

European Heritage Alliance 3.3

Towards an EU Strategy for Cultural Heritage –The Case for Research

Introduction

The European Heritage Alliance 3.3 was launched in June 2011 by 27 European and International networks and organisations active in the field of cultural heritage (for the full list see below). We bring together Europe's civil society organisations, historic regions, cities, towns and villages, museums, (private) owners of historic buildings, cultural landscapes and collections of artefacts, educators, town planners, heritage professionals and volunteers. The European Heritage Alliance 3.3 thus represents a very large constituency composed of tens of millions of Europe's citizens.

It is the first time Europe's major heritage organisations have all agreed to work together to promote the untapped potential of Europe's cultural heritage – responding to an urgent need to obtain explicit recognition within EU policy priorities of the crucial contribution cultural and natural heritage can and does make to realising Europe's potential, economically, environmentally, socially and indeed culturally.

We take our name in part from the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union which stipulates in Article 3.3 that the Union 'shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced'. This is a key reference point for the European Heritage Alliance 3.3 and our networks and organisations are committed to working together to support the European Union implement article 3.3 of the treaty. Article 3.3 therefore, together with article 167 of the Treaty on the functioning of European Union, forms the bases of our work in developing an EU strategy for cultural heritage.

Europe's cultural and natural heritage has a huge value for Europe's economy, society and environment¹. To this end we believe there is a need to develop an EU strategy for cultural and natural heritage - a strategy that values cultural heritage as a crucial asset and

¹ Cf. facts and figures included in the EC press release announcing the 2012 laureates of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards dated 20 March: "Cultural heritage brings a significant – and often underrated – contribution to job creation and growth. The sector represents an important part of the cultural and creative industries, which provide jobs for 8.5 million people in the EU and contribute up to 4.5% to Europe's GDP. Spending on conservation of cultural heritage by public and private bodies in Europe is worth an estimated €5 billion a year. Figures published by OECD show that 40% of worldwide tourism has a cultural dimension. Cultural heritage is also a key resource for sustainable development and social cohesion."

(<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/254&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>)

Cf. Also that the Competitiveness Council of the European Union noted, at its meeting on 12 October 2010, that "European cultural heritage is of exceptional economic importance for the tourism industry, generating an estimated annual revenue of €335 billion, and many of the 9 million jobs in the tourism sector are linked to it directly or indirectly. The market for conservation of this heritage is estimated at some €5 billion per year." (<http://91.194.202.13/uedocs/NewsWord/en/intm/117023.doc>)

resource, is fully integrated within the EU's key economic priorities as set out in the overall EU strategy for 2020 and enables in particular cultural heritage's contribution to the EU agendas on sustainability, creative Europe, research and innovation, climate change, energy saving, regional and rural development and territorial cohesion agendas.

To do otherwise would be to miss a huge opportunity to benefit and enrich the citizens of Europe and put at risk Europe's unique identity in the world.

Towards an EU Strategy for Cultural Heritage

In considering the approach to be followed in developing an EU Cultural Heritage Strategy the Alliance identified a lack of comprehensive and readily available evidence on the benefits of cultural heritage at the European level. Yet, this is information that we regard as critical to the evidence based approach needed to produce a persuasive and effective EU Cultural Heritage Strategy.

There have been, of course, many case studies, European projects, and national, regional and local research documents covering particular aspects of cultural heritage in specific parts of Europe. In addition, all of the European Heritage Alliance members have anecdotal case study evidence of ways in which different aspects of cultural heritage deliver social, environmental and economic benefits.

What appears to be lacking however is a readily accessible overview of the role and importance of heritage at the European level - a credible research base that is statistically valid and reflects all aspects of the subject. Such a comprehensive overview should partly reflect the complexity and diversity of heritage, its geographic spread as well as the qualitative dimension often needed to properly demonstrate the full impact of heritage.

We see this as a key challenge to moving forward and one that needs to be addressed if we are to convince EU and national policy makers of the wide range of benefits of investing in heritage; benefits that remain insufficiently understood and largely untapped.

Research Focus

The proposed research should seek to bring clear evidence of the multiple benefits with which heritage contributes to the quality of life and the sense of identity and belonging of Europe's citizens, to the job creation and sustainable and smart growth of Europe's economy as well as to the beauty, harmony and sustainable future of Europe's living environment, both in cities and in the countryside.

We propose that the Research Study would, inter alia, focus on providing evidence that demonstrates **qualitatively** and **quantitatively** how cultural heritage contributes or has the potential to contribute, to the delivery of the EU's overall 2020 strategy. In this context the focus would inevitably be oriented toward tangible heritage.

Taking the three overarching priorities of the 2020 Strategy members of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. have identified a number of key areas where we are convinced cultural heritage is currently contributing to the delivery of these priorities but where evidenced based research is not readily available to support the case and demonstrate the benefits.

