



Building the Legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

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Abstract

The paper presents the current reflections within the European Commission's on how to build a lasting legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The initiative is underway, with more of ten thousands of events and activities taking place across Europe, providing a unique opportunity to experience and enjoy the wealth of memory, ideals, principles and values embedded in Europe's cultural heritage, and thus reflect on our identity of Europeans. But the European Year is more than just a year-long celebration of the past: its aim is to be a laboratory "for heritage-based innovation", a wide ranging, shared reflection at policy level on how to implement the new integrated, holistic and participatory approaches that have been highlighted in the latest policy documents at EU level. The European Commission is opening the way, engaging national authorities, representatives of civil society and international organisations, and all the European institutions in the governance of the Year. New models of "crossover" initiatives are also being tested, in order to maximise the benefits to Europe's economy, culture, society and the environment, implemented in cooperation with various Directorates-General and Stakeholders, and organised in four pillars: Engagement: promote awareness of the value of cultural heritage, above all among young people; Sustainability: make full use of the potential of cultural heritage in local development strategies, also through its reuse and cultural tourism; Protection: promote quality in cultural heritage interventions, improve risk management and do more to combat illegal trafficking; Innovation: promote research and favour the use of the results obtained, and encourage active participation.

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The European Year of Cultural Heritage

The European Year of Cultural Heritage is under full sail. Throughout 2018, more than ten thousand of events and activities taking place across Europe will celebrate our cultural heritage, raising awareness about the value of this precious resource for our society and the necessity to safeguard it and pass it on to future generations.

But the European Year it is more than just a nostalgic year-long celebration of the past. It is an opportunity to engage citizens in a deeper reflection on the wealth of memory, ideals, principles and values embedded in Europe's cultural heritage, aiming at re-discovering how cultural diversity has shaped our identity of Europeans, thus reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common European space. Moreover, the European Year can be seen as a laboratory "for heritage-based innovation", (European Commission 2014), an opportunity to test new integrated, holistic and participatory approaches to safeguarding and management of cultural heritage, at national and EU level, helping triggering real change in the way we enjoy, protect and promote heritage in Europe. New approaches that have been outlined in the latest EU policy documents on cultural heritage, (Barca 2018), but need to be tested and pursued in the medium-long term, ensuring continuity in the policy line and more concerted action, in order to bring ripe fruits and maximise the benefits to Europe's economy, culture, society and the environment. But how to ensure that these efforts will continue beyond 2018? And what are the current plans to build a lasting legacy for the European Year of Cultural Heritage?

Towards an Action Plan for Cultural Heritage for Europe

To respond to those questions, the European Commission has recently announced in its Communication on A new European Agenda for Culture, at the conclusion of the European Year, its intention to:

"present an Action Plan for Cultural Heritage, and ask Member States to draft similar Plans at national level and follow up the 10 European initiatives through the Council Work Plans for Culture." (European Commission 2018)

The Action Plan is presented as a cross-cutting action, contributing to all of the three objectives of the Agenda: harnessing the power of culture for social cohesion and wellbeing, supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and for jobs and growth, and strengthening international cultural relations. The Commission proposes as well to incorporate the outcomes of the Year into future EU programmes and Cohesion Policy, and to support the enforcement of the future EU Regulation on the import of cultural goods through an Action Plan on illicit trade in cultural goods and establish a science-policy stakeholder social platform on endangered cultural heritage.

The Action Plan will build on the results of 10 initiatives set up by the Commission to implement the Year, alongside the coordination and communication activities. The initiatives are new models of cross-sectoral actions, meant to translate into concrete action the principle of participatory and integrated approach to cultural heritage, promoted in the latest EU policy documents. In order to do so, the Commission is engaging national authorities, representatives of civil society and international organisations, and all the European institutions,¹ in order to reach the common goals established in the legal basis of the Year.

As thoroughly described in the Commission Staff Working Document that accompanies the New European Agenda for Culture, each of the 10 initiatives refers to one or more specific objectives fixed in the legal basis of the Year. Let's now take a deeper look into these initiatives, which are articulated along 4 main pillars: Engagement, Sustainability, Protection, and Innovation (see Figure 1).

¹ At European level, all EU institutions are committed to making the European Year a success: the European Commission (including at least 14 different services of the Commission), the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, as well as the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

4 “Pillars”, 10 European initiatives



Figure 1. The 10 European initiatives.

Pillar 1 – Engagement: promote awareness of the value of cultural heritage, above all among young people;

1. EYCH Initiative 1 – Sharing heritage, history and values, aims at encouraging people-centred and inclusive approaches to cultural heritage, and to improve the social, cultural and physical accessibility to cultural heritage. It also aims at helping people and communities to draw connections between the local and the European cultural heritage. This objective is pursued both through “special editions” of well renowned actions, such as the European Heritage Days, jointly organised with the Council of Europe and the Member states, or the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Award, and the European Heritage Label, celebrating heritage sites which symbolize European ideals, values, history and integration. But also new initiatives such as the Access City Award, organized by the Commission to reward the efforts of small and bigger cities in the EU in granting access to physically disabled people, that in 2018 will have a focus on the accessibility of cultural heritage sites.
2. EYCH Initiative 2 – Heritage at school aims at raising awareness of the importance of cultural heritage for Europe through education and lifelong learning, with a particular focus on children, young and elderly people and local communities. Activities span from educational material on Europe's cultural heritage targeting teachers and pupils in primary and secondary schools to action targeting school children to encourage them to re-discover the European dimension of their local heritage and share their stories.
3. EYCH Initiative 3 – Youth for heritage, engages young people in better appreciating their cultural heritage, interact with it, and play an active role in its protection and conservation, for instance by volunteering.

