

# Initiative for a European Cultural Heritage Year

## Information on the project status

**November 2015**

Europe's cultural heritage is an essential part of our common European as well as local identity. Its preservation and promotion is our permanent task. One effort is the initiative for a European Cultural Heritage Year that has been welcomed at several occasions. Amongst others:

In its resolution of 8 September 2015, the European Parliament addresses the specific recommendation to the European Commission to designate a European Cultural Heritage Year and to submit the draft programme to Parliament no later than 2016.<sup>i</sup>

The conclusions of the 3349th Council meeting Education, Youth, Culture and Sport on 25 November 2014 call on the European Commission to propose a European Year of Cultural Heritage.<sup>ii</sup>

The Namur Declaration resulting of the Conference of the Ministers responsible for Culture in the Council of Europe on 23/24 April 2015 welcomes the initiative, and asks that the Council of Europe and all State Parties to the European Cultural Convention be invited to participate.<sup>iii</sup>

In response to those resolutions, the Reflection Group "EU and Cultural Heritage" drafted the concept paper "Sharing Heritage" that was presented in Berlin on 13 November 2015.

---

## Summary of concept

### "Sharing Heritage" – European Cultural Heritage Year 2018

The **aim** of the European Cultural Heritage Year is to share our common cultural heritage and its potential for identification, participation and development with each other in the light of a heterogeneous European social structure and against the background of current political, social and economic challenges. It is the best witness to Europe's rich history, which has been strongly influenced by values such as diversity, tolerance and intercultural dialogue. The European Cultural Heritage Year builds in particular upon the fact that our shared cultural heritage is always both local and European. The European Year highlights this dimension and uses it to respond to current challenges. It also builds on new opportunities to preserve and develop cultural heritage while underscoring the need to do so, because our cultural heritage is an essential, unique, irreplaceable part of Europe's social and economic potential which is closely tied to many other areas and is thus the foundation of our shared development in Europe.

The **programmatic focus** for the year is “Society in Transition”, which reflects ongoing and diverse social change in Europe, not least the current challenges posed by increasing numbers of refugees seeking protection in Europe. This focus also makes clear that the discussion should concentrate on people. Three aspects in particular are to be discussed during the European Year: cultural diversity, demographic change and sustainability. This will give the European Year its political and economic relevance.

The European Year is intended to reach the entire spectrum of society. A **special target group** is younger generations who are the “heirs of the heritage”, along with persons who have had only limited access to cultural heritage up to now. **Education** and the **participation of society** will be given special scope in order to achieve the goal of active participation and identification with cultural heritage, also using the new possibilities offered by digitization. Discovering and understanding Europe’s cultural diversity and non-European links improves our shared dialogue; and cultural orientation and recognizing the value of one’s own cultural heritage promotes acceptance of the cultural identities of others.

The European Year will provide the opportunity for a comprehensive **exchange** among European partners at all levels. The European Year will be organized by the European Union in cooperation with the Council of Europe. All European countries that are not member states of the European Union as well as all political, professional, social and regional institutions and civil society will be invited to become actively involved, especially via participatory procedures.

The European Cultural Heritage Year is to be held in **2018**, which is not only the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, considered the first major catastrophe of the 20th century, but also a year in which many European countries celebrate the 100th anniversary of their modern independence. So 2018 is especially appropriate for such a European Cultural Heritage Year, because it reminds us that Europe’s history and cultural heritage are marked by centuries of wars and conflicts on its way to peaceful and cooperative co-existence. In this context, it should also be noted that 2018 marks the 400th anniversary of the start of the Thirty Years’ War in 1618 and the 370th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the war in 1648. Our cultural heritage enables us to understand European history and its message.

The European Year will include **all forms of cultural heritage** – tangible, intangible and digital – in cooperation with the public and private institutions where they are kept, looked after and promoted: museums, memorial sites, archives, libraries, private collections, associations, etc. **Archaeological and built heritage** can serve as a **starting point**, because it is the most visible expression of our shared European cultural history, one that we see every day. Other forms of tangible and intangible cultural heritage can also be included, as the various forms of cultural heritage best illuminate each other. The European Year will also highlight the many connections between cultural heritage and other areas such as research and development, education, cultural and creative industries, tourism and nature conservation as well as regional and rural development.

*Complete concept paper:* [http://www.dnk.de/\\_uploads/media/1860\\_Sharing%20Heritage\\_EN.pdf](http://www.dnk.de/_uploads/media/1860_Sharing%20Heritage_EN.pdf)

---

### Intended Schedule

<i>Spring/Summer 2016</i>	Recommendation of the ECHY 2018 proposal by the European Commission
<i>End of 2016</i>	Adoption of ECHY 2018 proposal by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union
<i>Start 2017</i>	Call of European Commission to submit national projects
<i>2018</i>	European Cultural Heritage Year “Sharing Heritage”

---

i <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0293+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>  
ii [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/145953.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/145953.pdf)  
iii <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802f8a59>