

EUROPEAN YEAR OF CULTURAL HERITAGE-2018: AN IMPRESSIVE RESULT TO BE CONSOLIDATED

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Abstract

The European Year of cultural Heritage -2018 is a success story both for the large and qualified participation and for the EU enhancement of the cultural policies. Never the teamwork between the EU institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) worked so closely, mainstreaming the Cultural Heritage as a shared resource able to connect the communities and the stakeholders and to strengthen the intrinsic cultural values, economy, cooperation and external relations. The EYCH legacy is now implemented into the main EU multiannual Agendas, Work plan and Programs, with improved resources, detailed plans of action and shared governance. After the recent European elections, is now to the new EU representatives to bring these premises to a stronger reality.

Keywords

Cultural Heritage, Culture, European Union, Cultural Policy

1. *A success story*

I consider the European Year of Cultural Heritage the greatest success in the ten years of commitment as a Member of the European Parliament and I am pleased that the Journal SCIRES-IT has decided to dedicate a special issue to the reflection on what we have learned, to support and accelerate the innovation generated during the year 2018.

The final data, which can be read in the Editorial by Erminia Sciacchitano, Guest Editor of this issue of SCIRES-IT. She was Chief Scientific Advisor of the European Year and the true heart of the entire adventure, are highly significant:

10 million participants,

18,000 events organized in 37 countries,

more than 13,000 marked by the European Year logo,

10 long-term initiatives, grouped around four key themes: sustainability, protection and innovation.

These numbers are the best demonstration of how European citizens understand Cultural Heritage in all its forms as a fundamental element of their belonging to a context that unites the local identity with the wider one without contradiction, up to the European dimension.

2. *The legal basis in EU policy-making*

Culture also finds an important place in the Preamble of the Lisbon Treaty, in article 3, third paragraph, which establishes that the European Union "respects the richness of its cultural and linguistic diversity, and ensures that the Cultural Heritage of the Europe is safeguarded". The legal basis for the EU's intervention is defined in Article 167 of the Treaty, where it specifies that the intervention of the Union takes place in a subsidiarity regime, with relevant tasks also in support of or complement to the action of the Member States, but certainly not as a sphere of primary competence.

In the last ten years, marked by the great economic crisis of 2008, by austerity policies and by the growing social and political unease, the Union has devoted the greatest effort to secure our economies and to safeguard most of our welfare and lifestyle. This effort resulted unable to answer the sense of uncertainty and lack of perspective.

In this context, the European Year was the urgent appeal to put culture at the forefront of the European project.

Against an economic and reductive view of the Union, the European Year has affirmed a principle: Heritage, Culture and Creativity- key

elements of the social life – need to find more space, legitimacy and support in the Union priorities. In Gothenburg, in December 2017, we had the decisive step forward thanks to the clear statement made by the Group of Leaders in favor of the social dimension, which includes the cultural dimension, as the third pillar of the action of the European Union.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage also affirmed a method of work, making evident the variety and diversity of forms with which culture is present among the activities of 13 European Commission's Directorates-General: from social cohesion to inclusion, from the economy to relations with third countries, from research to education, culture confirms in fact its transversal dimension to all policies, as stated in the Treaty.

The European Year has challenged communities and stakeholders to re-read the ordinary life of the cultural realities in which we operate, which always risk becoming routine, with a clearer affirmation of aspects that are not always obvious, including the participation of citizens and communities, the relationship between culture and economy, its positive value in international relations and in the policies for co-operation and development.

3. *The first steps*

The process toward the EYCH has been marked by a constant dialectic between the two co-legislators of the Union: the European Parliament, always proactive and demanding in expanding the reasons, the methods and the budget of European support for culture, and the Council, careful not to extend the scope of action to areas not of primary competence, especially in a situation of painful priority choices. The Commission, which has shown itself to be prudent but careful, especially thanks to the sensitivity of President Juncker, the action of the Culture Commissioner, Tibor Navracsics, the Commissioners Oettinger and Gabriel and the strong support of Directorate General Education, Audiovisual and Culture (DG EAC).

