



# THE BERLIN CALL TO ACTION CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

## PREAMBLE

The 2018 [European Year of Cultural Heritage](#) marks a turning point for Europe's ever-growing movement for cultural heritage. We must build on this momentum to recognize and unfold the positive and cohesive power of our shared cultural heritage and values to connect Europe's citizens and communities and to give a deeper meaning to the entire European project. The time for action is now.

This "Berlin Call to Action" is presented at the [European Cultural Heritage Summit](#) on 22 June 2018 in Berlin by the 3 co-hosting organisations, namely [EUROPA NOSTRA](#) – the Voice of Cultural Heritage in Europe; the German Cultural Heritage Committee ([DNK](#)) acting as national coordinator of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in Germany and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation ([SPK](#)) based in Berlin.

In the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH), the first European Cultural Heritage Summit held from 18-24 June 2018 in Berlin brought together numerous citizens and organisations from across Europe. Among them were representatives of institutions, associations, foundations and universities as well as of religious communities and sites, all dealing with cultural heritage; architects, museum professionals, conservators-restorers, craftsmen, artists, private owners of historic houses and heritage sites, researchers and teachers; representatives of public authorities or financial institutions; entrepreneurs, start-ups, (art)historians, journalists, photographers, students and young volunteers; together with Ministers of Culture, Mayors of historic cities, members of European, national and regional parliaments, representatives of European Union institutions, as well as of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICCROM and many European heritage networks.

This "Berlin Call to Action" draws its inspiration and legitimacy from the expertise, enthusiasm and engagement of all those women and men who care for cultural heritage (tangible, intangible and digital) and who dedicate their expertise, time and energy, as professionals or volunteers, to ensure the transmission of this heritage to future generations. The economic value of their work is significant; its social and cultural value is priceless.

The "Berlin Call to Action" also builds on the input and support of the [EYCH national coordinators](#), members of the [EYCH Stakeholders Committee](#), as well as of members of the [European Heritage Alliance 3.3](#).

We now invite all those who care for Europe's past, present and future to sign, support and widely share this Berlin Call to Action.

# THE BERLIN CALL TO ACTION

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED CITIZENS, ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS... stand ready to take up our shared responsibility to unfold the cohesive power and potential of our shared cultural heritage to advance a more peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and just Europe.

Today, in this European Year of Cultural Heritage, we have a unique opportunity to influence the debate on the Future of Europe. Confronted with so many challenges, and even threats, to core European values, this debate cannot be based exclusively on political, economic or security considerations. We must “change the tone” of the narrative about Europe. We must put our shared cultural heritage where it belongs: at the very centre of Europe’s policies and priorities.

WHY? BECAUSE...

1. Our cultural heritage is what makes us European as it reflects our varying and shared values, cultures and memories. Therefore, it is the true embodiment of Europe’s “Unity in Diversity” and it helps us resist divisive forces which are a danger to our society.
2. Our cultural heritage captures the multiple layers of our identity – local, regional, national, and European; these layers are all interconnected and reinforce each other and they are continuously evolving;
3. Our cultural heritage feeds both our sense of belonging to a local community and the sense of togetherness and solidarity in Europe;
4. Our cultural heritage connects generations as it reflects cross-fertilisations and cross-border movements of people and ideas over many centuries of shared history. As such, it is the basis for a respectful and enriching dialogue and interaction within and between communities in Europe but also with other cultures of the world;
5. Our cultural heritage ensures a bridge between our past and our future. It allows us to draw from, and build on, our cultural traditions and history, while it also helps us to heal wounds and mend the fractures of the past. It simultaneously inspires on-going creativity and innovation. As such, it is a source of continuous learning and inspiration and a basis for active and responsible citizenship;
6. Our cultural heritage is also a key driver for sustainable development and enhanced social cohesion, as well as the source of a large number of rewarding jobs both directly and indirectly;
7. Our cultural heritage brings harmony and beauty to our living environment, both man-made and natural, and thus improves our wellbeing and quality of life.

