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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe

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1. INTRODUCTION: CULTURAL HERITAGE ON THE EU AGENDA

1.1. An asset for all, a responsibility for all

Europe's cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, is our common wealth - our inheritance from previous generations of Europeans and our legacy for those to come. It is an irreplaceable repository of knowledge and a valuable resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion. It enriches the individual lives of hundreds of millions of people, is a source of inspiration for thinkers and artists, and a driver for our cultural and creative industries. Our cultural heritage and the way we preserve and valorise it is a major factor in defining Europe's place in the world and its attractiveness as a place to live, work, and visit.

Cultural heritage is a shared resource, and a common good. Like other such goods it can be vulnerable to over-exploitation and under-funding, which can result in neglect, decay and, in some cases, oblivion. Looking after our heritage is, therefore, our common responsibility. While heritage protection is primarily a matter for national, regional and local authorities, the European Union has a role to play in line with the EU Treaties and in respect of the principle of subsidiarity.

The Preamble to the Treaty on European Union states that the signatories draw 'inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe'. Article 3.3 requires the EU to 'ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced'. Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) says: 'The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing 'common cultural heritage to the fore'. The TFEU also recognises the specificity of heritage for preserving cultural diversity, and the need to ensure its protection in the single market.¹

Since the adoption of the European Agenda for Culture² in 2007, heritage has been a priority for the Council's work plans for culture, and cooperation at European level has advanced through the Open Method of Coordination³. Political interest at EU level has steadily grown - cultural and heritage stakeholders recently highlighted in the Declaration on a New Narrative

¹ TFEU 36 allows prohibitions or restrictions on imports, export or goods in transit for the protection of national treasures possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value. Directive 93/7/EEC on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State was adopted under Article 114 TFEU, to secure the return of cultural objects which are classified as national treasures within the meaning of Article 36 TFEU. This Directive has now been recast by Directive 2014/60/EU . Council Regulation (EC) No 116/2009 on the export of cultural goods lays down provisions to ensure that exports of cultural goods are subject to uniform controls at the Union's external borders. TFEU Article 107, paragraph 3 (d) provides that aid to promote culture and heritage conservation may be considered to be compatible with the internal market, where such aid does not affect trading conditions and competition in the Union to an extent that is contrary to the common interest

² COM(2007)242 final and Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture

³ ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/european-coop_en.htm

for Europe⁴: 'Europe as a political body needs to recognise the value of cultural heritage. Heritage reveals what it has meant to be a European throughout time. It is a powerful instrument that provides a sense of belonging amongst and between European citizens'.

There is no contradiction between national responsibilities and EU action: heritage is always both local and European. It has been forged over time, but also across borders and communities. Heritage is made up of local stories that *together* make the history of Europe.

This Communication has been informed by several years of dialogue with EU Presidencies and stakeholders.⁵ It responds to this year's invitation of the Council to the Commission to "pursue the analysis of the economic and social impact of cultural heritage in the EU and contribute to a development of a strategic approach"⁶. It examines available information on the economic and social impacts of cultural heritage and plans to improve the evidence base (section 1.2) and explores the challenges and opportunities for the heritage sector (section 1.3).

In line with the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture, this Communication presents the EU's approach to heritage across different policy areas (section 2). It then sets out the tools available at EU level, complementing national and regional programmes, to help protect and enhance the intrinsic and social value of heritage (section 2.1), to strengthen its contribution to economic growth and job creation (section 2.2), and develop its potential for the EU's public diplomacy (section 2.3).

Lastly the Communication describes the measures available to strengthen policy cooperation at different levels, and projects being developed to support new models of heritage governance (sections 3 and 4).

The overall aim is to help Member States and stakeholders make the most of the significant support for heritage available under EU instruments, progress towards a more integrated approach at national and EU level, and ultimately make Europe a laboratory for heritage-based innovation⁷.

1.2. An undervalued contribution to economic growth and social cohesion

Heritage has many dimensions: cultural, physical, digital, environmental, human and social. Its value - both intrinsic and economic - is a function of these different dimensions and of the flow of associated services. The economic value of heritage has recently come into research focus⁸, but only partial estimates of its importance are available.

