

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

COUNCIL

Council conclusions on the creation of a European heritage label by the European Union

(2008/C 319/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

EMPHASISING IN PARTICULAR:

REFERRING:

- to the Treaty establishing the European Community,
- to the Council Resolution of 16 November 2007 ⁽¹⁾ on a European Agenda for Culture and the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 21 May 2008 on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 ⁽²⁾, which includes the promotion of cultural heritage as one of its objectives.

WELCOMING WITH INTEREST:

- the Commission's communication of 10 May 2007 on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world ⁽³⁾,
- and the European Parliament Resolution of 10 April 2008 on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world ⁽⁴⁾, in which the European Parliament supports the establishment of a European heritage label 'with a view to emphasising the European dimension of cultural goods, monuments, memorial sites, and places of remembrance, which all bear witness to Europe's history and heritage'.

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION:

- the inter-governmental 'European heritage label' scheme launched in Granada in April 2006 by several Member States.

- the importance of raising the awareness of young people of the shared cultural heritage and hence the necessity to promote their access to European cultural heritage.

1. CONSIDERS THAT THE CREATION OF A EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL BY THE EUROPEAN UNION,

- (a) which would aim to emphasize Europe's common history in a concrete way by enhancing the European dimension of its cultural heritage;

(b) could contribute:

- to enhancing the value and raising the profile of Member States' heritage and that of the shared cultural heritage,
- to increasing knowledge and appreciation among citizens of their history and their shared yet diverse cultural heritage,
- to the economic attractiveness and sustainable development of the regions, in particular through cultural tourism,
- to artistic, cultural and historical education and, in so doing, to stepping up intercultural dialogue, especially among young people,
- to the sharing of experiences and exchange of best practices across Europe as regards the enhancement of its cultural heritage,
- more generally, to the promotion of democratic values and human rights that form the foundation of European integration and European citizenship.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.⁽²⁾ OJ C 143, 10.6.2008, p. 9.⁽³⁾ COM(2007) 242 final — doc. 9496/07.⁽⁴⁾ 2007/2211 (INI).

2. CONSIDERS THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION'S EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL SHOULD BE AWARDED ON THE BASIS OF COMMON, CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT CRITERIA:

- (a) the following could be eligible for the label:
- monuments, natural or urban sites, cultural landscapes and places of remembrance, as well as cultural goods and intangible heritage attached to a place, including contemporary heritage — hereafter referred to as 'sites' ⁽¹⁾,
 - if they bear witness, in particular by their cross-border or pan-European nature, to Europe's history, common values or cultural heritage, particularly to the building of Europe;
- (b) candidates for the label should submit a long-term project which would commit them to:
- promoting the European dimension of the site, i.e. its place and its role in European history, the cultural, artistic, scientific and technological movements, personalities and events linked to the site which have played a key role in the history and the building of Europe, etc.,
 - enhancing the value of the site, for example by organising a range of educational, artistic, cultural and scientific activities (events, festivals, artist-in residence schemes, etc.),
 - ensuring good management of the sites,
 - ensuring the quality of the reception facilities: a policy of accessibility for the widest possible public and the promotion of multilingualism, etc.,
 - according special attention to a young public, in particular by allowing it privileged access to the site,
 - raising the profile and the attractiveness of the site on a European scale: appropriate signposting, the use of new technologies, etc.,
 - taking part in the activities of networks of sites awarded the label, possibly in the framework of groups covering a particular European heritage theme or a common aspect of the history of Europe.

3. BELIEVES THAT:

- (a) Member States should participate in this initiative on a voluntary basis;
- (b) the project should be based on the following principles:
- a regular selection procedure, based on common, clear and transparent criteria, carried out initially at national and then at European level, based on an expert assessment of the applications and covering a reasonable and representative number of sites each time,
 - flexible and streamline administrative arrangements, in compliance with the principle of subsidiarity,
 - an implementation with due respect for the criteria laid out in Section 2 of these conclusions, that seeks synergies and complementarities with other initiatives such as the Unesco World Heritage List and the Council of Europe's 'European Cultural Routes', and adopts a concerted approach as regards notification of the sites awarded the label;
- (c) the project could draw on existing Community funding, without prejudice to the support policies conducted by each of the Member States;
- (d) this initiative could also be open to third countries participating in the Culture Programme of the European Union;
- (e) award of a European heritage label would require recipient sites to comply with undertakings they have given and could be subject to periodic review;
- (f) sites already awarded the label in the framework of the intergovernmental European heritage label project should be taken into account and their status should be defined.

4. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- submit to it, within a reasonable time frame, and bearing in mind these conclusions, an appropriate proposal for the creation of a European heritage label by the European Union and specifying the practical procedures for the implementation of the project.

⁽¹⁾ The Council refers to the definitions commonly accepted by international or European law (Unesco Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 14 November 1970; Unesco Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 16 November 1972; Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 17 October 2003; European Landscape Convention of 20 October 2000).