While restating – in this year which marks the 70th anniversary of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) – that the right to cultural heritage is a basic human right and while reaffirming – in this European Year of Cultural Heritage – our commitment to the principles formulated in a large number of [relevant policy documents](#) already adopted by many European and international organisations, it is now time to translate these principles into effective action with tangible results for Europe and its citizens:

## ACTION 1 DEVELOPING THE EUROPEAN ACTION PLAN FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE

We call for an ambitious European Action Plan for Cultural Heritage as a lasting legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This Action Plan which is already announced in the recently adopted [New European Agenda for Culture](#), must be prepared and implemented with full involvement and engagement of all relevant public and private stakeholders, including civil society. It must also be holistic and interconnected with other key EU policy agendas and priorities, fully in line with the recent [conclusions of the EU Council](#). We refer to objectives and policy areas such as social cohesion, regional development, urban development, rural development, environment, maritime and tourism policies, sustainability agenda and climate change adaptation, research and innovation, digital policy, education and skills and, of course, the youth. This Action Plan should furthermore also have a strong external dimension since the European Union must also take global responsibility and reach out to partners across and beyond the borders of the EU. The Action Plan should therefore be coherent with the Council of Europe's [Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society](#) and its recent [European Heritage Strategy for the 21st century](#), and with the [UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#).

## ACTION 2 RECOGNISING HERITAGE AS A PRIORITY FOR EUROPEAN POLICIES AND FUNDING

In support of the future European Action Plan for Cultural Heritage, we call on the EU institutions to fully recognize cultural heritage as a strategic priority in the [up-coming policy programmes](#) and the [EU's new multi-annual financial framework](#) (2021-2027). This will contribute to the much-needed investment in Europe's human and cultural capital and in promoting Europe's values. At the same time, we all commit to continue raising the awareness of the [multiple values and benefits](#) of cultural heritage for Europe. This is particularly important in view of the upcoming European Parliament elections in May 2019, and the subsequent appointment of the new European Commission.

## ACTION 3 BRIDGING LOCAL, NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN

The various levels of governance are key to unleashing the full potential of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for society, economy, culture and the environment. Therefore, we call on all States, Regions and Cities in Europe to continue to develop holistic and ambitious policy and action plans for cultural heritage. We also urge them to enhance their dialogue and cooperation with relevant European and international organisations as well as with civil society. Thus ensuring that the policy and action plans adopted by various levels of governance – from local, national to European – complement each other and are coherent.

## ACTION 4 PRESERVING AND TRANSMITTING THE IRREPLACEABLE

Cultural heritage is unique and irreplaceable. Yet it is often vulnerable and even endangered. Therefore, it is our collective task to preserve this treasure so as to transmit it for further enjoyment and (re)use to future generations. We must boost the necessary human and financial resources and invest in skills and capacity building in order to ensure proper preservation, development and transmission of our heritage, both physically and digitally. In this process we must fully involve universities and the research community, develop innovative business models and stimulate creative synergies between heritage and the arts. We should also recognize the value of intangible expressions of our heritage which are constantly evolving and enriching our society and living environment.

## ACTION 5 INVESTING IN QUALITY HERITAGE-LED REGENERATION

We must ensure and enable adequate investments, public and private, into quality heritage-led regeneration of our neighbourhoods, cities and countryside based on creativity, innovation and adaptive re-use; inspired by the principles of high-quality “Baukultur” as formulated in the [Davos Declaration](#) adopted at the very beginning of the European Year of Cultural Heritage; and enriched by the active participation of citizens and their communities and civil society organisations. In this context, we welcome creative and respectful interaction between the protection of the built heritage and contemporary contributions to our built environment, which contribute to the heritage of tomorrow.

## ACTION 6 PROMOTING BETTER KNOWLEDGE AND DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

Cultural heritage must be given a much bigger importance in education activities – both formal and informal – for all ages. This will stimulate stronger public engagement for the safeguard and transmission of our cultural heritage. Special attention must be given to history education and heritage interpretation placed in a broader context of Europe’s past, present and future. This will equip Europe’s citizens and especially our children and the youth, with the necessary tools for gaining a deeper understanding of the on-going encounters and exchanges within Europe as well as between Europe and other cultures of the world. All of these activities will help build more respectful and meaningful relationships between people and the places where they live, work or visit. This will also facilitate a better understanding, respect and inclusion of new inhabitants in Europe.

## ACTION 7 BUILDING ON THE MOMENTUM

The European Year of Cultural Heritage has strengthened the policy momentum and wide mobilisation for cultural heritage in Europe. We must now consolidate and further improve the synergies between the widest possible range of public and private stakeholders including relevant European and international organisations and civil society. To achieve this, we need to find an adequate formula for a more permanent platform for gathering knowledge, capacity building and coordinating advocacy for cultural heritage in Europe.

Berlin, 22 June 2018

**The “Berlin Call to Action” can be signed online here:**  
[www.european-cultural-heritage-summit.eu/berlin-call-to-action](http://www.european-cultural-heritage-summit.eu/berlin-call-to-action)