The following summary aims to illustrate the nature and scope of research needed.

Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation

Qualitative research on views of business and quantitative research on vocational factors, job creation, floor-space availability, constraints to growth etc to demonstrate:

- Evidence that creative industries, empowered by technology and networking, cluster within historic areas - both rural and within cities;
- Evidence that the character and supply of heritage buildings e.g. industrial heritage provide ambience, identity and diversity that helps create, nurture and encourage innovation;
- Evidence of role of cities (most of which are historic/heritage) in delivering smart growth based on a track record of strategic urban planning and innovation in the past; and
- Evidence of the impact on smart growth of the digital agenda, interpretative and virtual technologies in supporting and facilitating cultural heritage related employment especially through sustainable cultural tourism.

Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy

Quantitative research combined with case study research on good practice examples to demonstrate:

- Evidence that cultural heritage, particularly where located within cities, demonstrates a sustainable and competitive business model in terms of re-use of buildings, greener transport opportunities with reduced travel, business and community support networks and a strong sense of identity;
- Evidence of the contribution that sustainable cultural tourism focusing on identity and diversity makes or could make to more sustainable local economies;
- Evidence of heritage solutions addressing urban centre and village depopulation/ ageing population issues through re-use of heritage building; and
- Evidence of the role of cultural heritage in mitigating climate change and reducing carbon emissions.

Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion

Qualitative and quantitative research, including views of businesses and citizens, combined with case study research on good practice examples to demonstrate:

- Evidence of links (direct and indirect) between innovation, the knowledge economy and quality of life - where cultural heritage (urban and rural) provides the context to bring them together;
- Evidence of the importance of integrated planning approaches involving all stakeholders to delivering social cohesion;
- Evidence of the contribution that sustainable cultural tourism makes to a high employment economy and to social and territorial cohesion;
- Evidence of the contribution of intangible cultural heritage to inclusion policy and economic growth; and
- Evidence of a correlation between cultural heritage in urban and rural settings to a sense of place, happiness, well being and belonging as important ingredients in securing social and territorial cohesion and contributing to productive and competitive economic activity.

Funding and Approach

Cultural Heritage can help deliver the 2020 strategy for growth and ensure that Europe's international identity is maintained and enhanced. We believe therefore that it is important for the EU to invest in the preparation of an independent, comprehensive and comparative research study at the EU level. The study proposed would bring tangible benefits at the European level and form an effective platform to help the EU fulfil its obligations under article 3.3 of the Lisbon Treaty.

The study would demonstrate for the first time in facts and figures the incredible wealth and diversity of heritage in all EU Member States and describe the value which Europe's citizens attach to this heritage.

We see this as research carried out by an independent research institution working in partnership with the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. and any other stakeholders with funding and support provided by the EU.

The research methodology of the selected researchers should reflect:

- The multi faceted and multi dimensional nature of cultural heritage embracing moveable and immoveable heritage as well as its tangible and intangible qualities;
- The differing geographical levels through which cultural heritage is experienced e.g. European, national, regional, landscapes, cities, towns, villages, neighbourhoods, squares, monuments, archaeology, castles, cathedrals, historic houses and buildings;
- The inter-related nature of town and country, of owner and user, visitor and citizen, service provider and consumer;
- The diversity of heritage embracing the full spectrum of functions from religious buildings to industrial heritage, from world heritage to the common heritage;
- A wide interpretation of what constitutes benefit - socially, economically, environmentally and culturally - and also an understanding of the value of heritage in its own right as an asset, a resource and a fundamental part of Europe's identity in the world.

The approach envisaged would be to evaluate the considerable body of existing, albeit fragmented, data - bringing together the many research documents, European projects and case studies as a key first stage. This would produce an invaluable resource in its own right but importantly enable gaps in research to be clearly identified for possible future research.

The creation of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3 also offers researchers a unique opportunity to tap into the members of 27 European or international heritage networks as a key resource and source of invaluable information, experience and raw data. It is suggested therefore that the research study methodology should fully involve the Alliance members – many of whom have already volunteered to facilitate access to members and provide examples of case studies.

Deliverables/ Outputs

1. Identify, collate, analyse all available relevant research documents, studies, projects and case studies, and
2. Prepare a 'key findings' document including identification of gaps in evidence needed to demonstrate the contribution of cultural heritage to EU 2020 Strategy and other key policy priority areas of the EU.

Timetable and Next Steps

The timetable for carrying out this research study will depend on the time needed to present this case to the European Commission, secure agreement and funding and procure an independent research body to carry out the work.

The aim should be to complete this exercise in 2012-2013. To this end the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. will seek to meet with Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, in the course of the first semester of 2012.

April 2012