

INTERVENTION BY LORENA ALDANA
EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OFFICER AT EUROPA NOSTRA
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- I am honoured and delighted to be here- I would like to start by paying tribute to the Europa Nostra *dream team* who has worked tirelessly and passionately to put together this rich Cultural Heritage Summit. Having worked for the past months in organising this interesting and timely Debate makes it all the most special for me to be on stage today at its closing session.
- On this occasion, I would like to speak not only on behalf of Europa Nostra but also and mainly from the perspective of the **new generation of heritage professionals** - including those who are already professionally active and those who are training to become heritage experts.
- Last year, during the Europa Nostra Berlin Summit organised for the EYCH, I had the pleasure to moderate a panel entitled '*Messages from the Young Generation*', composed by a group of committed and talented emerging heritage experts from all across Europe, who, through their initiatives created *by and for* young people, contributed to this important Year.
- And today, over a year after, I would like to share my thoughts on how to build lasting bridges between Berlin, Paris, and our next summit in Brussels planned for June 2020:
- *What have we achieved? How can these efforts be sustained and upscaled in the future? And what is still needed to be done?*

I speak of the Next generation of heritage leaders: why is this important?

- Europe is currently forming the next generation of heritage professionals and policy-makers charged with the important task of finding new solutions to the complex challenges of the field.
- 18% of the total EU population employed in the cultural sector, including in cultural heritage, is less than 29 years old, accounting for a total of 1.6 million people (*according to Eurostat data*). Not only is this proportion significant in quantitative terms - emerging heritage professionals are also a vital force on which depends the sustainability of the sector.
- Often, youth is rhetorically addressed as a future stakeholder in the heritage debate, with phrases such as 'the *future* guardians of cultural heritage'. However, the opposite is true: *in the present*,

young people are increasingly involved in cultural heritage protection and promotion and they are engaged political subjects in the heritage sphere. This is particularly the case of the next generation of heritage experts.

- As highlighted in our "**Berlin Call to Action**", there is an urgent need to strengthen youth participation in cultural heritage. At Europa Nostra, we are fully committed to lead by example inside our own organisation.
- *How do we plan to do this?* And what, in my view, needs to be done collectively to make sure the Paris Manifesto is not yet another heritage document in the records, but rather make *it live* through the actions and commitment of many, and especially the young people?

Engage, connect, empower

- As a red thread of my intervention, I would like to focus on three concepts, which correspond to the three core objectives of the Youth Strategy of the European Union 2019-2027: **engage, connect and empower**:
- **ENGAGE**: understood as allowing and promoting the meaningful participation of young people in policy and decision-making
- Youth participation in heritage policy-making can be understood in many different ways, according to which the process and the outcomes differ greatly. One extreme of the participation ladder includes one-way or top-bottom consultations. In the other extreme, we have participation on an equal foot, and as a process, rather than a one-off event. Unfortunately, as recognised by the EU Youth Strategy, young people have less opportunities to influence and participate in decision-making processes than any other age group.
- As a way to do our bit in this regard, Europa Nostra has introduced this year an **individual membership free of charge for people under 30**, with the aim of providing emerging professionals with meaningful opportunities to thrive in the heritage sector, while contributing to the organisation through their talent, drive and creativity.
- Since the launch of this free membership, over 80 highly skilled emerging professionals have joined our network. We shall now capitalize to the fullest on this enormous pool of talent, and encourage their **meaningful participation in heritage policy-making** through *the 'Europa Nostra platform'*.

- In particular, it is my hope to see our young members represented in many at our next Summit in Brussels - not only as participants and contributors, but also as panellists providing expertise and conveying their views to policy-makers. As a professional community, I believe we *can* and *should* do much more in terms of *diversity* and *representativity* in the heritage policy debate, in terms of age, but also in terms of background, gender, ethnicity or religious tradition.

The second Keyword is

CONNECT, meaning fostering connections, relations and exchange of experiences between young people through mobility and solidarity actions

- Here, I would like to address the mobilization of the younger generation for the benefit of cultural heritage, in the spirit of the *Paris Declaration on Endangered Heritage adopted last May* by EU Ministers.
- And I would like to relaunch Europa Nostra's proposal to consolidate a '***compagnonnage européen pour le patrimoine***', to activate youth in the restoration or maintenance of cultural heritage, on the good basis provided by the European Solidarity Corps launched by the European Commission in 2018.
- Europa Nostra and I would like to see volunteering activities within the Solidarity Corps benefiting from **additional visibility, a more structured, systematic and targeted approach, as well as an own identity**. In the meantime, the inclusion of cultural heritage as a policy priority in the 2019 work programme of the Solidarity Corps is already an opportunity to achieve this ambition, and an example of effective mainstreaming of cultural heritage in Youth policy and vice-versa.

Last but not least:

3) **Empower** - empower youth through training, networking and upskilling pathways.

- In 2018, with a view contribute to the EYCH, cultural heritage was included as a priority in the Erasmus + annual work programme. The result? Over 1,000 heritage-related projects were financed, for circa 93 million EU. This is an impressive amount compared to the rather modest share for CH within Creative Europe!

- In the future, in order to carry forward the legacy of the EYCH, it will be key that cultural heritage remains as an **explicit priority** in the Erasmus programme.
- Europa Nostra is also contributing to build and enhance the professional capacities of emerging heritage experts, in particular through our yearly **Capacity Building Days**.
- Through this scheme, 60 Young Heritage Professionals from over 20 countries across Europe and beyond gathered last June in Athens, in conjunction with our Council and Board meetings. The aim was to improve the inter-generational exchange and knowledge-transfer between emerging and established heritage professionals. And we are committed to continue and boost this scheme in the future.
- The **inter-generational component** is here key, and should be seen as a **cycle, rather than a linear pathway**: this process is two-way, mutually beneficial and shall be done on an equal basis. Not only can established professionals pass on their knowledge and expertise to the younger generation, but also vice-versa: the next generation has much to offer in terms of innovation, creativity, digital skills, fresh views and different sensitivity on current challenges and burning issues, as well as a versatile, multidisciplinary set of skills that are useful in a heritage labour market that is rapidly changing. Both sides have much to give, and much to take from their counterpart!

« Relançons l'Europe par la culture et le patrimoine ! : cela est une responsabilité pour nous tous »

- In doing it so, youth is not to be overlooked or understated: It is also up to us- the new generation of heritage professionals, to stimulate, co-create and put forward our very own vision and new narrative for Europe through culture and cultural heritage.
- To conclude, it is not really that much about '*passing on the torch*' but rather working hand by hand, across generations, to keep its *flame alive*.