



7ME EVALUATION MEETING NOTES The Hague, 26 November 2017

Europa Nostra (EN) held [Council and Board meetings](#) in The Hague on 16 and 17 November 2017. The day before, a major [Evaluation Meeting](#) took place, bringing together some 35 participants, including the contributors of the European Investment Bank Institute (EIBI) and the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) to the 7 Most Endangered (7ME) programme, EN Council and Board members who participated in 7ME missions in the past, and staff from Europa Nostra in The Hague and Brussels .

The introduction stressed that the background to this exercise was certainly not that the 7ME programme would be in any type of “crisis mode”. Rather, after implementing three rounds of 7ME selections and assessments of 7ME projects (2013, 2014, 2016) and before engaging in the next round (2018), it appeared to be the right moment to take stock of the experience so far. This should permit to optimize the approach to be undertaken in 2018 and moreover to prepare further events scheduled during the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 (EYCH) and thereafter.

The meeting built upon a series of evaluation efforts throughout 2017, including a discussion at the EN [Board meeting](#) held in Valletta, Malta, on 17 March 2017. It was supported by a set of standardized updated activity “fiches” on all 2013 and 2014 projects, and most of the 2016 projects, drafted mainly by the EIBI team.

Accordingly, ample documents were made available for the meeting:

- “Update and Evaluation of the 7 Most Endangered programme – Overview Table plus 17 project fiches”
- “Towards a review of the approach to the 7 Most Endangered programme”, compiled by Guy Clausse, EN Board Member
- “[Results of the Evaluation Questionnaire](#)”, compiled by EN on the basis of a survey with shortlisted or selected 7ME nominators
- “Overview table on experts involved with the 7ME sites 2013, 2014, 2016”
- Powerpoint [presentations](#) by Peter Bond (the Monastery and Church of Jesus in Setúbal in Portugal (2013) and the Wooden Churches in Southern Transylvania and Northern Oltenia in Romania (2014)), Richard Deeley (St. George’s Armenian Church in Mardin in Turkey (2013) and the Synagogue in Subotica in Serbia

- (2014)), Pedro Ponce de León (the Roman Amphitheatre in Durrës in Albania (2013) and the Neighbourhoods of Dolcho and Apozari in Kastoria in Greece (2014)), Gaiané Casnati/Mario Aymerich (the Archaeological Site of Ererouyk and village of Ani Pemza in Armenia), Tapani Mustonen (Helsinki-Malmi Airport in Finland), Mario Aymerich (Patarei Sea Fortress in Tallinn in Estonia) and Campbell Thompson (Convent of St. Anthony of Padua in Extremadura in Spain).
- Powerpoint [presentation](#) by John Sell, Executive Vice-President of Europa Nostra, on the 12 Shortlisted Projects for 2018 and on the results of the above evaluation questionnaire.

The underlying project [reports](#) have been publicly available on the EN and EIBI websites over the last few years. The new documents will be revised and then made similarly available.

The meeting permitted a rather thorough discussion of many issues raised through the various contributions. Moreover, it generated a “team building” process, since more people than ever involved in past - and future - 7ME missions met and exchanged ideas and proposals. The meeting did not produce final decisions, nor was this the format and occasion for that, but it clearly outlined the framework for such decisions in future.

Among the many points discussed, the following ones appear particularly worth recalling:

- The “correct” definition of a nominated site counts and, where need be, may be redefined to denominate a complete entity (e.g. St. George’s Armenian Church in Mardin in Turkey and the the Roman Amphitheatre in Durrës in Albania).
- Sustainability of proposed actions is crucial, but may only become clear and convincing based upon a good technical and financial exploration.
- The mere shortlisting of a site can already make a crucial difference, if the visibility gained through the shortlisting is well used.
- Both for shortlisted and selected sites, the success of the initiative depends crucially on local/regional/national support and involvement. This depends very much on the nominator and the owner. “You make or break a project locally, not in The Hague, Brussels or Luxembourg”.
- The (changing) political context is often determining, notably for campaigning projects (e.g. the Buffer Zone of the Historic Centre of Nicosia in Cyprus and the Roşia Montană Mining Landscape in Transylvania in Romania). Where political constellations have become locked, the European nature of the 7ME intervention can help unblock the situation.
- The availability of some modest sum of seed funding to support immediate post-report activity can make a stimulating difference, e.g. for developing Community building and awareness raising tools. So far, such seed funding came from EIBI (St. George’s Armenian Church in Mardin in Turkey and the Wooden Churches in Southern Transylvania and Northern Oltenia in Romania), from the Leventis Foundation (the Neighbourhoods of Dolcho and Apozari in Kastoria in Greece), the Headley Trust (the Synagogue in Subotica in Serbia) and through

- crowdfunding (the Archaeological Site of Ezerouyk and village of Ani Pemza in Armenia).
- Funding for the main investment continues to be a major issue. EU Funds can provide a boost under favourable circumstances (e.g. the Monastery and Church of Jesus in Setúbal in Portugal), but can be difficult to accede for administrative or political reasons (e.g. the Roşia Montană Mining Landscape in Transylvania in Romania). Outside the EU their availability is lower, though not zero. National funds can also be crucial (the Citadel of Alessandria and the Renaissance Monastery of San Benedetto Po, near Mantova, Italy). Loan funding, including from EIB/CEB, for 7ME-type projects is in practice low, and basically comes in tandem with EU grants (e.g. the Monastery and Church of Jesus in Setúbal in Portugal and the Former Royal Estate of Tatoi, near Athens in Greece).
 - Funding issues become exacerbated when the local/regional/national levels do not cooperate, or when historically large projects are under the responsibility of an under-dimensioned local level with limited capacities (Vauban's Fortifications in Briançon in France and Renaissance Monastery of San Benedetto Po, near Mantova, Italy).
 - The required skill set for pursuing campaigning/advocacy projects will often be different from the one for "classical" sites suffering from neglect. EIB/CEB contribution to be redefined accordingly.
 - For policy reasons EIB or CEB may occasionally have to "opt out" from a project. They should, however, raise such issues as early as possible.
 - Regular feedback from the nominator or owner is important, also to better fine-tune and propagate the overall 7ME initiative. But lack of timely reporting need not be equal to lack of progress on the ground (the Citadel of Alessandria in Italy and the Synagogue in Subotica in Serbia). Costa Carras, Vice-President of Europa Nostra, proposed the creation of an "oversight group" within EN to ensure better reporting.
 - The proposal for EN to obtain a "self-nomination" right was debated. Often, participants preferred that EN encourages hesitant nominators, rather than replacing them, thus avoiding a potential conflict of interest.
 - The issue of defining a "graduation policy" whereby EIB/CEB or EN withdraw after a few years from "old" projects or at least decrease their involvement was also debated. The long-reaching nature of some projects argues against such policy. But there is also a limited capacity to efficiently deal with an ever-increasing number of projects, so that one participant even proposed a "7 in, 7 out" policy. A flexible approach seems appropriate.

The topic of the 7ME initiative and of the evaluation meeting was also on the agenda of both the Council and Board meetings. Overall appreciation for the initiative was voiced. Attention of the Council was drawn to the potential use beyond Romania of the published "Guide for Common Maintenance and Repairs of Wooden Churches", drafted by Pro Patrimonio under EIBI guidance and support (available in Romanian and English).

On 17 November 2017 the Board selected the 7ME projects for 2018 out of the 12 sites shortlisted by the Advisory Panel of the programme in Tallinn in October, to be announced in March 2018. Also, in the framework of European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, EN plans to organise a “7 Most Endangered 5th Anniversary Conference” in Nicosia in autumn 2018.