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Volume 9, Issue 1 (2019)

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EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE 2018. A DEEPER REFLECTION ON THE PROMOTION OF EUROPE'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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Abstract

The European Year of Cultural Heritage has activated a reflection on the European dimension of Cultural Heritage recognizing the value of this fundamental resource for sustainable development. The activities of the Year aimed at enhancing the richness and the diversity of Europe's Cultural Heritage and at strengthening the sense of belonging to a common European space. They also offered the opportunity to reflect on how to better protect and promote this fundamental resource for Europe, building our common future through a shared understanding of the past.

Keywords

European Year of Cultural Heritage, cultural heritage, sustainability, cultural diversity, sharing, EYCH 2018

1. *The reflection and the cooperation of the Year*

Celebrated in 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage¹ has activated a reflection about the European dimension of cultural heritage, acknowledging its role of fundamental resource for sustainable development.

The purpose of the Year, launched in Milan on the 7th of December 2017 at the "European Culture Forum"², was to rediscover the richness and the diversity of Europe's cultural heritage, to raise awareness of our shared history and values, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. By better understanding the present through a richer and shared comprehension of the past, the Year offered as well the opportunity to reflect on the future of Europe.

In fact, the focus of the reflection, condensed in the words of the European Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, was to raise awareness about those "ideals, principles and values inherent in the

European cultural heritage that constitute a shared source of memory, understanding, identity, dialogue, cohesion and creativity"³.

general objective of the Year was to encourage and support the efforts of the Union, the Member States and regional and local authorities, in cooperation with the cultural heritage sector and broader civil society, to protect, safeguard, reuse, enhance, valorise and promote Europe's cultural heritage.

The objectives are in line with the Unesco "Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions", of 2005⁴ and, build on the studies conducted by Elinor Ostrom⁵ on, sustainable collective management of common goods. Therefore, the protection and promotion of cultural heritage as a pivotal component of cultural diversity, and the

³ Ibidem.

⁴ 2005_UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: "Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions", Paris 20.10.2005. Retrieved from http://unesco.blob.core.windows.net/pdf/Convenzione%20Diversit%C3%A0%20Culturali_ENG.pdf.

⁵ The American scientist Elinor Ostrom was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 2009, she has refuted the idea of a dominant dichotomy between the State and the Market, demonstrating the existence of efficient and sustainable ways to the collective management of shared resources.

¹ The decision establishing the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 was adopted with the "Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)" (2017_European Parliament, Council of the European Union).

² https://ec.europa.eu/culture/event/forum-2017_en.

strengthening of the sense of belonging and responsibility towards the common cultural heritage are generative prerequisites for the sustainable management of heritage resources.

In compliance with the European Treaties⁶, the European Commission supported the Member States, assisting and integrating their actions for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage in the context of activities related to the European Year.

A participatory and integrated model was adopted. It included 37 countries (28 EU Member states plus 9 associated countries), all European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Council of the European Union, European Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee) and a Stakeholder Committee formed by 38 organisations (including Council of Europe, UNESCO, ICCROM, Europa Nostra, Culture Action Europe, NE-MO network of museums, ICOMOS, Matera-Basilicata Foundation for Matera Capital of Culture 2019, just to name a few). The Stakeholders, in turn, engaged their entire network in carrying out activities during the European Year.

So, beyond the mere celebratory intent, the European Year of Cultural Heritage aimed at promoting a new and extended concept of cultural heritage that “encompasses a broad spectrum of resources inherited from the past in all forms and aspects - tangible, intangible and digital (born digital and digitised), including monuments, sites, landscapes, skills, practices, knowledge and expressions of human creativity [...]” (2017 European Parliament, Council of the European Union).

At European level, the management of the Year was coordinated by the European Commission, assisted by the Stakeholder Committee. At national level, every participating country appointed one or more coordinators, responsible for the implementation of the Year.

The total budget allocated to support the European Year was 8.000.000 euros, though more

resources were made available by other European programmes and initiatives.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage therefore was at the heart of a series of events and projects carried out even beyond the 28 EU countries.

2. *Path, principles and activities of the Year*

The designation⁷ of 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage is the result of an intense debate within the European institutions around the theme of cultural cooperation, which has been developed over a period of about twenty years⁸.

A decisive step in this important path was marked in 2005 by the Council of Europe Convention “On the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society”⁹ (Faro Convention), which enunciated the fundamental principle of right of people and communities to participate to cultural heritage and to benefit from it. In 2011, the decision establishing the European Heritage Label was also very significant¹⁰.