EU-wide data in particular are lacking, but sectoral and country-based studies indicate that the heritage sector makes a significant economic contribution. According to the European Construction Industry Federation, in 2013 renovation and maintenance represented 27.5% of

⁴ ec.europa.eu/debate-future-europe/new-narrative/pdf/declaration_en.pdf

⁵ The preparation of this communication has benefited from work done under successive EU presidencies by the Reflection group "EU and Cultural Heritage", starting with the Bruges declaration under the 2010 Belgian presidency (www.culture-dev.eu/pdf/fr/DeclarationofBrugesEN.pdf) and continuing through the 2013 Lithuanian and 2014 Greek presidencies. Important contributions have also come from the European Heritage Heads Forum and the European Heritage Legal Forum, as well as the European Heritage Alliance 3.3.

⁶ Council conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe adopted 21 May 2014: register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209129%202014%20INIT

⁷ ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/culture-policies/cultural-heritage_en.htm

⁸ www.eenc.info/news/the-social-and-economic-value-of-cultural-heritage-literature-review

the value of Europe's construction industry⁹. In France in 2011 heritage generated €8.1 billion¹⁰, and UK studies have shown that the historic environment can offer a high return on investment: each £1 invested generating up to £1.60 of additional economic activity over ten years¹¹.

Heritage has spill-over effects in other economic sectors. For instance, tourism is estimated to contribute €15 billion to the EU GDP¹² and 3.4 million tourism enterprises account for 15.2 million jobs¹³ – many linked to heritage, directly or indirectly. 27% of EU travellers indicate that cultural heritage is a key factor in choosing a travel destination. In 2013, 52% of EU citizens visited at least one historical monument or site and 37% a museum or gallery in their respective countries, while 19% visited a historical monument or site in another EU country¹⁴. Heritage can therefore help brand cities and regions, attracting talent and tourism.

Technology adds economic value in the heritage sector: digitised cultural material can be used to enhance the visitor experience, develop educational content, documentaries, tourism applications and games.

Heritage has great capacity to promote social cohesion and integration, through regeneration of neglected areas, creation of locally-rooted jobs, and promotion of shared understanding and a sense of community. The sector offers important educational and volunteering¹⁵ opportunities for both young and older people and promotes dialogue between different cultures and generations.

However, to increase understanding of the actual and potential role of heritage in policy development, it is important to improve systematic data on its economic and social impacts. . The project **Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe: Towards an European Index for Valuing Cultural Heritage**, funded by the EU Culture programme and launched in 2013 will help address this. It will gather and analyse existing research and data, from across the EU, on the impact of cultural heritage on society and the economy. Results are expected by mid-2015. On culture data more generally, Eurostat has begun developing a set of regular European statistics, which is also expected to produce results in 2015.

1.3. A sector in transformation: heritage as a source of social innovation for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth

Facing challenges...

The heritage sector is at a crossroads.

Public budgets are decreasing, as is participation in traditional cultural activities¹⁶.

Urbanization, globalisation and technological change are diversifying potential audiences.

⁹ www.fiec.eu/en/library-619/key-figures.aspx

¹⁰ www.economie.gouv.fr/files/03-rapport-igf-igac-culture-economie.pdf

¹¹ hc.english-heritage.org.uk/content/pub/HC-Eng-2010

¹² www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/european_union2014.pdf; ECB reference exchange rate, US dollar/Euro for 2013 is 1,3281

¹³ epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Tourism_industries_-_economic_analysis

¹⁴ EUROBAROMETER Survey on the attitudes of Europeans towards tourism ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_328_en.pdf EUROBAROMETER

¹⁵

www.europanostra.org/UPLOADS/FILS/Amsterdam_declaration_as%20adopted%20by%20GA_11062011.pdf

¹⁶ EUROBAROMETER Special Report 399, 2013, on Cultural Access and Participation: ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf

High tourist influxes are a mixed blessing – increasing revenues but also environmental and physical pressures.

Digitisation and online accessibility of cultural content shake up traditional models, transform value chains and call for new approaches to our cultural and artistic heritage.

Trafficking of cultural artefacts remains a difficult issue requiring action at European and international level.

Global warming and climate change, in particular rising sea levels and the increased occurrence of extreme weather events, can put cultural heritage at risk.

