



RESOLUTION

The Protection of the European Cultural Heritage, a Responsibility for All

Adopted at the 12th YEPP Congress in Athens, 03.11.2018

Recognising that:

- The cultural heritage constitutes a powerful instrument for the creation and the enforcement of a shared identity among the Europeans, regardless their nationality and place of origin. In other words, it contributes to promote the idea of Europe as a community of destiny, forged in the flames of a common past.
- Although the culture and, by extension, the heritage protection, is not an exclusive competence of the European Union [art. 6.c) TFEU] and, therefore, it must be primarily addressed at the national, regional and local levels, the EU has a pivotal role to play in this field, in respect of the principle of subsidiarity.
- The Treaty on the European Union enshrines the preservation of the cultural heritage as a core objective for the Union. In particular, article 3(3) TEU states that the EU «shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced».
- In the same vein, in accordance with article 167(1) TFEU, the European Union «shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing common cultural heritage to the fore».
- With the adoption of the European Agenda for Culture in 2007¹, the cultural heritage has become a cornerstone for the Council of the EU and, since 2014, it has been defined as «a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe»².
- Under the auspices of the Commission³, 2018 was designated as «The European Year of Cultural Heritage». Under the motto «Our heritage: Where the past meets the future», this initiative seeks to celebrate the cultural diversity and to underpin our sense of belonging to both a shared European project and space.
- Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, Tibor Navracsics, stated, on the occasion of the declaration of the European Year, that «our cultural heritage is more than the memory of our past; it is the key to our future», thus underlining the spill-over effects derived from its protection and promotion on the economic growth and the social cohesion.

¹ Council of the European Union (2007), *Resolution of the Council on an European Agenda for Culture*, Brussels, 16 November 2007.

² Council of the European Union (2014), *Council conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe*, Brussels, 21 May 2014.

³ European Commission (2017), *Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage*, Brussels, 30 August 2016

- Furthermore, as the Commission has highlighted, well-preserved historic sites become «centres of knowledge, focal points of creativity and culture, places of community interaction and social integration». In other words, cultural heritage «generates innovation and contributes to the smart, sustainable and inclusive growth»⁴, in line with the objectives of the 10-year strategy Europe 2020⁵.

Acknowledging that:

- Despite growing citizens patrimonial awareness and government efforts made in this area, nowadays cultural heritage faces several natural and man-made hazards of unpredictable dimensions and increasingly frequent over time -inter alia, extreme climate change events, fire risk, armed conflicts and terrorism.
- Beyond our borders, the devastating fire at Brazil's National Museum, in Rio de Janeiro sadly remembered for reducing to ashes the Latin America's largest anthropology and natural history collection-, and the destruction of the Ancient City of Palmyra after its occupation by ISIS, to name a few examples, have proven that cultural heritage security cannot be taken for granted.
- The tragedy occurred at Brazil's National Museum also reminds us that disinvestment in culture, together with the absence or the erroneous implementation of a risk management protocol, can be translated into disastrous consequences. For instance, cultural heritage destruction has a negative impact on citizens' collective memory and associated economic drivers as the tourism sector.
- In most of the countries, cultural heritage protection remains to be inadequately addressed by authorities and «it is not fully considered, or integrated, as a risk management priority neither in National Plans nor in emergency situations»⁶.

YEPP calls on:

- The European Union and its Member States to continue to support joint conservation efforts, creating synergies with the private sector, as well as raising awareness campaigns, especially between the younger people.
- Member States to make cultural heritage protection a key priority in the agenda, and, particularly, in risk management planning, by integrating this goal into the

⁴ European Commission (2014), *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe*, 22 July 2014.

⁵ European Commission (2010), *Communication from the Commission: Europe 2020: A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, Brussels, 3 March 2010.

⁶ European Commission (2018), *Safeguarding Cultural Heritage from Natural and Man-Made Disasters: A comparative analysis of risk management in the EU*, Brussels

national disaster and risk reduction strategies, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 -Sendai Framework-.

- Member States to foster, in accordance with the European Commission's recommendations, «a greater pan-European cooperation between academia, research institutes, professional conservators, the rescue services, and all levels of public administration -from Ministries to local authorities- that are involved in cultural heritage and civil protection matters»⁷.

⁷ *Ibidem.*