4. *European Year of Cultural Heritage-2018*

EYCH is the only thematic year that the Presidency Juncker has approved, a victory that has then given great fruits, strongly shared. During the Italian Presidency of the EU, in the second half of 2014, Minister Dario Franceschini

obtained the support of the Council's colleagues to the establishment of a year dedicated to Cultural Heritage, emphasizing the dimension of the common good, the holistic approach and the inclusion of intangible assets. Teamwork with the European Parliament's CULT Commission, of which I was President at the time, made it possible to combine a second request, approved by Parliament, with reference also to the sources of funding that would be found, in part, in the budget of the Creative Europe Program, and partly in that of other General Directorates, introducing the principle of mainstreaming, which has become essential in the planning of the whole year. Thus, after some delicate steps, which required continuous political vigilance, President Juncker accepted the request, starting the preparatory phase that allowed the three subjects of the Union, namely the Commission, Parliament and Council and the DGs involved, under the direction of DG EAC, to launch a much more ambitious, innovative and full of consequences process than would have been possible to imagine.

The Commission proposal, dated 30 August 2016, was followed by the legislative texts of the Council and the European Parliament, both approved in November 2016, and the Resolution of the Committee of the Regions, of 12 October 2016. In the final negotiation, the approved text is as a result enriched in content and provided with a budget of 8 million euro, divided between 2017 and 2018, of which 5 million are for cooperation activities.

The contribution of the European Parliament, with the rapporteur MEP Mircea Diaconu (ALDE, Romania), included the European dimension of Cultural Heritage and the aspects of integrated and above all participated governance by operators, citizens and local and regional communities, as well as the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects.

European networks and advocacy platforms of heritage stakeholders supported the proposal of the Year at EU level. The Reflection group EU and cultural heritage, an informal network gathering experts from national heritage authorities helped to liaise with the EU Presidencies of the Council, while the European heritage Alliance 3.3, composed by 49 organisations active in the field of Heritage, played a key role pushing the public opinion in support of the Year.

In the governance platform created the Year and representative of the stakeholders, called Voices of Culture and consisting of 38 members, as many as 19 were members of the European Heritage Alliance, first of all Europa Nostra.

5. *Towards a closer Dialogue among the Cultural Heritage Sectors*

The starting point was not consolidated among the operators and less than ever in the academic community: Cultural Heritage was identified above all as a Tangible Heritage, with a non-univocal declination between museums and sites, and with the never-ending tensions between conservation and promotion. The UNESCO definition of tangible, intangible, natural and Digital Heritage, well known but scarcely applied, in turn had an interpretation of an Intangible Ethno-Anthropological Heritage, with a tendency not to include forms of other Cultural Heritage such as music or theater. The digital dimension, which had long expressed its strategic centrality, was experienced as the technological invasion of the sanctum of culture. And above all the crucial question: the culture of who, why and for whom, that is the key principle of the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe, which, although ratified by some EU member states, remained faded in the background. In fact the EU had given a strong shock to the established silos within culture through the White Paper "Unlocking the potential of the Cultural and Creative sectors", the basis for the Creative Europe Program 2014-2020 approved in 2013 and of which I was the rapporteur.

Creative Europe has unified in a single program the previous separated Programs on Culture, MEDIA and some forms of cultural cooperation with third countries (MEDIA Mundus), introducing also in the Cross-sectoral Strand support measures for research, for sector studies, launching the loan guarantee facility that finally supports the cultural and creative sectors in their economic and employment dimension. However, EU intervention in support of Cultural Heritage was understood almost exclusively as support for the restoration of structures intended as attractors of the new economy, especially induced by tourism. Therefore through the Cohesion Fund, managed through the National Operational Plans and concretely by the Regions or by the internal, coastal, peripheral areas, subject to special interventions. It is beyond

dispute that the URBAN Plan has guided the process of renewal and recovery of many degraded urban centers and that so many abandoned industrial areas have found in the culture the sign of relaunch, based on European resources, but we must honestly admit that the exclusively instrumental vision, at the service of the economy, in which Cultural Heritage has been confined, is partial and inadequate and can create distortions. The road ahead was therefore long and complex.