These challenges all need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability of Europe's cultural heritage.

The heritage sector must also adapt management and business models and develop new professional skills, working with authorities not through one-off, isolated interventions, but by making the valorisation and preservation of heritage part of broader long-term development plans. The involvement of private stakeholders through public-private partnerships should also be further explored.

It is clear that many public policies have an impact on heritage, and heritage in turn has many impacts in other policy areas. Therefore a more integrated approach to heritage conservation, promotion and valorisation is needed in order to take into account its manifold contribution to societal and economic objectives, as well as its impact on other public policies.

... and seizing opportunities

The heritage sector is already reinventing itself to meet new challenges.

Conservation is increasingly geared towards preserving and enhancing a whole cultural landscape rather than an isolated site, and also becoming more people-centred. Old approaches sought to protect heritage by isolating it from daily life. New approaches focus on making it fully part of the local community. Sites are given a second life and meaning that speak to contemporary needs and concerns.

Digitisation and online accessibility enable unprecedented forms of engagement and open up new revenue streams. E-learning tools promote wider access to cultural content in homes, schools and universities, and allow people to generate, reuse and add value to content, enhancing the value of cultural collections.

As heritage sites become public spaces that produce both social and environmental capital, the cities and regions that host them turn into drivers of economic activity, centres of knowledge, focal points of creativity and culture, places of community interaction and social integration; in short they generate innovation and contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, in line with the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy.

Museums and archives are also evolving, including by digitising collections, connecting them in open networks and making them more widely available to citizens (though the percentage of digitised heritage available online remains small, because of the resources required for digitisation, and to a minor extent, for copyright clearance¹⁷).

Museums are increasingly community-oriented, led by people and stories, for instance proposing heritage-based narratives that weave the personal stories of community members into the interpretation of larger historical events. They place audiences on a par with

¹⁷

www.enumerate.eu/fileadmin/ENUMERATE/documents/ENUMERATE-Digitisation-Survey-2014.pdf

collections, at the heart of their activities, do not shy away from exploring sensitive and difficult issues, and address contemporary topics that speak to more diverse audiences.

Historic cities, towns and villages face the most complex problems in terms of preserving the fabric of European identity while generating sustainable growth and employment. But they also show that wise heritage management can be successful and sustainable, for example through the energy-efficient re-use of historic buildings, and the promotion of greener transport and cultural tourism. Thanks to the attractiveness of their urban and natural environments, heritage sites often host clusters of cultural and creative industries. Much of Europe's cultural heritage is also embedded in rural areas and remote regions, often closely linked with the natural environment; here innovative forms of community-oriented management can greatly improve their economic and social potential.

2. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CULTURAL HERITAGE

Cultural heritage is central to the European Agenda for Culture, making a significant contribution to all three of its objectives:

- *promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue* - because of its intrinsic and societal value, heritage is a pivotal component
- *promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity* – heritage contributes through its direct and indirect economic potential, including the capacity to underpin our cultural and creative industries and inspire creators and thinkers
- *promotion of culture as a vital element of the Union's international dimension* – European expertise in cultural heritage is highly respected internationally

While policies for maintenance, restoration, accessibility and exploitation of cultural heritage are primarily national or local responsibilities, cultural heritage is directly addressed in several EU policies, including culture, environment, research and innovation, education, regional policy and customs cooperation.

To support the European Agenda for Culture, a new generation of EU instruments has been developed - starting with the Creative Europe and Horizon 2020 programmes - which need to be better known and mobilised. The EU supports major joint conservation efforts (for example in the Parthenon and the site of Pompeii)¹⁸, funds cutting-edge research, and participates in the elaboration of new, more open narratives about Europe's heritage; it also contributes to raising awareness through prizes and other initiatives, often in cooperation with civil society.

To strengthen Europe's position in the field of cultural heritage preservation, restoration and valorisation, there is a need to:

- encourage the modernisation of the heritage sector, raising awareness and engaging new audiences
- apply a strategic approach to research and innovation, knowledge sharing and smart specialization;
- seize the opportunities offered by digitisation; to reach out to new audiences and engage young people in particular;

¹⁸ The European Investment Bank, in cooperation with Europa Nostra, also supports the protection of the seven most endangered sites in Europe, selected annually: www.europanostra.org/7-most-endangered

- identify skills needs and improve the training of heritage professionals and
- continue developing more participative interpretation and governance models that are better suited to contemporary Europe, through greater involvement of the private sector and civil society.

