

The Hague, 14 June 2019



The Voice of  
Cultural Heritage  
in Europe

La Voix du  
patrimoine culturel  
en Europe

President / Président  
Plácido Domingo

International Secretariat  
Secrétariat international  
Lange Voorhout 35  
NL - 2514 EC Den Haag  
T +31 70 302 40 50  
F +31 70 361 78 65  
E info@europanostra.org

[www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org)

ING Bank (NL) N° 63 18 630  
IBAN: NL63INGB0006318630  
BIC: INGBNL2A

KvK (NL) N° 27281560

**His Excellency**  
**Donald Tusk**  
**President of the European Council**  
Rue de la Loi  
B-1048 Brussels  
BELGIUM

***Open Letter to EU Leaders on the vital role of our shared cultural heritage  
within the EU Strategic Orientations for 2019-2024***

Dear Mr President,

Following the recent European Elections and ahead of the forthcoming European Council of 20-21 June 2019, I write to you in my capacity as the President of EUROPA NOSTRA - the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe (\*) - to urge you to seize this crucial moment and recognise the strategic value of our shared culture and cultural heritage for the future of Europe.

As you know, the European Union celebrated the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018. With a minimal financial investment, this Year has generated hugely positive energy and enthusiasm among so many heritage stakeholders, and among the communities and citizens of Our Europe. Together, the EU Institutions and Member States, and a large number of civil society organisations, demonstrated the significance and potential of cultural heritage as a positive and cohesive resource for the future of Europe. This resource has a great relevance for Europe's sustainable development, for the quality of life of Europe's citizens, and for their sense of belonging and identity (local, national, and European).

Considering that the European Council is about to adopt the Strategic Orientations of the European Union for the next 5 years, we believe that it is important to draw your attention to the important developments and achievements of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. I therefore urge you to duly incorporate the lessons learned in the main EU priorities for the years to come.

Having examined the outline of the Leaders' Agenda discussed at the EU Summit in Sibiu, Europa Nostra and I believe that an explicit mention of Europe's shared cultural heritage can and should be included in all proposed four pillars of EU's future strategy:

- 1) Pillar 1 (Protecting citizens and freedoms): among priorities aiming to protect shared values and identity of Europe's citizens;
- 2) Pillar 2 (Developing our economic base): among priorities aiming to invest in our future given the huge importance of cultural heritage for developing sustainable cultural tourism;
- 3) Pillar 3 (Building a greener, fairer and more inclusive future): among priorities aiming to safeguard the quality of life and living environment; and
- 4) Pillar 4 (Promoting Europe's interests and values in the world): among priorities aiming to share Europe's values in the world given the vital role of culture and cultural heritage for developing positive and respectful external relations of the Union.

Indeed, if we wish to achieve a more sustainable, a more climate-friendly, a more inclusive, and a fairer future for Europe and its citizens, the EU must make a much stronger investment in its human and cultural capital. This is paramount to ensure that Europe remains a continent of peace, stability and prosperity in today's world, which is in profound transformation. Europa Nostra and I therefore remain confident that we can count on you, and all EU Leaders, to put our shared cultural heritage, along with culture and education, where they belong: at the very heart of the European project.

Having dedicated my entire life to celebrating the beauty and value of Europe's musical and artistic heritage with audiences across the Globe, I strongly believe that our shared culture and cultural heritage are what constitutes the DNA of Our Europe and what brings us Europeans together. I therefore thank you in advance for your personal attention and support for our pressing appeal.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Plácido Domingo', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Plácido Domingo  
President

**(\*) Europa Nostra**

[Europa Nostra](#) is the pan-European federation of 230 heritage NGOs which is also supported by a wide network of 112 public bodies, private companies and more than 900 individuals. Covering more than 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage, especially through flagship initiatives like the [7 Most Endangered programme](#) and the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#). Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe and also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, in particular through coordinating the [European Heritage Alliance 3.3](#), a platform of 49 European and international networks active in the wider field of cultural heritage.