

“HORIZON FOR HERITAGE RESEARCH”

MANIFESTO

Preamble:

In recent years, considerable progress has been made in advancing an understanding of how developments in the field of Cultural Heritage contribute to a range of societal benefits. As evidenced by the *European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018*, the field has become a focal point of social, political and cultural Europe that is receiving more and more public and political attention. Yet, at the same time, it is widely recognised that much more needs to be done in order to bring about a fuller realisation of the opportunities that the domain has to offer. Our purpose now must be to put forward a set of ideas and stimulate debate on how to establish and sustain a platform that will facilitate a high level of integration and collaboration amongst all those with a research interest in Cultural Heritage. We envisage the development of a community of practice that embraces those engaged in either a professional or private capacity, associated with a civil society organisation, or who are practitioner-based. Under the auspices of REACH – the current social platform for participatory approaches and social innovation in culture, and acknowledging the foundational work carried out by *CulturalBase*, the preceding social platform, we bring forward this manifesto for promulgation.

We start from the premise that a high degree of fragmentation continues to pose one of the greatest challenges to the Cultural Heritage field:

- Research is undertaken in a wide variety of institutional contexts, representing stakeholders with different backgrounds and perspectives (research institutes and university departments, memory institutions, the cultural and creative industries, and practitioners)
- Research encompasses different disciplines, each with their own methodological approaches and practices, and is frequently communicated by the use of discrete and specialised terminology targeted at select audiences, and may also be disseminated in a range of different languages
- The cultural heritage sector has not always been quick to catch up with, and take advantage of, the rapid pace of progress in digital developments and in societal transformation.

Consequently, our mission is to:

- Call for much greater efforts to be made in creating a synergistic and coordinated approach that will break down the separation between cultural heritage research silos
- Identify the unique role that various interests play but demonstrate how to value such roles as part of a wider contribution to research
- Demonstrate how, through an holistic approach, the value of cultural heritage research is greater than the sum of its respective parts
- In this respect, facilitate a shift in, and a renewal of, the *weltanschauung* of policy-makers, managers and curators, educators, and entrepreneurs, so that opportunities, rather than costs, may be considered and, in the processes and practices of culture and cultural heritage, hitherto undiscovered treasure troves of resources may be exploited
- Express, on behalf of professional, Cultural Heritage research stakeholders, the expectation that an ambitious and holistic research agenda will be advanced with appropriate funding from Horizon Europe (the next research and innovation framework programme).

Now, therefore, is the time for action; we call for the establishment of a new governance structure that will be:

- A permanent, sustainable coordination structure – one that has the capacity to endure beyond the lifetime of any individual, funded project
- The professional stakeholder partner of EU institutions in the co-creation process of an ambitious Cultural Heritage research and innovation agenda
- Open to all stakeholders – broadly defined as actors in any sector or discipline with an interest in cultural heritage research
- A leading advocate for and interlocutor with the European and international institutions that manage cultural heritage research
- A forum for facilitating dialogue, discourse, and co-creation
- A directory of what resources can be offered on a basis of mutual trust such as, acting as a knowledge-exchange broker, providing a platform for online services, and the dissemination of toolkits, publications and other communications.

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