To achieve these objectives, the European heritage sector needs more opportunities for larger-scale networking, and peer learning within and between Member States.

2.1. Enhancing the intrinsic and societal value of cultural heritage in order to promote cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue

Research and innovation

Pooling resources in order to apply the latest technologies and stimulate new scientific approaches can greatly improve the understanding, preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. The EU has long supported cultural heritage research within the framework of its research framework programmes, promoting EU excellence in heritage research.

Under the **Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development**, around €100 million were invested in projects related to key aspects of protection, conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, addressing also cultural interactions, museums, identities and linguistic diversity, cultural landscapes and dedicated research infrastructures.

The **Joint Programming Initiative Cultural Heritage and Global Change** is an innovative and collaborative research initiative that aims to streamline and coordinate national research programmes in order to enable more efficient and effective use of scarce financial resources, exploit synergies and avoid duplication¹⁹.

Horizon 2020 is the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, with nearly €80 billion available from 2014 to 2020. It will further reinforce the EU's position in the field of cultural heritage preservation, restoration and valorisation, supporting cooperation among researchers across a broad range of themes. Opportunities for heritage-related research and innovation will be available under all three pillars of the programme: excellent science, industrial leadership, and societal challenges. The EU will support the application of cutting-edge science to heritage protection; the development of more inclusive interpretations of the past; and new methods of dissemination and knowledge sharing. The European Roadmap for research infrastructures gives priority to the creation of a new European Digital Research Infrastructure for the Art and Humanities (DARIAH).²⁰

Research and innovation activities will look into the transmission of European cultural heritage, the changing patterns of identity formation, the sometimes controversial heritage of European wars, Europe's intellectual basis and cultural role in the world and the rich European collections of archives, museums and libraries, tapping into the technological opportunities brought about by the digital age. Furthermore, research and innovation is carried out on strategies, methodologies and tools needed to enable a dynamic and sustainable cultural heritage in Europe in response to climate change and natural hazards and disasters. Particular emphasis will be placed on converging technologies and on multidisciplinary

¹⁹ www.jpi-culturalheritage.eu/ and www.heritageportal.eu

²⁰ ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/pdf/esfri-strategy_report_and_roadmap.pdf

research and innovation for methodologies, products and services in the cultural heritage sector²¹.

An EU Research and Innovation policy framework and agenda for cultural heritage will also be launched, based on the contribution of a high level expert group looking at innovative and sustainable investment, financing and management of cultural heritage. It will have a multi-stakeholder approach focused on society and entrepreneurship, and provide policy support at EU and Member States level.

The Social Platform on Reflective Societies will also bring together researchers, stakeholders and policy-makers to address policy issues in a comprehensive way. The platform will support the Commission in defining an innovative and focused research agenda, including on cultural heritage and cultural expressions in Europe.²²

Connecting our heritage and making it widely available in the digital era

The digitisation of heritage contributes to the European Agenda for Culture, by improving public access to different forms of cultural and linguistic expressions. Digitising cultural heritage, making it accessible online, and supporting its economic exploitation are also activities at the heart of the Digital Agenda for Europe. Digitisation multiplies opportunities to access heritage and engage audiences; while digital tools such as 3D scanning can facilitate the preservation and restoration of physical cultural assets.

The **Europeana** cultural platform (www.europeana.eu) now provides access to some 30 million cultural objects from more than 2,500 organisations: the resources of Europe's cultural institutions are now more internet-friendly and more widely re-usable. Europeana helps develop and implement standards and interoperability in this area and provides a space where culture professionals share digital expertise. It allows Europeans to engage with their cultural heritage and contribute their own personal experiences, e.g. in relation to landmark historical events such as World War I.

However, challenges remain: digital cultural content needs to be properly managed, maintained and preserved; online rights have to be cleared; and material made available in machine-readable formats, according to open standards, with minimum resolution, interoperability and rich metadata.

