

BELGIAN CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

6TH CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE (22-24 APRIL 2015)

**“Cultural heritage in the 21st century for living better together.
Towards a common strategy for Europe”**

NAMUR DECLARATION

THE MINISTERS OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL CONVENTION MEETING IN NAMUR on 23 and 24 April 2015,

- i. Welcoming the decision of the Belgian Government to bring them together fourteen years after the Portoroz conference (Slovenia) in 2001;
- ii. Recognising the decisive contribution of the Council of Europe, in particular through the conventions which it began drawing up over 40 years ago for the protection, conservation and enhancement of heritage and which reflect this specifically European field of excellence;
- iii. Welcoming the European Union's efforts to give greater consideration to cultural heritage in its areas of expertise, notably in the Communication of the European Commission of 22 July 2014 “Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe” and the Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage adopted on 25 November 2014 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union, and the convergence of these efforts with the Council of Europe's work;
- iv. Thus wishing to mark the 40th anniversary of the European Charter of the Architectural Heritage adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on 26 September 1975, the 30th anniversary of the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, the 15th anniversary of the European Landscape Convention and the 10th anniversary of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society;
- v. Considering that cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, including all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time;
- vi. Noting with satisfaction the support given to this approach by the actors of civil society which have been associated with preparatory work;
- vii. Noting the contribution of culture and cultural heritage to sustainable development, of which they form the “fourth pillar”;
- viii. Resolved to continue and intensify their co-operation in order to provide responses that meet with the challenges facing the conservation, enhancement and use of heritage as a fundamental right at the beginning of the 21st century;

I. ADOPT THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION:

1. Climate change, demographic changes, migration, political, economic, financial and social crises are having a significant impact on our societies and heritage. We need to be aware of these challenges and work together to prevent a development where our societies are weakened and lack points of reference, are tempted to adopt inward-looking attitudes, are experiencing an erosion of traditional bonds and sometimes risk rupturing or imploding;
2. Cultural heritage is a key component of the European identity; it is of general public interest and its transmission to future generations is a shared responsibility; it is a unique resource, fragile, non-renewable and non-relocatable, contributing to the attractiveness and the development of Europe and, crucially, to the creation of a more peaceful, just and cohesive society;

3. A Strategy for redefining the place and role of cultural heritage in Europe is therefore a necessary response to the current challenges in the light of the changing European socio-economic and cultural context;
4. This Strategy:
 - 4.1 should draw on the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, openness and dialogue, equal dignity of all persons, mutual respect and sensitivity to diversity;
 - 4.2 should promote a shared and unifying approach to cultural heritage management, based on an effective legal framework for the integrated conservation of heritage, and involving all the major players, institutional and other, and the representatives of professionals and civil society, at international, national and local level;
 - 4.3 should offer a vision and a framework for the next ten years, identify actions and projects that could have a lasting impact in Member States and be implemented primarily through existing instruments and tools, in particular the conventions, updating and developing them if necessary;
 - 4.4 should focus on the following priorities:
 - the contribution of heritage to the improvement of European citizens' quality of life and living environment;
 - the contribution of heritage to Europe's attractiveness and prosperity, based on the expression of its identities and cultural diversity;
 - education and life-long training;
 - participatory governance in the heritage field;
 - 4.5 should be guided by the proposed themes identified in the Guidelines for the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century appended to the present Declaration, of which they form an integral part;
 - 4.6 should include appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods using existing tools and instruments, in particular the conventions;

II. REQUEST THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE:

5. to entrust the drafting and follow-up of the implementation of this Strategy to the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape of the Council of Europe, and to give it the resources to complete this task;
6. to take the appropriate decisions to this effect in the context of the Council of Europe's programme and budget for 2016-2017;
7. to adopt the Strategy preferably as a Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States by the end of 2016;

III. RECOGNIZE THAT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A EUROPEAN HERITAGE STRATEGY SHOULD BRING TOGETHER A MULTITUDE OF PLAYERS AND TO THIS END:

8. invite the European Union to be involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy, both at European and member State level;
9. welcome, as best practice, the idea of the Council of the European Union to organise a European Heritage Year, and ask that the Council of Europe and all States Parties to the European Cultural Convention be invited to participate;
10. invite those Member States which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the following four conventions: the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised), the European Landscape Convention, the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society;
11. also invite UNESCO and ICCROM to cooperate more widely with the European institutions in order to promote the exchange of experience and best practices, and to create synergies with other regions of the world;
12. Recall the importance of developing this future strategy with the involvement of civil society actors and organisations active in the heritage field including the networks of Cities;

Appendix

Guidelines for the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century

It will be up to each country to implement the Strategy according to the competences and responsibilities specific to each level of government and the relevant legislation, while giving priority to those themes and recommended courses of action which best match their own concerns or objectives, and at the same time endeavouring to implement the Strategy as a whole in a harmonious, integrated and coherent manner.