6. *Innovation in Contents and in the Method of Work*

Today we question ourselves on the innovation induced by EYCH and, for my part, the focus is mainly on the evolution in the vision that the EU dedicates to Cultural Heritage and, secondarily, on the governance that was activated and that trace a road to the future. Other articles have the task of analyzing in which forms and in which fields this innovation has changed the modus operandi of operators and public and private institutions, but I proudly underline that as never before the EYCH introduced a structured dialogue between the EU in its various articulations, the Member States and stakeholders.

It was systematic and fruitful, leading to a level of mutual attention and awareness never touched before. The European Year Committee, which brought together Member State delegates and saw for the first time the European Parliament represented with the role of observer, held part of its meetings together with Voices of Culture, the group of stakeholders selected by the Commission through a Call to put around the table the Cultural Heritage professionals who work in the public and private sectors, in all areas.

I give credit above all to the Director General and to all the staff of DG EAC, who has been able to express contents, willingness to dialogue, high-profile management skills and great industriousness. Thus, between December 7, 2017, the start of the European Year, in Milan, and December 7, 2018, when the Austrian Presidency convened the closing ceremony in Vienna, not only thousands of events were held, but also a process of cultural and institutional innovation of extraordinary relevance.

The most challenging regards the citizens, invited to bring to the full awareness that their

affection for the place of origin, the culture of belonging, is not only a private fact, but the sign of a collective responsibility, to be known and protected, to be handed down in the sign of dialogue and openness, which requires innovation in tools and vision. The motto of the European Year: "Cultural Heritage: where the past meets the future" clearly expresses it.

The second sign of innovation has been received by the stakeholders, who have recognized that only in a transversal dimension, outside of divisive and narrow category boundaries, Cultural Heritage can express its full potential for the growth of the whole society, conquering a new priority. The declaration signed by the operators in the "Berlin Call for Action" on 21 June 2018 was adopted by Heads of State and Government and contributed to the drafting of the New Culture Agenda, the Council Work Plan and the EYCH follow-up proposal released by the Commission.

7. The EYCH follow-up in the EU plans

7.1 New European Agenda for Culture

On 22 May, the European Commission presented a series of new initiatives in the fields of education and culture, including a proposal for 'A New European Agenda for Culture'. The previous Agenda was released in 2007, with the vision to act in long term. That's why the relevance given by the New Agenda to the Cultural Heritage as cross cutting action is a well noted news. The New Agenda outlines how the European Commission will support EU Member States in tapping into culture's potential to foster innovation, economic growth and jobs as well as fostering ties between communities and strengthening Europe's external relations. Most importantly, the New Agenda outlines how to build on the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 and sustain its legacy. "While most actions in the New Agenda contribute primarily to one of the three objectives -social, economic and international relations- many aspects are transversal.

Two large areas of policy actions at EU level - Cultural Heritage and digital - will serve all three objectives. Protecting and valorising Cultural Heritage: The 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage has made a resounding start, with thousands of activities taking place across Europe. The Commission is contributing directly

focussing on ten main themes under four core objectives: Engagement, Sustainability, Protection, and Innovation. These will result in recommendations, principles and toolkits to ensure the positive legacy of the Year, and contribute to the New Agenda. At the conclusion of the European Year the Commission will:

1. Present an Action Plan for Cultural Heritage, and ask Member States to draft similar Plans at national level and follow up the 10 European initiatives through the Council Work Plans for Culture

2. Propose to incorporate outcomes of the Year into future EU programmes and Cohesion Policy

3. Support the enforcement of the future EU Regulation about the import of cultural goods through an Action Plan on illicit trade in cultural goods and establish a science- policy stakeholder social platform on endangered Cultural Heritage.

7.2 Action plan for Cultural Heritage

Later an Action Plan for Cultural Heritage was released as a " Staff working Document", with more than 60 actions and initiatives taking the legacy of the four Cultural Heritage pillars built during the Year. The details are included in other articles in this issue. The capacity of this Action Plan to turn into reality is strongly related to the new asset that the EU will take after the recent European elections.