At EU level some of these challenges are addressed by **Directive 2003/98 on the reuse of public sector information**²³, while **Recommendation 2011/711/EU**²⁴ on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation calls on Member States to promote the availability of databases with rights information, connected at European level (such as ARROW), and to create the legal framework conditions to underpin licensing mechanisms for the large-scale digitisation and cross-border accessibility of works that are out-of-commerce.

A number of EU projects have enabled online access to rare material. The **Europeana Regia project** has digitised more than 1,000 rare and precious manuscripts from the Middle Ages

²¹ Council Decision 2013/743/EU establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020
²² ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/h2020/topics/2102-reflective-9-2014.html

²³ Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the reuse of public sector information.

²⁴ Commission Recommendation 2011/711/EU of 27 October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation

and the Renaissance. Others focus on the potential for creative re-use of digital cultural material, such as **Europeana Creative** and **Europeana Space**.

The EU has recognised film as an essential component of European heritage; the Parliament and Council have therefore recommended to the Member States to systematically collect, preserve and restore our film heritage and facilitate its cultural and educational uses²⁵. The Commission monitors the application of these recommendations²⁶ and facilitates exchange of best practices in the framework of the Cinema Expert Group/Subgroup Film Heritage²⁷. Film heritage is also central to the new Commission Communication: European film in the digital era: bridging cultural diversity and competitiveness²⁸.

Promoting cooperation, raising awareness, rewarding excellence, promoting EU flagships and remembrance

Building on the previous EU Culture programme, the new **Creative Europe** programme will support cross-border cooperation to promote the modernisation of the heritage sector. It will also improve civil society capacity to operate transnationally by supporting networks and platforms. Since audience development is a key priority of the programme, the heritage sector will be encouraged to experiment with new ways of reaching more diverse audiences, including young people and migrants.

The richness of Europe's cultural heritage and the efforts to protect it deserve to be better known by European citizens. This is primarily the responsibility of national and local authorities and of the heritage sector, but the EU also contributes with a number of pan-European initiatives.

Every year in September in 50 countries across Europe more than 20 million people enjoy access to thousands of rarely opened sites and unique events as part of **European Heritage Days**. This locally-led initiative is supported jointly by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

The EU helps raise heritage awareness through the **European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards** which celebrates exemplary heritage achievements. To date 387 sites and projects have received these prestigious awards.

The **European Capitals of Culture** (ECoC) is another flagship cultural initiative which demonstrates the potentially large social and economic returns on investing in heritage. Some ECoC evaluations have found a return of up to 8 euros for each euro spent. The ECoC title can also create a significant social and economic legacy, particularly when embedded in a long-term culture- and creativity-led development strategy (as in Essen, Lille and Genoa).

A special focus for EU action is preserving the memory of key events in the history of European integration, and in particular those tragic events – such as those linked to the World Wars– which transcend the history of individual European states. Started at inter-governmental level, the **European Heritage Label** highlights heritage sites that celebrate and symbolise European integration, ideals and history. It is now a fully-fledged EU initiative; the first awards were made in April 2014.

The European Remembrance strand of the **Europe for Citizens** programme aims to encourage reflection on the causes of totalitarian regimes in Europe's modern history. Activities also concern other defining moments and reference points in recent European

²⁵ Recommendation 2005/865/EC on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities

²⁶ 2008, 2010 and 2012 reports available on ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/protection-film-heritage

²⁷ ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/cinema-expert-group-subgroup-film-heritage

²⁸ ec.europa.eu/culture/library/reports/com272_en.pdf

history. The strand aims to promote tolerance, mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue and reconciliation as a means of moving beyond the past and building the future.

2.2. A catalyst for creativity and growth: making greater use of the economic potential of EU cultural heritage

Exploiting the potential of cultural heritage for local and regional development

The EU's cohesion and rural development policies can be instrumental in promoting the restoration of cultural heritage, supporting cultural and creative industries and financing the training and upgrading of skills of cultural professionals.

Conserving, promoting and managing cultural heritage is currently well supported under the **EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**. In 2007-2013, the European Regional Development Fund allocated €3.2 billion for protecting and preserving cultural heritage, €2.2 billion to develop cultural infrastructure and €53 million for cultural services, which also benefited cultural heritage.