The integrated approach to cultural heritage was first the subject of a conference organised in the context of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU

⁷ On designation see the following document: 2016_«Europa Nostra»: “European Commission proposes European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018”, *Europa Nostra* 20.04.2016. Retrieved from <http://www.europanostra.org/european-commission-proposes-european-year-cultural-heritage-2018/> (2016_European Commission: “Proposal), 2016_Italian Senate: “Resolution of the 7th Standing Committee on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage”, Rome 05.10.2016. Retrieved from https://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/99161_7.pdf.

⁸ The first political document dedicated to the theme of cultural heritage can be identified in the “Council Conclusions of 17 June 1994 on drawing up a Community Action Plan in the field of cultural heritage” (94/C 235/01). Retrieved from [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31994Y0823\(01\)&from=IT](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31994Y0823(01)&from=IT)

⁹ The Convention, open for signature in Faro, Portugal, on 27.10.2005, entered into force in 2011. Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/rms/0900001680083746>

¹⁰ 2011_European Parliament, Council of the European Union: “Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label”, *Official Journal of the European Union* 16.11.2011, Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32011D1194&qid=1562755330630&from=IT>

⁶ The “Treaty on European Union” (TUE) and the “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union” (TFUE) have been amended by the subsequent “Treaty of Lisbon” in force since 1 December 2009. In particular, in TFUE, Cf. article 167 on the Culture that provides for bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore, encouraging cooperation in respect of diversity. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>.

Council, held in Vilnius in November 2013: "Cultural heritage and the EU-2020 strategy - towards an integrated approach". The reference to common values, and to a concept of integration that enhances diversity, was later developed by the Conference organised by the Italian Presidency "Heritage Commons Towards a participative heritage governance in the third millennium" of 2014¹¹, which highlighted the issue of the *participatory governance*¹². The result was the reaffirmation of the need for a more holistic and transversal vision of cultural heritage, focused on the integration of all its forms and aspects (tangible, intangible and digital) and on the implications of the concept of *commons*¹³ in the fields of protection, management, enhancement, use of cultural heritage. Equally important is the role that the common heritage assumes as a driving force for local and territorial sustainable development.

Later, the validity of the orientation towards the integrated approach¹⁴ and its potential for activating synergies between actions carried on by community institutions, local administrations and civil society, was confirmed by the analysis of several impact studies, published in the 2016 report "Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe"¹⁵. The document showed that the greatest benefits of investments concerning the heritage derive from the positive contamination between different

interventions and from the combined use of the different resources that Europe has made available for the cultural heritage in addition to national and local measures. The study confirmed, through factual evidences, that limiting actions to the protection and conservation of buildings and sites is not enough; there is need to sustain both creation and preservation of cultural assets as phases of a unique cycle, targeting the sustainability of cultural heritage as a way to bring benefits to European citizens. The interest, rather than to the mere promotion, shifts towards re-signification and re-use, protecting the past through innovation, research and revitalisation of the shared heritage.

The reflection of the European Year also moved from the discussion held at the Social Summit of Gothenburg in 2017, "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture". The documents prepared by the Commission¹⁶, envisages, as a possible legacy of the Year, a long-term EU action plan dedicated to cultural heritage. Later the European Council¹⁷ called on Member States, the Council and the Commission, to take the opportunity of the European Year of Cultural Heritage to increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and cultural heritage.

Operationally, the programme of the Commission for the EYHC, summarised in the factsheet "*Building the legacy of the European Year of cultural heritage 2018*"¹⁸, was focused on 10 European Initiatives¹⁹ (EI) which constitute the strategic plan of the work, connecting policies and programmes of the different actors involved at European level. The European Initiatives cross-cut many sectors: culture, education and training, but also research, media, business, social and territorial policies.

Every EI, aims at specific objectives grouped according to the following 4 fundamental

¹¹ The conference was organized in the framework of the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and was held in Venaria Reale, Turin 23-24 September 2014. Retrieved from, http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/multimedia/MiBAC/documents/1411369385639_Heritage_Commons_Conference_Turin_23-24.09.2014.pdf.

¹² Ivi, 2. Aims and objectives. For developments on the concept of participation: (2014_Council of the European Union: "Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage),

¹³ "The concept of *commons* (from the Latin word *communis*) dates back to the middle ages as an institutional arrangement for the collective management and property of natural resources, including habitable and grazing land, forests, irrigation systems and fisheries". Ivi, Session 1: Heritage as a common good.

¹⁴ For references on the integrated approach,; (2015_European Committee of the Regions), (2015_European Parliament).

¹⁵ https://issuu.com/europanostra/docs/chcfe_report_executivesummary_it and also, 2016_European Parliament: "European Parliament resolution of 30 April 2015 on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Da'esh", 30.4.2015. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015IP0179&qid=1562755711373&from=IT>

¹⁶The contribution was prepared by the Commission to the Leaders working lunch on 17.11.2017, it intends "culture as a fly-wheel for the EU" and it analyzes the situation and the achievements already completed, in front of what would have been achievable in the next two years and the possibility of initiatives to be implemented by 2025. (2017_European Commission).

