



PRESS RELEASE

Europa Nostra's Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović awarded the highest French distinction – 'La Légion d'Honneur'

The Hague / Brussels, 2 November 2022

On behalf of the President of France, **Emmanuel Macron**, the Ambassador of France to Serbia, **Pierre Cochard**, presented the distinction of the national order of the Legion of Honour, in the rank of Knight ('Chevalière'), to **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**, Secretary General of Europa Nostra, at a memorable ceremony held on 21 October 2022 at the Residence of France in Belgrade in the presence of a high-level delegation of Europa Nostra from various European countries. 'La Légion d'Honneur', the highest distinction conferred by the French Republic, was awarded to Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović for her *"unreserved commitment to the preservation of heritage in Serbia and more widely in Europe, in close collaboration with France"* and for her *"dedication and commitment to the cultural dimension of the European project"*.

In his [address](#), the Ambassador of France to Serbia paid tribute to Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović. *"Welcoming you to this embassy has a very special meaning: this building is a masterpiece of Belgrade's heritage and its facade is inspired by that of the Palace of the Légion d'Honneur in Paris, located on the banks of the Seine. With you, dear Sneška, the Seine has never been so close to the Sava and the Danube. Your itinerary is indeed that of a convinced European. (...) It is your exceptional journey at the service of European integration through culture, based on the conviction that heritage is our common good, that France rewards today,"* stated **Pierre Cochard**.

Established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, ['La Légion d'Honneur'](#) has been rewarding the outstanding merits of citizens and designating them as "models of French civil service" for 220 years.

In her [acceptance speech](#), **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**, affirmed:

"I am deeply honoured with this high distinction granted by the President of the French Republic. I owe it to my family, my teachers and so many extraordinary people with whom I have had the privilege to work for 30 years promoting the mission of Europa Nostra."

"I have deep respect and admiration for President Macron's vision and determination to strengthen the feeling of belonging to a large European family through more ambitious European policy and action in favour of our shared cultural heritage."

"I receive the Légion d'Honneur with gratitude but also with great humility and, above all, with a deep sense of responsibility. We all know that the ideals, the values and the wonderful cultural heritage which constitute the soul and the "raison d'être" of our Europe, are today seriously threatened, in too many places in Europe, especially in Ukraine, but also in Serbia."

She concluded by saying *"My life's mission is far from complete. France, Serbia and Our Europe can count on me to continue - until the last breath - to defend and celebrate a Europe of Values and a Europe of Culture"*.

In addition to the large number of family, friends and colleagues of Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, the ceremony at the Residence of France was attended by **Emanuele Giaufret**, Ambassador of the European Union to Serbia. **Maestro Prof. Ljubiša Jovanović**, renowned flute player and Artistic Ambassador of Europa Nostra in Serbia performed the famous solo piece for flute - the Syrinx by the French composer Claude Debussy as a musical tribute to Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović.

A high-level delegation of Europa Nostra from different European countries attended the award-giving ceremony. It was led by **Denis de Kergorlay** (France), Honorary President of Europa Nostra and President of the Cercle de l'Union Interallié, who is himself 'Chevalier de l'ordre de la Légion d'Honneur'. Other members of the delegation

were the Board members **Laurent Lévi-Strauss** (France) and **Prof. Paolo Vitti** (Italy); the Council members **Jorge Chamíné** (France), **Uwe Koch** (Germany) and **Jimmy Jamar** (Belgium); the former Vice-President **Marques de Santa Cruz** (Spain); three representatives of Europa Nostra's large membership in Greece, **Louisa Anastopoulou**, **Prof. Fani Mallouchou-Tufano** and **Ioana Mikrou**; and the Dutch Life member **Harry Bodifée**; as well as **Nada Hosking** representing Europa Nostra's partner organisation from the USA, the Global Heritage Trust. Europa Nostra Serbia was represented by its President, **Prof. Irina Subotić**, its Secretary General, **Vesna Marjanović**, who is also a newly elected member of the Europa Nostra Council, and its Board members.

The delegation of Europa Nostra and Europa Nostra Serbia, with invited guests from Belgrade, also participated in the [events](#) held in Belgrade on 20-22 October by Europa Nostra to mark this special occasion, namely the European Conversation on the Strategic Value of Cultural Heritage, the Chamber Music Concert offered by Maestro Prof. Ljubiša Jovanović and a string quartet composed of his special guests, as well as the visits to museums and historic sites in Belgrade, including the Belgrade Fortress, which was included on the 2020 List of 7 Most Endangered sites in Europe.

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TO FIND OUT MORE

[Photos of the ceremony](#)

[Media articles](#)

Extended interview with Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović – [online version](#) and [printed version](#) – published on 2 November 2022 by **CorD Magazine**, an independent monthly publication produced in Belgrade (*in English*)
Extended [television interview](#) with Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović broadcast on 24 October 2022 by **Radio-Television of Vojvodina** (*in Serbian*)

More information

Biography of Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic

Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic has been working for [Europa Nostra](#), the European Voice of Civil Society Committed to Cultural Heritage, for over 30 years, having been appointed as the organisation's Secretary General in 2000. She has worked closely with representatives from all EU institutions, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and numerous public and private bodies committed to cultural heritage at all levels of governance, from local to global. Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic has been a regular speaker/author on cultural heritage related matters of importance for a more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive future of Europe.

The Secretary General of Europa Nostra has been the spokesperson of the [European Heritage Alliance](#) – an informal platform of over 50 European/international heritage networks – since its creation in 2011. She has played a prominent role in advocating and implementing the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) and is a member of the EC Expert Group on Cultural Heritage. She is also committed to climate action and is the regional co-chair of the [Climate Heritage Network](#).

Before joining Europa Nostra at its headquarters in The Hague, Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic worked for the EU Institutions in Brussels and in her native city Belgrade. In 1991, she was one of the founders and first Secretary-General of the European Movement in Yugoslavia.

Europa Nostra

[Europa Nostra](#) is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. It is a pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, covering more than 40 countries. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the largest and the most representative heritage network in Europe, maintaining close relations with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international bodies.

Cecilia Bartoli, the world-renowned opera star, is the [President](#) of Europa Nostra.

Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through the [7 Most Endangered Programme](#). It celebrates excellence through the [European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards](#). Europa Nostra actively contributes to the definition and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a participatory dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the [European Heritage Alliance](#).

Europa Nostra is among the official partners of the [New European Bauhaus](#) initiative developed by the European Commission, and is the Regional Co-Chair of the [Climate Heritage Network](#) for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.