In 2014-2020, ESIF investments in heritage will remain eligible, under certain conditions, through direct funding, but also through investment in urban regeneration, sustainable development and support to small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Under the **European Regional Development Fund** investment in culture and heritage should be part of integrated and sustainable economic development strategies. It can cover a wide spectrum of activities in the public, non-profit and private sectors (in particular SMEs), pursuing investments that contribute directly to the fund's objectives and investment priorities. Investments in small-scale cultural infrastructure as part of a territorial strategy should contribute both to the development of endogenous potential and to the promotion of social inclusion and quality of life, particularly among marginalised communities, by improving their access to cultural and recreational services in both urban and rural contexts.

The **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development** will continue supporting the conservation and upgrading of rural cultural heritage (on which €1.2 billion was invested from 2007-13), and the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** will finance community-led development projects that promote cultural heritage – including maritime cultural heritage – in fisheries areas.

Moreover, in the 2014-2020 programming period, urban-regeneration projects, including heritage or cultural sites, will continue benefitting from financial engineering mechanisms (i.e. equity loans or guarantees). A new Financial Instruments - Technical Advisory Platform (FI-TAP)) is under preparation to replace the policy initiative JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas), developed by the European Commission jointly with the European Investment Bank and in collaboration with the Council of Europe Development Bank.

Promoting tourism around European cultural & industrial heritage

The Commission promotes the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism, including products linked with cultural and industrial heritage. In addition to supporting the Council of Europe's programme on cultural routes, the EU provides grants for the creation or improvement of European cultural routes crossing several countries and joining them in a common narrative, such as the "EU sky route" aimed at putting Europe on

the Worldwide Tour of Astro-Tourism or the "Liberation Route Europe" around 1944-45 events. These routes often link together lesser known destinations, thereby contributing to a diversification of the touristic offer, and lessening the pressure on other localities.

Europe's rich underwater cultural heritage – shipwrecks and archaeological sites submerged by rising sea-levels – is largely hidden, in danger through increasing human activities at sea and its economic potential unrealised. The Commission has set out plans to make available maps of these sites, protect them by ensuring that they are included in spatial plans, and realise their potential for attracting a coastal tourism industry providing less precarious employment opportunities.²⁹

Reviving old skills and developing new ones

A major problem faced by the heritage sector is the progressive disappearance of traditional skills and crafts. Demographic trends compound this situation so there may soon be a shortage of skilled workers. Newer skills - such as in information technologies - are in strong demand, but often in scarce supply.

There is a need to increase the attractiveness of heritage-related professions and to provide more opportunities for continuous training, taking advantage, for instance, of the opportunities provided by the **European Social Fund**.

Building on the achievements of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the **Erasmus+ programme** will provide increased opportunities for learning mobility and tackle skills gaps by supporting transnational partnerships between businesses, higher education and vocational education and training institutions. Knowledge Alliances (for higher education institutions) and Sector Skills Alliances (for vocational education and training) can help design and deliver curricula that meet the new needs of different sectors and better link them with the labour market. The cultural heritage sector is well placed to take advantage of these initiatives.

Ongoing work on developing heritage-related occupational profiles within the **European classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO)** will also improve the transparency of qualifications and facilitate the cross-border mobility of specialised workers.

2.3. Cultural heritage in EU external relations

Culture is an essential asset of Europe's public diplomacy – we share our cultural values and funding programmes with our partners, paving the way for stronger ties between individuals and organisations.

The EU and its Member States are active in multilateral fora and organisations that address cultural heritage policies, such as the **Council of Europe**³⁰ and **UNESCO**³¹, and conduct bilateral dialogues with third countries and regions where heritage plays an important role.

There is also growing awareness in EU external policy of the risks to which heritage is exposed, and the benefits of properly designed and implemented heritage policies for promoting sustainable development, pro-poor growth and peaceful relations.

²⁹ COM(2014)254 on innovation in the blue economy; COM(2013)133 on maritime spatial planning.

³⁰ The Council of Europe's 2011 Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention), innovatively links the common heritage of Europe to human rights and fundamental freedoms. It also contains a definition of heritage that has proved highly influential.

³¹ The Hangzhou declaration, adopted at UNESCO's International Congress "Culture: Key to Sustainable Development" (15-17 May 2013), calls for the full integration of culture into sustainable development strategies worldwide and for national policies and programmes to be stepped up in order to secure the protection and promotion of heritage.