¹⁷ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32204/14-final-conclusions-rev1-en.pdf>

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/overview-10-european-initiatives-factsheet_en.pdf

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/overview_it.

structuring principles.

EI connected to the 1st principle - *Engagement*, awareness raising, especially of young people, about the value of cultural heritage: EI 1 - shared heritage (sharing of the heritage of history and values); EI 2 - cultural heritage at school (discovery of Europe's treasures and traditions); EI 3 - young people for cultural heritage (new generations and heritage).

EI connected to the 2nd principle - *Sustainability*, enhancement of the potential of cultural heritage in local development strategies: EI 4 - cultural heritage in transition (regeneration of industrial, religious and military sites and landscapes); EI 5 - tourism and heritage (responsibility and sustainability for cultural heritage).

EI connected to the 3rd principle - *Protection*, promotion of quality in interventions: EI 6 - treasuring the heritage that we have to take care of (quality standards for interventions on cultural heritage); EI 7 - cultural heritage at risk (against illicit trafficking in cultural heritage and for managing risk factors).

EI connected to the 4th principle - *Innovation*, promotion of research, support for the dissemination of results, incentives for participation: EI 8 - competences related to cultural heritage (better education and training for professions); EI 9 - everybody for cultural heritage (promotion of social innovation and community participation); EI 10 - science for cultural heritage (research, innovation, science and technology in favor of heritage) (Sciacchitano, 2018).

In order to foster transnational cooperation and involve local communities at the same time, numerous and various events have been organised for the divulgation and participation to the activities of the Year, also thanks to existing targeted initiatives such as the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, the European Heritage Label and the European Heritage Days, a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe. Important conferences on the topics of the Year²⁰ were also

organised, discussing possible developments, success stories, future challenges.

Within the "Creative Europe"²¹ programme (2014-2020), a specific Call to "Support for cooperation projects related to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018"²² was launched. The objectives of the call were: supporting European cooperation in order to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space; promoting cultural heritage as a source of inspiration for artistic contemporary creation and innovation; strengthening the interaction between the cultural heritage sector and other cultural and creative sectors. The call selected 29 projects, and Italy was in first place as number of projects financed.

Several projects and initiatives were supported through other EU programmes and policies, such as: "Horizon 2020", the European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2018-2020; the Natura 2000 network that deals with natural heritage; the "Europe for Citizens" programme which finances projects aimed at increasing the sense of belonging and the knowledge of the common history and diversity among the citizens of Europe; the "Erasmus +" programme which supports actions of mobility and social inclusion. Models of multilevel governance and participatory management supported the transversal approach to cultural heritage, simultaneously promoting research, innovation and divulgation, with particular regard to the tools of the digital revolution.

The experience of the European Year can be summarised with the following data: 37 countries, 38 stakeholder organisations, 19 Directorate-Generals (DGs) of the European Commission, over 23.000 events organised, over 12.000.000 people, over 30.000.000 visitors to 70.000 events organized for the European Heritage Days, around 14.000 labeled projects and events (including over 900 European Union funded projects). These results show that "[...] working together around a shared agenda we can better safeguard, enhance and promote Europe's cultural heritage at national, European and local level. Moreover, they show

²⁰ "High-level H2020 Conference", 20.03.2018 Brussels. Retrieved from <http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/index.cfm?pg=events&eventcode=D6CE1414-01FB-4DAC-46FA109CCCF4E069> and "Sharing Heritage, Sharing Values", promoted the 18. 06.2018 Berlin by Europa Nostra, one of the key civil society organizations actively contributing to a vast majority of these initiatives. Retrieved from,

https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/european-cultural-heritage-summit-sharing-heritage-sharing-values_en.

²¹ <http://cultura.cedest.beniculturali.it/Default.aspx>.

²² <http://cultura.cedest.beniculturali.it/cooperazione-ych.aspx> and https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/2_call_notice_eacea_35_2017-culture-ce-2018_en.pdf

that, in order to sustainably manage the common goods, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, we can integrate national and local measures with the many resources that Europe makes available" (Sciacchitano, 2018).

The connection between culture and development continues to be pursued, even beyond the Year, through actions that integrate research, education, and the knowledge created and handed down by communities over time. The Horizon 2020²³ call for "Participatory approaches and social innovation in culture", for example, investigates new models for cultural governance, including a mapping for the comprehension of critical issues and opportunities for research and innovation, through new networks of conservation, re-use and participatory management of cultural heritage.

