

Council conclusions on the need to bring cultural heritage to the fore across policies in the EU

(2018/C 196/05)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING THAT:

1. The Leaders of EU Member States and of EU institutions proclaimed in the Rome Declaration from 25 March 2017 a vision of a 'Union where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development' which 'preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity' ⁽¹⁾;
2. The European Council in its conclusions from 14 December 2017 ⁽²⁾ called on Member States, the Council and the Commission, in line with their respective competences to take work forward with a view to taking the opportunity of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 ⁽³⁾ to increase awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and cultural heritage;

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT:

3. Today, culture is highlighted on the EU's political agenda as confirmed by the Leaders' discussion in Gothenburg in November 2017, during which the Leaders recognised the importance of culture in building inclusive and cohesive societies, and in sustaining Europe's competitiveness ⁽⁴⁾;
4. This development reaffirms the value of good cooperation at EU level in cultural heritage and confirms the importance of mainstreaming cultural heritage into other sectoral policies and actions to maximise its social and economic benefits;
5. The recent social and economic challenges encountered by the European Union call for action to strengthen the ties between and within our societies. Cultural heritage as a source of knowledge and mutual understanding has the potential to be one of the drivers of this process by fostering the sense of belonging to the common European space. Moreover, such action could become a basis for maintaining European solidarity and preserving the integrity of the European Union while at the same time promoting and protecting cultural diversity;
6. Cultural heritage in all its diversity and forms — tangible and intangible, immovable and movable, digital and digitised ⁽⁵⁾ — is a value in its own right, an inheritance from our past and a strategic resource for the sustainable future of Europe, helping to respond to social, economic and environmental challenges at different levels — from local, national and regional to European and even global;
7. Europe's cultural heritage is dynamic in nature and further enriched through the exploration of the shared past of European peoples and nations, and by continually evolving initiatives and programmes. Cultural heritage is thus also a source of inspiration for contemporary arts and creativity that in turn may become the cultural heritage of tomorrow;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF COMPETENCE AND IN DUE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY:

8. To bring cultural heritage to the fore in relevant EU policies and promote awareness among stakeholders of the mutual benefits of its mainstreaming into other sectoral policies as well as about the financing opportunities for cultural heritage ⁽⁶⁾, including by providing timely information to stakeholders about the EU funds available for cultural heritage;

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/03/25/rome-declaration/pdf>

⁽²⁾ EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1.

⁽³⁾ Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018) (OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 1).

⁽⁴⁾ EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1 and the European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017 (Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture), doc. 14436/17.

⁽⁵⁾ Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe (OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 36).

⁽⁶⁾ Mapping of cultural heritage actions in European Union policies programmes and activities — http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/2014-heritage-mapping_en.pdf

9. Without prejudging the next Multiannual Financial Framework negotiations, to examine possibilities to introduce, where appropriate, a more explicit focus on the preservation and promotion of Europe's common cultural heritage in relevant EU programmes. This could be done by taking cultural heritage into account when preparing and implementing the programmes, but also by including cultural heritage as a strategic objective among their priorities;
10. To promote innovation, sustainability and social inclusion through specific heritage-oriented projects with a European dimension and social value-added, also by taking into account the gender equality perspective;
11. To foster cooperation among European researchers, professionals and education and training bodies with a view to promoting high quality skills, training and knowledge transfer in the traditional and emerging heritage professions;
12. To further enhance the principle of participatory governance of cultural heritage by analysing the current practice in cultural governance, identifying actions, where relevant, towards making cultural governance more open, participatory, effective and coherent as well as by sharing best practices;
13. To identify and facilitate the exchange of good national and international practices by promoting mobility of professionals of the cultural sector in Europe ⁽¹⁾;
14. To deepen and broaden the dialogue with the civil society organisations, European citizens and particularly European youth with a view to achieving a deeper understanding of the contribution of Europe's cultural heritage to strengthening the shared European identity in all its diversity of cultures, languages and heritages;
15. To continue to support cultural heritage as an important element in the EU's strategic approach to international cultural relations as well as in the promotion of intercultural dialogue;
16. To implement common and coordinated transnational actions ⁽²⁾ with international organisations to safeguard and preserve cultural heritage in a sustainable manner and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development ⁽³⁾;
17. To promote support for the digitisation of cultural heritage as a tool for open access to culture and knowledge, thus stimulating innovation, creativity and participatory governance of cultural heritage;
18. To make available the outcomes, reports and evaluations of EU-funded initiatives and projects on cultural heritage online in a more systematic and retrievable manner;
19. To take the opportunity of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 to build a shared and comprehensive strategic vision for cultural heritage, and ensure its legacy by developing concrete actions. Where possible, synergies could be sought with the Council of Europe's European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century;
20. To support the development of evidence-based policies by continuing to work with Eurostat and national statistical offices on the collection of reliable data on the social and economic contribution of cultural heritage, and to contribute to similar efforts at international level by organisations such as Unesco and the Council of Europe ⁽⁴⁾;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, IN DUE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY:

21. To recognise the role of cultural heritage in relevant national sectoral programmes co-financed by the EU with a view to preserving the value and importance of cultural heritage for local people and future generations and fully develop the potential of heritage as a resource for economic development, social cohesion and cultural identity;
22. To continue their cooperation by considering priorities and activities in the new Work Plan for Culture post-2019 related to the mainstreaming of cultural heritage into other EU policies;

⁽¹⁾ EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1.

⁽²⁾ [http://undocs.org/S/RES/2347\(2017\)](http://undocs.org/S/RES/2347(2017))

⁽³⁾ In line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

⁽⁴⁾ E.g. the Compendium on Cultural Policies and Trends.

INVITES THE COMMISSION:

23. When planning, implementing and evaluating EU policies, to continue to take into consideration their direct and indirect impact on the enhancement, conservation and safeguarding of Europe's cultural heritage and in particular the need for quality guidelines to ensure that EU investment does not damage or diminish the values of cultural heritage;
24. To continue the ongoing dialogue and cooperation with existing networks in the field of cultural heritage that have accumulated valuable experience and proved their competences in the field ⁽¹⁾;
25. To further develop cooperation with Unesco and the Council of Europe on issues of common interest in the policies and practices of cultural heritage, including on combatting the illicit trafficking of cultural property, especially in conflict zones;
26. To seek synergies with the Unesco and Council of Europe Conventions, which set the international principles for conservation, safeguarding and management of cultural heritage, such as the Council of Europe's Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro 2005).

⁽¹⁾ Such as, e.g. the European Heritage Heads Forum, the European Heritage Legal Forum and the Reflection Group 'EU and cultural heritage'.