



7 Most Endangered 2022 results

29 March 2022, 10:00 online

**Webinar with Europa Nostra. Participation of Commissioner Mariya Gabriel
(video)**

**Henry von Blumenthal, acting Dean of the European Investment Bank Institute
(EIB) 5 minutes.**

Commissioner Gabriel, Mr. Parzinger, Mme Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What an impressive list and congratulations to all winners!

I am very pleased to be here today to represent the European Investment Bank and its Institute for the official announcement of the 7 Most Endangered 2022.

When I say that I am pleased, I have also to say that I do so with a tinge of sadness because these are sad days for Europe and also sad days for cultural heritage.

Five weeks of war in the Ukraine has created a primary tragedy in the lives of those involved in the here and now, but today we are concerned with a secondary tragedy, with consequences which could reach into the future, long after all of us have passed away. Buildings and infrastructure, landscapes and cultural heritage sites have been destroyed. It is too early to say what will become of the seven World Heritage Sites in the Ukraine, not to mention the countless churches, monuments and museums.

What can we do? For the primary tragedy, on Wednesday 2 March, the EIB approved and immediately launched an unprecedented humanitarian aid package of €2.5 million coordinated by the Institute for seven NGOs to help the people affected by the war in Ukraine.

Two days later, the EIB Board of Directors approved a €668 million immediate financial support package for Ukraine developed in close collaboration with the European Commission. Most of it has already been delivered.

The Bank will also deliver an additional €1.3 billion for infrastructure projects and develop a multi-billion euro package to mitigate the consequences of the refugee crisis, and help address the social and economic fallout caused by the war both in the neighbouring regions and within the EU.

But there is still the issue of that other tragedy; the one that is less concerned with the body, and more with the soul. In this regard, the Institute commends and supports Europa Nostra and Global Heritage Fund's call for donations to help the defenders of cultural heritage in the Ukraine as well as those working in the cultural heritage world who have been rendered refugees.

As the example of the Ukraine shows, cultural heritage is about far more than 'stones and bones' from the past. It is a key resource for our European identity, without which economic growth is meaningless. Some nations look to their sovereign for their identity, some to other expressions of their sovereignty such as their flag or their constitution. Every nation or alliance of nations needs its Totem. So what is the EU's Totem? What we have is what the rest of the world acknowledges we have: our European Cultural heritage. This heritage has a cohesive power which connects European people and communities. "Whether we like it or not we are all intrinsically connected to our past" as Herman Parzinger said in its essay "Togetherness: a new heritage deal for Europe" published by the EIB. This cohesive power can help the EU deliver the European Green Deal as demonstrated in and the Cultural Heritage Green Paper published last year by Europa Nostra and ICOMOS and supported by the Institute.

For all these reasons, the EIB Institute is once again proud to be supporting the 7 Most Endangered Programme with Europa Nostra, Europe's leading cultural heritage organization.

The innovative cooperation between our two organizations united to safeguard heritage sites in danger mixes the vast cultural expertise and lobbying work of Europa Nostra and the technical appraisal and rescue planning skills of the EIB.

In addition to this expertise, since last year, each of the selected seven projects are eligible for an EIB Institute Grant of up to 10 000 euros provided they have a viable use for it.

It is a limited amount of money and it might not in itself save a site. But it can help finance an awareness raising campaign, a feasibility study to safeguard an endangered monument or the tarpaulin needed to protect a church without a roof. Some 2021 projects have already benefited from this financing like the Giusti Gardens in Verona or the five southern Aegean Islands in Greece. I hope many more will take advantage of this new opportunity the EIB Institute is offering.

In its the now nine years of existence, the 7 Most endangered programme has proven useful and efficient to raise awareness and save sites like the Bourla Theater in Antwerp, the Mafra carillons in Portugal and the Buzludzha Monument in Bulgaria. And what better example than the Wooden Church of Urși Village, Vâlcea County (Romania), a 7 Most Endangered project in 2014, which was awarded both a Grand Prix and the Public Choice Award in last year's European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards, Europe's top honour in the field of cultural heritage.

This year again, from Albania to Germany and from Roman baths to an early XXth century garden city, the seven laureates illustrate the diversity and richness of Europe's cultural heritage. We have to start somewhere; I fervently hope that when the reconstruction of the Ukraine begins, those priceless heritage items will be restored, protected and renewed in ways that show that they are not luxuries; they are of the essence, and that this fact will be understood and applied all over Our Europe.

Thank you for your attention.