

In response to the Symposium held at Covent Garden, Brussels, March 2019

Joint Statement

HORIZON FOR EUROPE'S CULTURAL HERITAGE RESEARCH

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. Several institutional and organisational stakeholders are already coordinating heritage science research at different levels, with the aim of implementing and strengthening the European Research Area (ERA). For example, the Strategic Research Agendas of the **Joint Programming Initiatives** (JPIs) seek to tackle a few, current challenges that cannot be solved solely on the national level and allows Member States and Associated Countries to deal with critical issues through a joint transnational approach. In respect of Cultural Heritage, the JPI-CH could make important contributions towards building European research programmes for the near future.¹ Several Europe-wide, research infrastructures have been developed in recent years. For example, the recently-launched **European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science** (E-RHIS) supports research on heritage interpretation, preservation, documentation and management.² Similarly, several other research infrastructures on cultural heritage³, co-ordinate research institutions in many EU states.

As evidenced by the *European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018* (EYCH2018), the field has become a focal point of social, political and cultural Europe that is receiving more and more public and political attention. For example, the 'Berlin Call to Action' was presented at the European Cultural Heritage Summit in June 2018, hosted in Berlin by **Europa Nostra**, the **German Cultural Heritage Committee** (DNK), and the **Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation** (SPK).⁴ EYCH2018) has achieved much in understanding how to foster cooperation.⁵

In relation to the promotion of sustainable development, the **Paris Declaration – 'Heritage, Sciences and Technologies: an Opportunity for our Societies and the Global Economy'** – was

¹ <http://www.jpi-culturalheritage.eu/about-us-2/strategic-research-agenda/>

² <http://www.e-rihs.eu/>

³ ARIADNE, CHARISMA, CLARIN, DARIAH, IPERION CH

⁴ www.europanostra.org/.../2018/.../Berlin-Call-Action-Cultural-Heritage-Future-Europe

⁵ see, for example, the report on skills, training and knowledge transfer in the cultural heritage professions in Europe, drawn up by an expert group operating under the Open Method of Co-ordination https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/toolkits/new-european-landscape-heritage-professions_en

promulgated at the 'Frontiers of Heritage Science' conference in February 2019.⁶ The 'Europeana Innovation Agenda: priorities of the cultural heritage community' acknowledges the importance of cultural heritage in the cultural and creative industries and highlights the need to strengthen the network of cultural heritage institutions and increase the reach and impact of the sector.

Yet, at the same time, it is widely recognised that much more could be done in order to bring about a fuller realisation of the opportunities that the domain has to offer. Our purpose is to establish and sustain a platform that will facilitate a high level of integration and collaboration amongst all those with a research interest – however defined - in Cultural Heritage and, thereby, add an important asset at the European level. 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 Horizon 2020 social platform for participatory approaches and social innovation in cultural heritage), and acknowledging the foundational work carried out by 'CulturalBase' (the preceding Horizon 2020 social platform), we bring forward for adoption and promulgation this Joint Statement on the proposal to establish a stable coordination structure that will become an important asset at the European level.

Recognising 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.

⁵ <https://heritage2019.sciencesconf.org/resource/page/id/12>

Our purpose now 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 policymakers, 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).

By means of establishing a new coordination structure that will be:

- permanent and sustainable – a governance structure that gives recognition to existing networks and has the resource 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 institutions across Europe (and beyond) that manage cultural heritage research
- a forum for facilitating dialogue, discourse, and co-creation
- a directory of resources to be offered on a basis of mutual trust (acting as a knowledge-exchange broker, provider of online services, and disseminating toolkits, publications and other communications).