The following guidelines suggest unifying, consensual themes while at the same time respecting differences in the way heritage and certain issues are perceived by the various states and parties involved. They identify operational priorities, which should be implemented using the Council of Europe instruments and tools available:

- the conventions, resolutions and recommendations developed by the Council of Europe since 1969;
- the databases, knowledge bases and institutional networks (HEREIN, ELCIS and Compendium of Cultural Policies);
- activities conducted with local entities in the spirit of the Faro Framework Convention;
- the Technical Co-operation and Consultancy Programme related to the integrated conservation of the cultural heritage;
- current thinking on the contribution of digital technology to all the suggested themes.

Account should also be taken of the European Union projects which concern cultural heritage, through the various EU sectorial policies.

The suggested unifying and consensual themes are as follows:

- HERITAGE AND CITIZENSHIP
 - Issues: establishing good governance and promoting participatory management for the identification and management of cultural heritage; optimising the implementation of the conventions; promoting a sensorial and sensitive approach to heritage more in harmony with the population's experience;
 - Guidelines: develop education and training for all in the field of cultural heritage; get all the partners to work together; involve civil society and elected representatives more; educate and raise awareness about heritage rights and responsibilities; enable citizens to develop or regain a sense of ownership of heritage; pursue actions in the spirit of Faro; engage in dialogue and establish partnerships with national and international institutions, and with NGOs; contextualise the conventions and other reference texts, ensuring better implementation.
- HERITAGE AND SOCIETIES
 - Issues: living in peace, improving quality of life and the living environment; contributing to people's well-being, to the good health of individuals, preserving the collective memory;
 - Guidelines: take into account the everyday heritage that constitutes people's primary living environment; use heritage to connect or even reconcile human beings with life, with their fellow citizens, with their environment and history; recognise cultural heritage as an ideal means of transmitting values through the generations; promote the care of heritage by actors and the more autonomous communities of citizens, with the support of experts; fight against standardisation.
- HERITAGE AND THE ECONOMY

- Issues: building a more inclusive and cohesive society; developing prosperity; promoting public well-being;
 - Guidelines: consider heritage as a source of reflection and inspiration; use heritage resources in respectful, creative and innovative ways; increase the attractiveness of Europe and its expertise in the field of cultural heritage; mitigate the intensive use and excessive exploitation of certain heritage sites; diversify the provision in terms of heritage sites; increase access to cultural heritage including through e-content; promote the use of cultural heritage for education, research, scientific and technical co-operation and tourism; broaden the scope of the European cultural routes; promote cultural connections between citizens and communities (twinning) based on cultural heritage; update the European Heritage Days portal as an e-heritage platform; promote augmented reality techniques based on a genuine knowledge of cultural heritage; consider alternative financing models or instruments; encourage the re-use and regeneration of heritage to create jobs and utilise local resources.
- HERITAGE AND KNOWLEDGE
 - Issues: fostering a knowledge society; ensuring the maintenance and transmission of knowledge, methods and know-how; increasing awareness about, and a sense of responsibility for, cultural heritage and the values it conveys; ensuring access to life-long training; combatting social dumping where heritage-related labour is concerned;
 - Guidelines: support the exchange of knowledge, ideas and best practice; develop and co-ordinate the actions of the European Union, the Council of Europe, and ICCROM; promote the exchange of experts and expertise, apprentices, researchers, students (expand the existing exchange programmes) and volunteers (active at archaeological sites or monument restoration projects for example); work on evidence-based policy development.
 - HERITAGE AND TERRITORIAL GOVERNANCE
 - Issues: defining the role of institutions and the responsibility of citizens to work together to improve the surroundings and quality of life of all members of society; introducing heritage management that is conducive to living together in harmony, well-being and development;
 - Guidelines: in the spirit of the Florence convention, affirm territory as an entity that is remarkable for the character of its heritages and that may cross borders: specific landscape and environmental features, strong identity, sense of belonging shared by all members of the community, etc.; promote uniqueness as a driving force for the positive transformation of the living environment; promote innovative good spatial governance based on heritage as a resource; promote co-operation between territories in the field of transfrontier heritage.
 - HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
 - Issues: providing the public sector with appropriate means, enabling it to be more effective in improving quality of life and the living environment;
 - Guidelines: improve the public sector's cultural heritage management capacity so it can manage heritage as a real local and regional resource; promote cultural heritage as a factor in social and territorial cohesion and landscape quality; strengthen the role of cultural heritage in the development of public spaces, analyse the risks for cultural heritage; widen the scope of the technical co-operation and consultancy missions of the Council of Europe and make them more permanent in the field; use the European projects (European Union) while stressing the importance of heritage for other sectoral policies; develop partnerships with UNESCO, the European Union, and ICCROM in cultural heritage risk management.