

The Hague, 11 December 2017

SPECIAL JUBILEE MESSAGE BY MAESTRO PLACIDO DOMINGO,  
PRESIDENT OF EUROPA NOSTRA  
TO THE ESTONIAN HERITAGE SOCIETY

Dear Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,  
Dear Colleagues, Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sorry I cannot join you today for this joyous occasion in Tallinn to celebrate 30 years of the Estonian Heritage Society. I am singing Verdi's opera Don Carlo – which celebrates its 150th anniversary – in Valencia at the moment. But as President of Europa Nostra, the Pan-European Heritage organisation, I wanted to share with all of you how proud we are of our country representation in Estonia. For us the Estonian Heritage Society is a perfect example of what Europa Nostra really stands for. And to celebrate your Jubilee in the old Town Hall, one of award winners of our European heritage awards, is truly special.

Cultural heritage is not just about restoring buildings or preserving customs and traditions, it is about real passion and hard work and the dedication of thousands of professionals and volunteers. Our heritage tell a much larger story than just the monument or site itself, it is reflective of who were are as a people, who we are as Europeans, as human beings, and the preservation of heritage is not a local or a national plight, it is in a real sense a human right.

As President of Europa Nostra and as an UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, I truly believe in this connection between human rights and heritage. Yesterday it was the United Nations Human Rights Day. This reminded us of the fact that the Estonian Heritage Society was the very first NGO in the citizens' movement for Estonian Independence. And now, 30 years later, as we stand on the verge of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, this deep motivation behind our love and care for heritage is ever more important. We think that you, the Estonians, can show the rest of Europe the importance of cultural heritage for our shared future, for our democracy and for an inclusive, just and peaceful Europe. We are therefore delighted that it is during the Estonia's Presidency of the European Union that the European Council will adopt later this week the very first Conclusions on the role of education and culture, including cultural heritage, for the future of Europe.



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The Voice of  
Cultural Heritage  
in Europe

La Voix du  
patrimoine culturel  
en Europe

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We think it is important at moments like this, to look back at what has been accomplished by the Estonian Heritage Society over the last 30 years, with more than a thousand members and 53 member organisations and individual members from all over Estonia. But we should also use these moments to look forward to the next step, our next ambition, our future accomplishments. In my opinion one of the most important goals of the European Year of Cultural Heritage is that we learn to look at our own heritage, our own story not only with local or national eyes, but also with European eyes. Why? Because our local and national monuments and sites do not stand on their own; they are all somehow connected to a much larger European story. This is certainly true for The Patarei Sea Fortress which is included in Europa Nostra's 7 Most Endangered List. Patarei is still waiting to become a success story, like the closeby Seaplane Harbour Museum, one of my favourite Grand Prix winners of the European Prize for Cultural heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. Saving Patarei Sea Fortress should be a priority for us all! With already so many people committed to the cause, this could send an exemplary and inspirational message of the Estonian government and city of Tallinn, working together with civil society, to the rest of Europe during the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Let me end by wishing you all an inspirational afternoon with joyful celebration of the past and great hope for the future. And I am sure that you will be singing together on this occasion, since music and singing is so vital to the identity and heritage of Estonia!

Congratulations once again to you all, our dear friends of the Estonian Heritage Society, for your dedication and your hard work for 30 years. We wish you every success for the next 30 years and beyond, together with EUROPA NOSTRA!



Plácido Domingo