This represents an opportunity for EU action beyond the borders of the Union. There is growing global demand for European expertise in heritage³² and many Member States are willing to share their know-how to protect sites and help partner countries develop sustainable, community-based strategies.

Enhancing tangible and intangible heritage and the fight against illicit trafficking are priorities for **cooperation between the EU and Africa**. Heritage-related topics are also addressed in the **Asia-Europe Meeting** (ASEM) and in **policy dialogues** that the Commission conducts with strategic partners such as China, India, Brazil, and the European Neighbourhood Policy countries. In the **Mediterranean** region³³ in the past three years, EU development aid for the heritage sector has exceeded €70 million. In South East Europe, the Council of Europe and the European Commission have jointly implemented the **Ljubljana Process**³⁴, based on the premise that heritage programmes contribute to the stability and development of democratic, peaceful and free civil societies. Heritage management is also among the priorities of the **Kyiv initiative**³⁵, involving the countries belonging to the Eastern Partnership.

In future EU development policy, in light of the 2011 *Agenda for Change*, heritage interventions will be evaluated based on how they address development priorities such as the empowerment of civil society in local governance, conflict resolution and human rights promotion.

3. THE WAY FORWARD: STRENGTHENING POLICY COOPERATION AT ALL LEVELS

Cooperation at EU level can and does make a decisive contribution towards heritage policies and governance at national and local levels, building on Article 167 of the TFEU ('bringing...common cultural heritage to the fore') and setting out a multi-layered, multi-stakeholder framework.

Legislative action has already been taken in areas of EU competence; for example the **Environmental Impact Assessment Directive 2014/52**, whose recent revision strengthens the requirement for Member States to assess the effects of certain public and private projects on material assets and cultural heritage. In addition, in the context of the State Aid Modernisation programme, aid for culture and heritage conservation are included as a new category of aid in the new **General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER)**³⁶. The GBER significantly extends the possibilities for Member States to grant "good aid" to companies without prior Commission scrutiny, be it in the form of investment or operating aid.

The next Council **Work Plan for Culture** starting in 2015 offers the opportunity to step up cooperation between the Member States within the **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)**. EU Ministers for Culture agreed recently³⁷ that heritage should be a priority area for future OMC work. Important issues in this respect include improving the evidence base for policies, innovations in heritage management, and the best use of the structural funds and other EU programmes. Heritage will also feature in the Commission's **structured dialogue with civil society**.

³² For instance, cooperation in fighting illicit traffic of cultural goods, and protection of national archives, are both explicitly mentioned in the final Declaration of the Fourth EU-Africa Summit, 2-3 April 2014.

³³ www.euromedheritage.net/

³⁴ ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/ce_precatalogue_ljubljana_e.pdf

³⁵ www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default_en.asp

³⁶ Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty

³⁷ Council Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe, 21 May 2014

In order to ensure the flow of information with the Member States and civil society and strengthen the interface between national and EU policies, the Commission is working to improve access to information on EU policy and programme support for the heritage sector through a detailed **mapping exercise** of activities across the Commission services, which is being published online in parallel with this Communication³⁸ and which will be reviewed and updated regularly.

Through the Creative Europe programme, a pilot project promoting **peer-learning among cities and regions** is planned, to contribute to the dissemination of good practices in culture and creative industries, including heritage. The Commission, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, will also promote heritage-based and local-led development within the territory of the Union, by identifying new models for **multi-stakeholder governance** and conducting on-site direct experimentations.

Finally, heritage has been a significant focus for the biannual **European Culture Forum** and will continue to feature in future editions.

4. CONCLUSION

This Communication examines what the EU can do to enhance heritage's intrinsic value and take advantage of its economic and societal potential. The European experience shows that it is possible to progress from an appreciation of the uniqueness of one's own heritage to an interest in and respect for the heritage of others.

The Commission now invites all stakeholders to jointly look into how public policies at all levels, including the EU, could better be marshalled to draw out the long term and sustainability value of Europe's cultural heritage, and develop a more integrated approach to its preservation and valorisation.

³⁸

ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/culture-policies/cultural-heritage_en.htm