

European Conference
‘Cultural heritage and the EU-2020 strategy – towards an integrated approach’¹

November 13–14, 2013, Vilnius

Organised by the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture
in the framework of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU Council

Idea and concept

As cultural heritage is omnipresent in all aspects of the human existence, it is closely related to a variety of other sectors and policy fields, such as environment, agriculture, regional development, science and education, tourism, and others. However, today it is often approached as an isolated object and given lower priority in the decision-making process of other policy fields. The creation of this unfortunate position imposes limitations on the rich potential of cultural heritage for stimulating jobs and economic growth.

In order to strengthen the position of cultural heritage in other sectors and to put it at the heart of the public policy agenda, the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania will organise the international conference **“Cultural heritage and the EU-2020 strategy – towards an integrated approach”** on November 13–14, 2013 in Vilnius.

The conference will be hosted during the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and has the ambition to get together professionals and policy makers representing different sectors from all over Europe: representatives of the European Commission, European Parliament, ministries, government agencies, civil society, experts, researchers and academicians.

During this conference the participants will discuss a wide range of possibilities for cultural heritage to contribute to other policy fields, with a special focus on environmental, agricultural and cohesion policy. By using cultural heritage as a resource for promoting the objectives of “Europe 2020”, a strategy can be developed to better integrate cultural heritage in other policy areas and mainstream it in the EU-policy framework.

The agenda of the conference will include the official opening, a plenary session with keynote speakers and three thematic workshops on the added value of cultural heritage in three key policy fields – **environment, cohesion policy and agriculture**. These three policy fields were selected because of their overarching policy goals, topical interest and close, not always evident, link with and impact on cultural heritage.² Within the European Union, these three competences are of great importance and receive a lot of financial support. The conference will provide a unique opportunity to meet and debate with representatives of these sectors allowing better understanding and cooperation.

¹ This conference is the follow up of the Declaration of Bruges stated during the Belgian Presidency of the EU(9/12/2010) and work done by the reflection group ‘EU and cultural heritage’. More details about the conference and all practical information will be provided on the website www.kpd.lt (a conference website is being prepared).

² However, this does not mean that the interaction is less needed or less important for tourism, education, research and innovation, etc.

The conference will be concluded with a final statement and specific recommendations on how to put the mainstreaming principle into practice. In addition, the Lithuanian Presidency will begin to prepare Council Conclusions that will be finalised during the following EU-Presidencies on cultural heritage in a strategic perspective, providing a long-term mandate to work on cultural heritage issues.

Call for good practices

A transversal dimension of cultural heritage appears in different fields such as environment, agriculture, tourism, science and education, regional development, etc. In order to prepare the conference, examples of good practices in each European country are needed. You are kindly asked to send such **examples of good practices before the 15th of July 2013, to Alfredas Jomantas (a.jomantas@heritage.lt)**, Head of the Heritage registry, public relations and education division of the Department of Cultural Heritage of Lithuania. **Some of these cases can be presented and discussed in short (20 min.) presentations** during the conference. The conference's three thematic workshops will mainly focus on the fields of agriculture, cohesion policy and environment. This approach will enable the cultural heritage sector to set up interaction with these policy domains to which it is closely related and learn more about their challenges, aims and trends.

■ **ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Environment is one of the most important EU-competences.

Every five years the European Commission publishes 'environmental programmes' where it indicates what it wants to achieve in the next years in the field of environment.

The **7th environmental programme** (2014-2020) elaborates further on these achievements and focuses on **nine priority objectives**.

Three thematic priority objectives are intended to:

- Protect nature and strengthen ecological resilience;
- Boost sustainable resource-efficient low-carbon growth;
- Effectively address environment-related threats to health.

The thematic priorities are **supported by an enabling framework with four further priority objectives** which will:

- Promote better implementation of EU environment law;
- Ensure that policies benefit from state of the art science;
- Secure the necessary investments in support of environment and climate change policy;
- Improve the way environmental concerns and requirements are reflected in other policies.

Two more priority objectives focus on:

- Enhancing the sustainability of EU cities;
- Improving the EU's effectiveness in addressing regional and global challenges related to the environment and climate change.

Originally, the environmental policy was regulating and not redistributive. Today, there is a budgetary dimension, with a specific budget line ([Life +](#)) for environmental initiatives.³

In addition, structural funds and the cohesion policy can be used to help underdeveloped regions with environmental investments (e.g. water purification projects and waste management). However, at the same time projects with a questionable environmental impact such as road constructions through valuable nature reserves were financed with the structural funds. Today in the selection and in all stages of the preparation and execution of projects, they try to take into account environmental aspects.

Other initiatives are [Natura 2000](#)⁴ and the [European Green Capital Award](#)⁵

Good practices

For the workshop, we are looking for some good examples of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage and environment. Possible themes are:

- *Reuse of industrial buildings*
- *Reuse of religious buildings*
- *Sustainability and energy efficiency*
- *Cultural heritage and spatial planning*
- *Natural Parks*
- *Water management: water directive, river contracts (bringing together stakeholders)*

■ **COHESION POLICY**

Cohesion policy is the policy behind the hundreds of thousands of projects all over Europe that receive funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) – the two **Structural Funds** – and the **Cohesion Fund**. Economic and social cohesion – as defined in the 1986 Single European Act – is about "reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions."

The Lisbon Treaty adds another facet to cohesion, referring to "economic, social and territorial cohesion". The idea is that the cohesion policy should also promote more balanced, more sustainable "**territorial development**" – a broader concept than the regional policy, which is specifically linked to the ERDF and operates specifically at regional level.