Pillar 2 – Sustainability: make full use of the potential of cultural heritage in local development strategies, also through its reuse and cultural tourism:

4. EYCH Initiative 4 – Heritage in transition, aims at promoting good practice in the adaptive reuse of Europe's industrial, religious and military heritage, bringing socio-economic benefits to European cities and regions. Initiative focus on the exchange of best practices in the reuse of industrial, religious and military heritage or awareness-raising campaigns such as "Work it out!", a pan-European dance performance in industrial heritage sites and the Torch Initiative run by Future for Religious Heritage, collecting personal stories related to religious heritage throughout Europe.
5. EYCH Initiative 5 – Tourism and heritage, explores the concept of 'sustainable cultural tourism'. A group of experts from the member states are looking into practices across Europe, mapping methods and tools to make Europe's cultural heritage accessible to and interoperable with a sustainable system of tourism promotion and marketing. It also promotes Europe's Cultural routes (i.e. those promoted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO World Heritage Journeys in the EU) and a European Destination of Excellence Award to promote emerging, little-known destinations committed to social, cultural and environmental sustainability of tourism.

Pillar 3 – Protection: promote quality in cultural heritage interventions, improve risk management and do more to combat illegal trafficking;

1. EYCH Initiative 6 – Cherishing heritage, aims at promoting debate, research and exchange of good practices on the quality of EU-funded interventions on cultural heritage. A working group of experts, coordinated by ICOMOS, has started working to produce an updated document on quality principles for cultural heritage interventions in Europe.
2. EYCH Initiative 7 – Heritage at risk: fighting illicit trade, managing heritage site risks, aims to encourage synergies between the EU and its Member States to strengthen initiatives to prevent the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. Activities focus on the negotiations for regulation on the import of cultural goods, on the basis of the Commission proposal adopted in July 2017, and other awareness raising and capacity building activities, including two joint projects with UNESCO to sensitize relevant stakeholders and the art market to the implications of illicit trade in cultural property and to train Member States' authorities on the legal framework and practical ways of investigating heritage related crimes. A recently published Study on 'Safeguarding Cultural Heritage from Natural and Man-Made Disasters' will facilitate sharing experience between Member States on effective ways to protect cultural heritage at risk and pave the way for future cooperation.

Pillar 4 – Innovation: promote research and favour the use of the results obtained, and encourage active participation

1. EYCH Initiative 8 – Skills for heritage: for traditional and new professions, aims to support the development of specialised skills and improve knowledge transfer in the cultural heritage sector, attracting young people to heritage-related jobs, while accompanying the adaptation of heritage-related professions to the digital world. A working group of 26 Experts from EU Member States has already started working under the Agenda for Culture, to exchange good practices and design policy recommendations for Ministries of Culture and Education. Their discussions is enriched by the contribution of a group of 35 relevant stakeholders, under the "Voices of Culture" structured dialogue, which has produced a Brainstorming report on skills for Heritage. Further opportunities for cultural heritage professionals and young people will be promoted under Erasmus + programme.
2. EYCH Initiative 9 – Heritage for all: citizen participation and social innovation. This initiative is inspired by the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural heritage for the Society of the Council of Europe. It promotes a wider understanding of heritage, placing people and communities at the centre and testing new models of participatory governance and management of cultural heritage. Two projects supported by the Horizon 2020 programme will contribute to develop, test and promote innovative models of participatory governance: the social platform "REACH", and a larger research project to be launched later in 2018. The initiative will also showcase successful people-centred approaches to heritage in existing EU schemes, such as the European Capitals of Culture, the European Heritage Awards, the European Heritage Label and the European

Heritage Days. Moreover, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Commission is implementing the pilot project STEPS, which engages communities in Lisbon and Rijeka, in the heritage mapping of their neighbourhoods, creating, testing and evaluating a methodology for participative governance.

3. EYCH Initiative 10 – Science for heritage: research, innovation, science and technology, focus on the EU has made in the development of a worldly-known European expertise the field, through the EU Research and Innovation programme 'Horizon 2020' and the Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). A Policy Review showcasing results and good practices of EU-funded research on cultural heritage, was presented at the High-Level Horizon 2020 Conference on Innovation and Cultural Heritage. The Conference is an example of the coordinated action among the services of the Commission, since it has been jointly organized by the 3 Directorates in charge of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Research Sciences and Innovation and Digital Economy and Society, to present some of the most promising innovations to preserve and treasure Europe's cultural heritage for the next generations.

The 10 initiatives are expected to produce at the end of 2018 policy recommendations, principles and toolkits, new models of heritage governance, and other culture-based development strategies. At the end of the European Year the Commission will take stock of these results and present the future steps to be taken, building also on the experiences made by the National coordinators appointed by the national authorities to implement the year and coordinate events and projects at local, regional and national level, and the platform of 35 Stakeholders from the cultural sector as well as civil society organisations which are closely involved in the year's. New solutions for Europe to face the challenges of economic and social change and the digital revolution, and maximize the benefits that cultural heritage brings to our society. And above all the outcome of a year of reflections on the type of Europe we want and the future we intend to move towards.

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