

R O M Â N I A



PREȘEDINTELE ROMÂNIEI

H.E. Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania
Message to the 2020 Europa Nostra Heritage Award Ceremony

Taking place under such exceptional circumstances, the 2020 European Heritage Awards Ceremony is a proof of our commitment to the preservation and the enhancement of our cultural heritage, a token of respect for culture.

This year's Europa Nostra event is even more special for us: a Romanian project, "*The Ambulance for Monuments*" receives the important Public Choice Award, shortly after having been awarded for its outstanding contribution to the protection of the cultural heritage through education, training and public awareness-raising.

I warmly congratulate the team that initiated this project. Due to their vision, through the involvement of young people, of the specialists, authorities and sponsors, many monuments at risk have been saved during the five years since *The Ambulance* exists, thus testing the viability of a model of social cohesion emerging from cultural values and local identity.

I also warmly salute the public that ranked "*The Ambulance for Monuments*" first in their choices. I believe that many European citizens appreciated the Romanian project as a concrete expression of solidarity and an example for the appropriate use of the civic energies developed by culture and cultural heritage.

In these difficult days, Europa Nostra, awarding a major prize to "*The Ambulance for Monuments*" initiative, reminds us of the statement assigned to Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union: "If I were to do it again, I would start with culture."

Today, through our commitment to the preservation of our cultural heritage, we reassert that understanding and assuming our common history is what provides resilience to the European project, its existence is the best opportunity we have to cherish our cultural diversity. Preserving our heritage is by no means turning towards the past, on the contrary, it shows which are the values we intent to bequeath to the next generations. Our future is the outcome of the dialogue between cultures, its shape - the result of both contemporary creativity and inspiration drawn from the achievements of the past.

Our Europe – Europa Nostra – will be forever indebted to its culture and to the ones who serve and protect it.

That is why our vision for a united Europe rests upon the humanistic messages of our cultural heritage and respects the social vitality that it provides, improving democracy and promoting liberty.

Klaus Iohannis
President of Romania