Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions — European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

(2017/C 088/03)

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR),

— having regard to the proposal from the European Commission for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage ([1]),

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. welcomes the European Commission's proposal to designate the year 2018 as the 'European Year of Cultural Heritage' and agrees with the Year's stated overall and specific objectives;

2. considers that a European Year devoted to cultural heritage constitutes a valuable opportunity to raise awareness at grassroots level about the need to protect cultural heritage, to bring knowledge of it to a wider audience and to contribute to the attainment of shared goals in the pan-European context ([2]); moreover, the European Year should promote the exchange of best practices in the development of effective management systems, helping to mitigate risks related to urban development and landscape transformation and in the fight against illicit excavations and the illegal trafficking of cultural goods;

3. calls for a comprehensive and visionary approach in making 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage, seen also as an opportunity to reaffirm our motto 'United in diversity'. The CoR reiterates its intention to support the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. To this effect, it expresses its readiness to also contribute to the work of the European steering group that the European Commission proposes to establish within the framework of the European Year 2018;

4. acknowledges that the celebration and commemoration of cultural heritage helps Europeans build understanding, inspires creativity and fosters active citizenship. Promoting culture and cultural heritage is therefore essential in order to strengthen identity and democratic values in Europe and to contribute to social and economic cohesion. In this regard, protected natural areas should be seen as forming part of cultural heritage;

5. welcomes the recognition given to culture as a tool for local and regional development and the value of innovative models of multilevel governance and management of cultural heritage; stresses, however, that the appointment of coordinators at Member State level must fully reflect the governance structures of each Member State, including federal structures and/or regions/cities with legislative powers;

6. reaffirms the significance of landscapes as a basic component of the natural and cultural heritage, having a deep impact on the cultural identity of the citizens of Europe; believes therefore that in line with the European Landscape Convention and the European Agenda for Culture, the overall objectives for the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 could be enriched by including a strong component for territorial development, in the form of regional and local cultural strategies involving the promotion of sustainable cultural tourism;

7. expects that the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 will create a momentum to increase the funding available in the COSME programme for small and medium-sized enterprises related to cultural tourism;

8. expects tourism, especially cultural and heritage tourism, to play an important role in 2018, given the fact that it is one of the fastest growing economic sectors in Europe that drives global growth and development, creates millions of jobs, spurs exports and investment and transforms peoples' lives;

9. underlines the importance of culture as one of the pivotal factors attracting tourists and emphasises the need to promote Europe's cultural and natural heritage in our regions, cities and rural areas which provide a showcase for our diversity, and to assure better accessibility to those areas, which are difficult to reach such as rural, mountains or islands regions;

10. recalls the aim of the new EU Urban Agendas to improve the quality of life in towns and cities and to develop new 'urban' governance and underlines that partnerships should also be set up on other issues requiring integrated policy approaches, for example, taking into account the cultural and tourism dimension in urban development, new inclusive forms of participation, innovation and Smart Cities ([3]);

([1]) COM(2016) 543 final.
([2]) COR-2014-05515-00-00-AC-TRA.
([3]) COR-2015-05511-00-01-AC-TRA

11. highlights the close ties between cultural heritage and rural development and calls on the rural areas to pay more attention to cultural heritage in their development strategies as it contributes to safeguarding and creating jobs, supporting agricultural businesses, protecting cultural landscapes, supporting rural arts and handicrafts;

12. reiterates the possible advantage of using the European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) for multi-level governance projects enabling all the relevant actors to be involved in the governance of a cross-border or Euro-regional territory ([4]) and to stimulate cooperation in the field of culture, including tangible and intangible cultural heritage, with positive spill-over to other sectors, such as tourism and industry;

13. reiterates its support for the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) and the European Heritage Label (EHL) initiatives, as well as for the European Heritage Days and the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, and underlines the need for strong synergies with the activities undertaken within the framework of the European Year 2018;

14. notes that, although co-financing at the European level of activities in support of European Years is within the existing possibilities for priority setting on an annual or multiannual basis and in relation to existing programmes, the choice of the policy focus of each Year determines to a great extent the size of the available budgetary envelope. This leads to considerable funding fluctuations from one Year to the next, which may jeopardise the attainment of a Year's goals;

15. reiterates that in a globalising world culture can also determine the attractiveness of a place and its competitiveness for business, investors and creative and enterprising individuals;

16. considers the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 as an important milestone for fostering the EU strategy for international cultural relations ([5]);

17. welcomes the focus on the Middle East when considering the role of heritage in the area of external relations, as this region is hardly hit by the deliberate destruction of cultural treasures in certain conflict zones. Agrees that cultural cooperation must be sought also with European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership countries;