In this regard it is interesting to refer to [the Territorial Agenda 2020](#) that suggests to strengthen cohesion by using 'the territorial potential'. Cultural landscapes are intrinsic part of this.

Cultural heritage has an important role to play in the European social and economic policy. One of the best examples of the way in which cultural heritage is 'mainstreamed' into relevant areas is that of local and regional development.

³ Life + (ca. 0,2 % of the EU budget) by which e.g. nature reserves are supported.

⁴ More information: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/>

⁵ More information: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/>

The **current cohesion policy runs from 2007 to 2013**. Heritage-related projects can be financed under the three objectives of the cohesion policy:

- 1) convergence;
- 2) regional competitiveness and employment;
- 3) European territorial cooperation.

Two of the three available funds can be used: [European Regional Development Fund \(ERDF\)](#) and [European Social Fund](#).

Since 2007, investments in culture and heritage have been largely linked with the protection and management of heritage and the creation of infrastructure and services in view of enhancing local attractiveness and boosting tourism.

Examples:

- URBACT II networks;
- Historiccentres.net: networking for sustainability of historical centres;
- HerO: Heritage as opportunity – sustainable management strategies for vital historic urban landscapes (Regions for Economic Change “Fast track network” under the new initiative);

The future cohesion policy will run from 2014 to 2020. The European Commission has adopted a draft legislative package which will frame cohesion policy for 2014-2020. The new proposals are designed to reinforce the strategic dimension of the policy and to ensure that EU investment is targeted on Europe's long-term goals for growth and jobs ("Europe 2020").

Through Partnership Contracts agreed with the Commission, Member States will commit to focusing on fewer investment priorities in line with these objectives. The package also harmonizes the rules related to different funds, including rural development and maritime and fisheries, to increase the coherence of EU action.

With regards to the new cohesion policy and its investment priorities, the challenge is to further integrate the cultural and creative sectors into regional and local development strategies in line with the newly coined concept of 'smart specialisation' so as to bring about the emergence of 'creative ecosystems' throughout the EU, i.e. via the development of a creative environment that promotes traditional cultural assets (cultural heritage, touristic destinations, dynamic cultural institutions and services), stimulates the developments of creative businesses and support spill-over effects into the local existing industries and local development.

The “protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage” has been included as part of the thematic objective for protection of the environment and promoting resource efficiency. The ‘Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020’, adopted by the European Commission on 14 March 2012 illustrates the opportunities for the cultural heritage in the context of the cohesion policy.

Through the cohesion policy, there will be also the possibility to develop innovative financial instruments to co-finance investments in a number of areas, including investments in the cultural and creative sectors, in conjunction with the financial instrument that is proposed under the Creative Europe, Horizon 2020 and COSME programmes as a way to give leverage to private investment in this field.

Good practices

For the workshop we are looking for some good examples of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage and the cohesion policy. Possible themes are:

- *Using cultural heritage as resource for revitalisation of an area: rehabilitation of historic building and local economy: job creation, more technical artisanal skills, etc.*
- *Social inclusion and diversity management*
- *Quality of life*
- *Creativity*

■ AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The protection of rural heritage is a very important issue that affects most European countries because of the transformation of the countryside. Global change, climate change, urbanisation and regulations have strong impacts on the cultural landscape, rural, traditional buildings and archaeological sites. Landscapes and heritage not only play a vital role in the identity of inhabitants, but they also represent economic and ecological values. They are constantly in motion, adapting to new functions and uses.

From the start of European Community agriculture was **one of the most important competencies**. Moreover it is a policy field where not only rules are made, but to which a major part of the budget is dedicated to.

The European laws related to agriculture concern **very diverse subjects**. Since 2006 there are several European laws in order to protect 'geographical indicators', 'protected designation of origin' and 'traditional specialties guaranteed'.

The common agriculture policy has undergone over time five major reforms, the most recent of which occurred in 2003 (mid-term review) and in 2009 (the 'Health reform'). With the view to adapting the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the period 2007-2013, the European Union adopted a **revised rural development policy** in **September 2005**. It came into effect at the beginning of 2007. The policy is structured around **three core objectives** each of which has a corresponding axis:

- **Axis 1: improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector.**
- **Axis 2: improving the environment and the countryside.**
- **Axis 3: improving the quality of life in rural areas and helping the diversification of the rural economy.** This axis comprises measures which encourage farmers to diversify into non-agricultural activities, measures to improve the quality of life in rural areas and measures concerning local development. This axis helps to promote micro-enterprises, rural tourism, basic services and village renewal.
- In addition to these three axes there is the **fourth one** which promotes the **Leader approach**.

In **the most recent CAP reform of October 2011**, great attention is given to the greening of the CAP policy.

Since 2007 there are two funds, namely **the European Guarantee Fund (EAGF)** and the **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development**. The first fund finances direct payments to farmers and measures to respond to market disturbances and the second finances the rural development programs of the Member States.

The contribution to culture and cultural heritage is to be found mainly in the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, i.e. the Rural Development Policy, under priority 2. Cultural heritage is also supported under the third priority (quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy), which includes on the one hand, the ‘conservation and upgrading of rural heritage’ measure which provides financing for studies and investments linked to the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of cultural heritage and on the other hand the ‘basic services for the economy and rural population’ measure which offers financing for the establishment of cultural services in rural areas.

Lastly, priority 4 of the Leader approach should likewise allow for the development of territorial cultural activities including local cultural strategies.

Good practices

For the workshop we are looking for some good examples of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage and agriculture. Possible themes are:

- *Traditional food production and certification of the traditional food*
- *Immaterial heritage in rural areas*
- *Reuse of rural buildings*