Paying attention to the future, the European Year provided for the management of long-term projects extended beyond 2018, based on the experience of the 10 European Initiatives (EI).

In order to project the effects of the activities realized beyond the Year, improve strategies and actions based on the experience made, the European Commission adopted the "European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage"²⁴ at the end of 2018, innervated on four basic principles and five thematic areas (pillars), with more than 60 actions on cultural heritage to be implemented by 2020.

The principles of "European Framework" are: 1) the holistic approach, 2) mainstreaming and integrated approach across different EU policies, 3) policy-making based on factual evidence and cultural statistics, 4) multi-stakeholder cooperation and dialogue and exchange between different actors in the design and implementation of policies and programmes on cultural heritage²⁵.

The thematic areas are instead expressed in the respective references to: a) Cultural heritage for an inclusive Europe: participation and access for all; b) Cultural heritage for a sustainable Europe: smart solutions for a cohesive and

sustainable future; c) Cultural heritage for a resilient Europe: safeguarding endangered heritage; d) Cultural heritage for an innovative Europe: mobilising knowledge and research; e) Cultural heritage for stronger global partnerships: reinforcing international cooperation²⁶.

The "European Framework" also established a "Cultural Heritage Forum" which will meet at least once a year starting from 2019 and will involve European institutions, EU Member States, European cultural heritage networks and international organizations.

Among the five main areas of action, the pillar of innovation is particularly interesting in its reference, not only to the digital technologies that "offer unprecedented opportunities for us to improve public access to cultural heritage assets and allow for their curation and re-use"²⁷, but also to the social sphere, requiring a more participatory approach to protection and management of cultural heritage, that must be promoted through open models of involvement, as for example in the social economy.

In the specific area of action "Mobilising knowledge and research for technical and social innovation", the support to advanced digitisation through Horizon 2020 and foster social innovation and cultural heritage competences is very significant.

Clusters actions at present being applied concern, for example, the following topics: Regenerating cities and regions trough cultural heritage; Balancing cultural heritage with sustainable cultural tourism and boosting synergies between natural and cultural heritage; Raising the quality of interventions in the European historical environment on cultural heritage sites through the dissemination of quality principles developed together with ICOMOS during the Year, the organisation of peer learning ad study visits and setting up of a Horizon 2020 platform.

3. Conclusions

The Year was officially closed in Vienna on 6th and 7th of December 2018, but we can already see the first sediments of an important cultural legacy left by the event.

²³ Horizon 2020 - Work Program 2016-17. Europe in a changing world - inclusive, innovative and reflective Societies, http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2016_2017/main/h2020-wp1617-societies_en.pdf

²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/european-framework-action-cultural-heritage_en and <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/library/documents/staff-working-document-european-agenda-culture-2018.pdf>.

²⁵ *ivi*, "What are the next steps".

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/library/documents/2018_cult-eych_factsheet_framework_def.pdf.

²⁷ "Commission Staff Working Document" European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, pp. 8-9.

The belief that the quality of interventions in cultural heritage really adds value to society, culture, economy and environment, led the European Commission and the ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites) to define a document²⁸ dedicated to quality standards in conservation and management of cultural heritage.

The document, mainly focused on built heritage and cultural landscapes, was built, in the holistic and participatory spirit of the European Year 2018, thanks to a public consultation on the topic of quality.

Important reflections on the rich and continuing legacy of the EYCH have also been the subject of a symposium²⁹ organised with the

support of the European Commission Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) which brought together, among others, representatives of research projects funded by Horizon 2020, heritage organisations, European institutions, civil society networks, proving that the EYCH “had a significant impact in engaging Europeans with their heritage. It created a momentum for heritage research that should be carried on with”³⁰. In particular discussing the ‘cultural landscape’³¹, there was talk of an innovative approach to conservation, considering the landscape no longer from a static point of view but through a dynamic perspective that focuses on the people who live there and transform it dynamically.

²⁸2019_European Commission and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites): “European quality principles for eu-funded interventions with potential impact upon Cultural Heritage”, Paris 14.05.2019. Retrieved from https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/Secretariat/2018/EYCH_2018/European_Quality_Principles_2019_EN.pdf.

²⁹ Cf. “Horizons for Heritage Research Symposium - Towards a Cluster on Cultural Heritage”, Brussels 20.03.2019, <https://www.reach-culture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Horizons-for-Heritage-Research-Towards-a-Cluster-on-Cultural-Heritage-Symposium-Report.pdf>.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 5.

³¹ The concept of ‘cultural landscape’, is particularly incisive for highlighting the rupture of some dualisms now overcome in object of Cultural Heritage (tangible-intangible, rural-urban, culture-nature).

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