18. stresses that it is fundamental that young people acknowledge, understand and appreciate their heritage and feel it as part of their identity. In this regard calls for a more proactive approach to promoting European cultural heritage and its diversity among young people and children; recommends therefore to include in school curriculum elements of European art, music, theatre and film education to improve knowledge of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the continent;

19. reaffirms the importance of acquiring cultural and creative skills from an early age, both within the education system and in leisure time, which empowers the young generations to fully benefit from the new forms of access to culture ([6]);

20. considers accessibility to be fundamental in making the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 a success; improvement of accessibility represents a crucial starting point in order to also increase participation rates ([7]);

21. confirms its willingness to be involved in the design of a comprehensive communication strategy, as well as the organisation of relevant conferences, events and initiatives and its readiness to facilitate engagement with citizens and stakeholders;

22. wishes to see more active EU media, audio-visual and IT policy which seeks to promote the cultural and linguistic heritage of Europe;

23. considers also that there is a need to create a European Network of World Heritage Cities, as these cities are the Common Heritage of all European citizens, and to adopt specific measures to preserve them and raise awareness about their existence;

([4]) CDR371-2011_FIN_AC
([5]) JOIN(2016) 29 final
([6]) CDR 2391/2012 fin
([7]) CDR3952-2013_00_00_TRA_AC

24. instructs the President to forward this resolution to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council, the President of the European Council and the Slovak Presidency.

II. **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage

Amendment 1

Recital 0

Text proposed by the Commission	*CoR amendment*
	The European Union contributes to the preservation and to the development of the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity, respecting the diversity of the cultures, languages and traditions of the peoples of Europe as stated in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 2

Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission	*CoR amendment*
As highlighted by the European Commission in its Communication 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe' ([8]), cultural heritage is to be considered a shared resource and a common good held in trust for future generations, whose care is a common responsibility of all stakeholders.	As highlighted by the European Commission in its Communication 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe' ([8]), cultural heritage is to be considered a shared resource and a common good held in trust for future generations, whose care is a common responsibility of all stakeholders. ***To this effect, Article 36 TFEU does not preclude prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports or goods in transit justified on grounds of the protection of national treasures possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value.***
([8]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 22 July 2014 Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe COM(2014) 477 final.	([8]) Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 22 July 2014 Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe COM(2014) 477 final.

Reason

It is important to remind that goods that are part of national cultural treasures are exempted from EU rules related to the free movement of goods.

Amendment 3

Recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission	*CoR amendment*
Cultural heritage can have an important role for community cohesion at a time when cultural diversity is increasing in European societies. New participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage policies and educational initiatives that attribute equal dignity to all cultural heritages have the potential to increase trust, mutual recognition and social cohesion.	Cultural heritage can have an important role for community cohesion at a time when cultural diversity is increasing in European societies. ***Sites having been awarded the European Heritage Label have a strong European dimension as they have been selected for their role in European history. As such, they symbolise European ideals, values, history and integration, and they bring the European Union and its citizens closer together. Together with the European Capitals of Culture, they increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area. Therefore, complementarities with the European Year of Cultural Heritage must be sought.*** New participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage policies and educational initiatives that attribute equal dignity to all cultural heritages***, while respecting the freedom of the arts, in accordance with Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,*** have the potential to increase trust, mutual recognition and social cohesion.

Reason

Both the European Heritage Label and the European Capitals of Culture are important instruments for the promotion of cultural heritage at local and regional level and should be duly acknowledged in the Decision. The same applies to the freedom of the arts, which is a cornerstone of European creativity.

Amendment 4

Article 2(2)(k)

Text proposed by the Commission	*CoR amendment*
encourage synergies between the Union and Member States, including strengthening initiatives to prevent the illegal trafficking of cultural goods.	encourage synergies between the Union and Member States, including strengthening initiatives to prevent ***unauthorised excavations and*** the illegal trafficking of cultural goods.

Reason

The devastation of archaeological sites due to illicit excavations has inestimable consequences for Europe's cultural heritage.

Amendment 5

Article 4

Text proposed by the Commission	*CoR amendment*
Coordination at *national* level	**Coordination at *Member State* level**
Each Member State shall appoint a ***national*** coordinator responsible for organising its participation in the European Year. The coordinator shall ensure the coordination of relevant activities at ***national*** level.	Each Member State shall appoint a coordinator responsible for organising its participation in the European Year***, in full respect of the powers conferred to the national, regional and local levels of government***. The coordinator shall ensure the coordination of relevant activities at Member State level.

Reason

Federal State structures and sub-national government levels must be fully taken into account for the appointment of Member State coordinators.

Brussels, 12 October 2016.

The President
of the European Committee of the Regions

Markku MARKKULA