receive greater attention in educational curricula. As such, it is vital for strengthening the sense of belonging together and being part of a cultural community “united in its diversity”. To quote President Tusk “Without our cultural heritage Europe simply would not and could not exist.”

Therefore, Europa Nostra strongly recommends to the European Council to give an even stronger emphasis to EU’s future enhanced action with regard to cultural heritage in the conclusions on the role of education and culture which are expected to be adopted on 14-15 December 2017. The European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, and its highlight event - the European Cultural Heritage Summit which Europa Nostra will be co-hosting with German government institutions and the European Union on 21-22 June 2018 in Berlin - , provide a perfect opportunity to put such strategic orientations immediately into practice, with strong support of public authorities and a broad mobilisation and participation of civil society.

¹ [Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe](#) Report, June 2015



**The Voice of
Cultural Heritage
in Europe**

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