

Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe

(2014/C 183/08)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECOGNISING THAT:

1. the Treaty stipulates that the Union shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced;
2. cultural heritage consists of the resources inherited from the past in all forms and aspects - tangible, intangible and digital (born digital and digitized), including monuments, sites, landscapes, skills, practices, knowledge and expressions of human creativity, as well as collections conserved and managed by public and private bodies such as museums, libraries and archives. It originates from the interaction between people and places through time and it is constantly evolving. These resources are of great value to society from a cultural, environmental, social and economic point of view and thus their sustainable management constitutes a strategic choice for the 21st century;
3. cultural heritage is a major asset for Europe and an important component of the European project;
4. cultural heritage as a non-renewable resource that is unique, non-replaceable or non-interchangeable is currently confronted with important challenges related to cultural, environmental, social, economic and technological transformations that affect all aspects of contemporary life.

EMPHASISING THAT:

5. cultural heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social capital because it has the capacity to:
 - a) inspire and foster citizens' participation in public life;
 - b) enhance the quality of life and the well-being of individuals and their communities;
 - c) promote diversity and intercultural dialogue by contributing to a stronger sense of 'belonging' to a wider community and a better understanding and respect between peoples;
 - d) help to reduce social disparities, facilitate social inclusion, cultural and social participation and promote intergenerational dialogue and social cohesion;
 - e) offer possibilities to develop skills, knowledge, creativity and innovation;
 - f) be an effective educational tool for formal, non-formal and informal education, life-long learning and training.
6. cultural heritage has an important economic impact, including as an integral part of the cultural and creative sectors, because, among other things, it:
 - a) constitutes a powerful driving force of inclusive local and regional development and creates considerable externalities, in particular through the enhancement of sustainable cultural tourism;
 - b) supports sustainable rural and urban development and regeneration as illustrated by initiatives by many European regions and cities;
 - c) generates diverse types of employment.
7. cultural heritage plays a specific role in achieving the Europe 2020 strategy goals for a 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' because it has social and economic impact and contributes to environmental sustainability;
8. cultural heritage cuts across several public policies beyond the cultural, such as those related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation. These policies have a direct or indirect impact on cultural heritage and at the same time cultural heritage offers a strong potential for the achievement of their objectives. Therefore, this potential should be fully recognised and developed.

CALLS ON MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE AND WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

9. recognise the intrinsic value of cultural heritage and deploy the potential of culture and cultural heritage as a shared strategic resource for developing a society based on democratic, ethical, aesthetic and ecological values, in particular in a moment of crisis;
10. reinforce dialogue with the cultural heritage stakeholders to identify and implement coordinated policies and actions for the sustainable management and development of cultural heritage, as well as promote collaboration with international and intergovernmental organisations, in particular with the Council of Europe;
11. mobilise available resources for supporting, enhancing and promoting cultural heritage via an integrated, holistic approach, while taking into account its cultural, economic, social, environmental and scientific components;
12. contribute to the mainstreaming of cultural heritage in national and European policies;
13. identify and build on the synergies created between the EU and national public policies beyond cultural policy, such as regional development, cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, energy and climate change, tourism, education, research and innovation with a view to creating added value;
14. where possible, improve access to funding, make full use of available programmes for the public and private sector, and encourage investment in cultural heritage as a part of integrated strategies for sustainable local and regional development within available national and EU programmes, as well as within the EU Structural Funds in accordance with partnership agreements;
15. continue to support the EU action for the European Heritage Label⁽¹⁾;
16. continue to promote education on cultural heritage, raise public awareness on the potential of cultural heritage for sustainable development and to encourage public participation, especially of children and young people, in cooperation with civil society;
17. improve the collection and analysis of qualitative evidence and quantitative data, including statistics, on cultural heritage;
18. encourage the funding, development and dissemination of digital cultural content as well as the availability of innovative heritage-related services of cultural and educational value to citizens, and promote public access to those digital heritage resources and services, including via Europeana.

CALLS ON MEMBER STATES TO:

19. promote long-term heritage policy models that are evidence-based and society- and citizen-driven;
20. enhance the role of cultural heritage in sustainable development, focusing on urban and rural planning, redevelopment and rehabilitation projects;
21. encourage networking and partnerships between cultural heritage and other policy fields, between public and private actors in all relevant domains and on different levels of governance;
22. consider including cultural heritage in the framework of the next Council Work Plan for Culture which will be implemented from 2015 onwards;
23. enhance cross-border, interregional and transnational cooperation on cultural heritage issues with relevant stakeholders,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 303, 22.11.2011, p. 1.

24. foster traditional knowledge and skills that are necessary to the safeguarding, sustainable management and development of cultural heritage and that should be handed down to future generations, so as to improve human capital and ensure the continuous protection of and access to Europe's cultural assets;
25. further cooperate on a research agenda for cultural heritage and strengthen support for cultural heritage research initiatives within the EU framework programme for research and innovation Horizon 2020 such as the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

26. pursue the analysis of the economic and social impact of cultural heritage in the EU and contribute to a development of a strategic approach to cultural heritage;
 27. take into account, in the review of the Europe 2020 strategy, the contribution of cultural heritage in achieving the strategy's goals;
 28. take into consideration the specific nature of cultural heritage when applying state aid rules;
 29. promote the exchange and use of good practices stemming from projects funded in the context of Union programmes aiming at fostering sustainable use and management of cultural heritage;
 30. further support at EU level the networking of, and pooling of resources between, public and private sector heritage experts and practitioners as well as civil society organisations.
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