

**Meeting of the EP Intergroup on European tourism development,  
cultural heritage, Ways of St. James and other European cultural routes**  
on  
**‘Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe’**

**16 September 2015, European Parliament, Brussels**

Co-organised by **Europa Nostra** and the Co-Chair of the Intergroup, **Ana-Claudia Tapardel**,  
with the support of the other Co-Chair, **Francisco Millan Mon**

*Reaction by*

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### **Importance of historic towns to Europe**

Europe's cities are mostly if not all in large part historic heritage cities whose character derives substantially from the urban quality of their historic urban areas.

Much of Europe's cultural heritage tangible and intangible is consequently experienced - by citizens and visitors alike - within the context of historic towns and cities.

Heritage stakeholders - know Cultural Heritage is key asset/catalyst for job creation and growth and that the case for investing in heritage is strong.

The need has been to influence decision making and setting of funding priorities - at the European, national regional and local levels.

We recognised this required a shift in thinking to:

- Present cultural heritage as mainstream and cross cutting
- Of value in itself - a key resource capable of delivering benefit across all policy areas

What has always been lacking but is available now is a sound body of evidence to persuade decision makers of the wide ranging benefits of investing in heritage. The focus for the last two years has been at the European level - with a momentous shift in policy thinking - but that momentum now needs to shift in turn to the national, regional and local levels - in particular historic towns and regions.

### **What happens now?**

CHCfE is particularly important to the leaders of historic towns and cities who can and should now make use of the projects key findings to adopt an integrated approach to the management of their towns and cities. By that I mean:

- Recognise the impacts that mainstream policy has on Cultural heritage and crucially cultural heritage has on the corporate policies and aspirations of the local authority - so for example

- Develop and align their development and strategic planning processes to reflect the opportunities demonstrated i.e. recognising and fully embracing.
  - The central Importance of CH to the identity of Europe's towns, cities and regions -attractiveness, creativity, catalyst for heritage led regeneration and inward investment. Cultural heritage is an integral part of the narrative of the city and central to its vision for the future.
  - Opportunities for job creation across a wide spectrum of employment from repair and maintenance to cultural tourism to the creative industries, the clear evidence of returns on capital possible and the wider tax benefits that can be achieved for public authorities demonstrated in the case studies.
  - The unique role their democratic mandate provides to foster participatory governance and secure the social benefits that quality of life, stimulus to education and learning and social cohesion.
  - Also reflect and act on the report's recommendations by measuring impact and monitoring trends locally.
  
- Be inspired to maximise the impact of cultural heritage and play a key role in mobilisation of action now needed at regional and local levels.

**But how is this to be achieved - it will not happen by itself.**

Raising awareness and the sharing of good practice is key as is communicating experience, know how, skills, lesson learned and so on –organisations like EAHTR can and will play their part - but there also needs to be a more strategic focused approach that incentivises and enables innovation and change.

In this respect I would like also to draw your attention briefly to another important and relevant development. The Commission report on an integrated approach to CH also flagged up an EU Research and Innovation policy framework and agenda for cultural heritage was also to be launched, based on the contribution of an expert group looking at innovative and sustainable investment, financing and management of cultural heritage. This was the Horizon 2020 programme and I was a member of the advisory group. Our report

**Getting Cultural Heritage to Work for Europe published and present to Commissioner Carlos Moedas in June 2015**

The report argues that the European Union should vigorously promote the innovative use of cultural heritage for economic growth and jobs, social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

It suggests that lessons should be learnt from places where cultural heritage has been a positive economic, social and environmental driver, that Innovative financing, new forms of governance, unified landscape management, public private partnerships, crowd-sourced funding, philanthropy and many other innovative and creative approaches should be promoted to release the locked-up potential of Europe's heritage.

The report recommendations were for H2020 to fund significant demonstration and inducement prizes that would unlock the creative potential of Europe's historic towns, regions as well as all stakeholders to identify and implement integrated and innovative approaches to

- Heritage led regeneration - Sustainable cultural landscapes - Inclusive governance - and innovative business models

Commissioner Moedas pledged increased funding for cultural heritage research and innovation with over €100 million for research and innovation in the field of cultural heritage to be available in 2016-17 under Horizon 2020. Calls reflecting the expert groups recommendations are expected, if approved by the Commission, later this year in October or November.

The findings of the CHCfE report fit very well providing a deeper evidence base that underpins and reinforces the central message of Getting Cultural Heritage to work for Europe that

- relatively modest investment in cultural heritage can pay substantial dividends
- the proposed inducement prizes will act as a catalyst to engage with key stakeholders, learn from past experience, fund demonstration projects including potentially training programmes and crucially
- unlock innovative new approaches and services that will deliver real benefit both economically in terms of improving environmental sustainability and social cohesion

If we together can

- secure the widespread dissemination of the case study evidence now available
- embrace the opportunities for demonstration inducement funding for demonstration projects that build on the good things and get them replicated across Europe and
- if the wider thrust of EU policy on Cultural Heritage follows through into actions within the European investment plan

Then the added incentive of a cultural heritage year in 2018 will provide a real focus for action and change – I am confident that Europe's historic towns and regions will play their part.