7.3 The Work Plan 2019

Last 27th of November, under the Austrian Presidency, the Council approved the Work Plan for Culture 2019, that sets as first priority "sustainability in Cultural Heritage". The Work Plan states: "Cultural Heritage is both the manifestation of cultural diversity passed down from previous generations and a resource for sustainable cultural, social, environmental and economic development in Europe. Conservation, preservation and safeguarding, research, educational activities and knowledge transfer, financing, participatory governance and contemporary interpretation are key areas that will benefit from a comprehensive strategic approach. During the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, a large number of diverse activities took place all across Europe. To ensure its legacy, follow-up measures and mainstreaming activities need to be developed, including an

Action Plan for Cultural Heritage by the Commission. The work of the European Year's national coordinators should be taken into account as well." In addition to the five priorities of the future Work Plan for Culture, digitisation and cultural statistics will be horizontal issues for cooperation. The agreement reached by EU Ministers of Culture also spells out specific actions to be undertaken for each of the five priorities.

As regards Cultural Heritage, cooperation at EU level will focus, among others, on the following topics which build on several of the European initiatives launched during the European Year of Cultural Heritage:

- participatory governance, also in relation to the Faro Convention (in 2019-20),
- adaptation to climate change (in 2021-22),
- quality principles for Cultural Heritage interventions, also with the aim of developing guidelines governing the next generation of EU funds (in 2019-20),
- alternative funding for CH, also by examining the role of foundations (in 2020-21),
- social cohesion, also to explore the "need to include culture as a cross-cutting issue in the fields of social policy, health policy and local development" (2019-21),
- high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone (2020-22),
- citizenship, values and democracy, also to examine the impact of culture on these aspects (2019-22),
- strategic approach to international cultural relations of the EU (2019-21).

7.4 *Creative Europe 2021-2027*

As part of the multiannual programs, the Creative Europe program will be renewed and update for 2021-2027. The texts approved by the two co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, will move to the final negotiation in the next few months. Once again, I have been appointed as Rapporteur for the Parliament and I have witnessed the shift in paradigm about Cultural Heritage, that after the EYCH is without any doubt a corner stone of the European cultural Policies.

In particular, a new section has been added to the Culture strand, named "thematic", devoted to the Cultural Heritage, recalling all the main areas covered during the Year. There is a concern about

the amount of the budget, that might be not sufficient to fulfill the ambitious objectives, and the final negotiation will tell us the results. The European Parliament supports the doubling of the previous budget (2014-2020) to 2.8 B €.

7.5 *The Stakeholders*

The new governance includes a stronger and structured dialogue with the professionals operating both in the private and the public areas. Europa Nostra's Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović welcomed the new actions: "The European Year of Cultural Heritage has brought an unprecedented mobilisation among EU decision and policy makers, Member States' authorities and –of course– among Heritage stakeholders and communities. Europa Nostra has been continuously stressing the need to build on this momentum so as to sustain the legacy of the European Year, as demonstrated in the Berlin Call to Action: "Cultural Heritage for the Future of Europe"

8. *What now?*

After the European elections, with the growth of eurosceptic and sovereign parties, Cultural Heritage risks falling back into a more limited vision, mainly related to local identity.

The foundations for Cultural Heritage growth have been laid, but the outcome of EYCH has not yet been formalized, the new EP and the new Commission are expected, meanwhile the Office of the DG EAC which was its creator is subjected to a physiological turnover and the concerns are not lacking.

It is necessary to monitor and maintain the pressure of the world of culture so that the results are not dispersed, indeed they are consolidated.

History is made by people, we should not lose the exceptional contributions given by the Berlin Call for Action, and then by Culture Action Europe and by the Alliance for culture, by PEARLE etc. Deadlines are imminent: the attribution of mandate to the Committees, the trilogue on Creative Europe and other Programs relevant for Cultural Heritage, the launch of INVEST EU. "Nessun dorma", and the Cultural Heritage Stakeholders, the Institutions and the Social Community help keep our guard and attention high to confirm and consolidate the EYCH achievements.

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