

## **PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE OF EHHF 2008**

The last three years English Heritage organised the EHHF-conferences in a very consistent way. And with big success. We all appreciated that.

Already at the start English Heritage mentioned that this leadership would last only for three years. These years are over now. It is time to change. Therefore we are looking for a new way of organising this European conference.

The Netherlands likes to do a proposal for the near future in order to divide the heavy burden by introducing a tripartite system in which three countries will tackle this organisation. The triple combination will be formed by countries from different corners of the EU: one country comes from the west, one from the east and the third one will be selected from the Mediterranean area. In other words: each year one country will be host, and the two others countries will support and assist the host as brave and loyal secretaries. The following year they will rotate. Within three decades every country will have played it's ambassador's role as a host.

## DUTCH PAPER EHHF 2008

### Going from National to European

We live in times of globalization and Europeanization. As opinions on politics and heritage change, I would like to elaborate on four characteristics in our contemporary cultural attitude.

First of all, we should promote cooperation on *cross-border projects*. For sure history didn't stop at national borderlines. Cultures crossed frontiers without asking permission. Therefore the Romans expanded their Limes from the Black sea to the North Sea. And the Germans constructed an Atlantikwall starting in Norway and reaching out as far as Spain. And during the Cold War most of us built various kinds of military and civilian objects – secretly - on each side of the Iron Curtain in order to encounter the enemy. Countries situated on a coastline or along a bending river such as the Rhine or Danube, created their own typical identity. One could say a blood circulation in the EU. Maybe even an 'economic main structure' of European river systems. For example the Netherlands, which is situated at the end of a so-called pipeline, receives all kinds of useless rubbish and waste, but also thousands of valuable artefacts are washed along the shore. Unmistakably, the Dutch river mouths and estuaries do form unique archaeological depots, especially the estuary of the Rhine and the delta of our south-western province Zeeland.

Secondly, there is an immense *interchange going on of knowledge and expertise* in Europe at different fields and levels. Let's continue these important developments and inform each other on regular basis about the newest gadgets of heritage management. No one needs to invent a new wheel for himself. So ask around, shout it over the border. Therefore the website of the EHHF is a good instrument and opportunity, but its capacity and target could be broadened.

We should also lobby more intense in Bruxelles for the cultural component. Many ministerial notes are delivered on projects about European energy or agriculture, but seldom about European heritage. We have to influence the administrative and political corridors in Bruxelles better with our visions on heritage management.

The third characteristic I would like to mention is the *selection and revaluation of national heritage on European scale*. For example, a listed building which is unique and rare in the Netherlands, could be recognized as a very common monument in - let's say - Italy, Denmark or Slovenia. This indicates different kinds of values and appreciation. The remarkable Dutch skies that are often floating above the untouched river landscapes and forelands of for example the river Waal, create a famous picture frame. These forelands are typical Dutch and highly valued on a national level, but – more important - are unique and rare in Europe too. What about the sandy, widespread National Landscape called the 'Veluwe'? In our country it is authentic and rare, but compared to other European countries like Germany or Lithuania, these landscapes are very common. Do we dare to re-evaluate our national listed buildings in an European perspective? According to me, it is time for an European list of monuments or an European nomination of cultural heritage. This is one step further compared to the

French proposal, in which each country screens it's own listed buildings for European connotations.

The final observation is called 'the price of paradise', named after a book written by an author who walked through the countryside of 'new' European countries. He saw the economic and political benefits that were created after the grim Cold War-period and pictured it as a 'paradise'. After thousands of kilometres on foot he concluded that the cultural landscapes of most of the former East European countries are still intact. Thus, we have to treat these cultural pearls of heritage very carefully, in order to avoid the same situation as in 'older' European countries, including the Netherlands, where landscapes and nature are under heavy pressure and often damaged and rumbled. We don't want to create the same disastrous situation. And we should prevent to pay this price once more and therefore learn from the lessons of our past.

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