

**Presentation: EUROPEAN HERITAGE HEADS FORUM,  
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1. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to present Sweden's work with cultural heritage and historic environments.

2. Preservation of the cultural heritage and historic environments in Sweden has a long and exciting history. The first director general of the Board of National Antiquities was appointed as early as 1630. The work which began then continues to this day, 380 years later, and I am the 30th holder of the office and the second female director general. A lot has changed during this expanse of time, both in the surrounding society and in the mission of director general. I will briefly mention here some dates which have been important to the development of the mission.

Interest in ancient monuments and their preservation was encouraged by King Gustav II Adolf who appointed the first director general, Johannes Burèus, and commissioned him the task of making inventories of and documenting Sweden's ancient monuments. In 1666, the seventh director general, Johan Haldorph, pushed through the first draft of Sweden's decree on ancient monuments and it is also the oldest decree on monuments in Europe (some decrees within the Vatican precede this, however).

"Posters and Decrees, On Ancient Monuments and Antiquities" decreed that ancient finds would go to the state and that damage towards such finds was illegal. Following that, the law was supplemented with a paragraph that ordered without delay the reporting and redeeming of all finds of gold, silver and copper "as well as other rare objects" to the Crown. The decree still applies to this day and is the foundation of the State Historical Museum.

In 1666, the Staff on Antiquities was also established and headed by the director general. The Staff made inventories of information on historical finds gathered by the country's parish priests. There is a direct succession from the Staff on Antiquities to today's Swedish National Heritage Board and the National Historical Museum. Over the years, interest in and the significance of ancient monument work have both grown.

3. Over the centuries more laws have been introduced. New legal texts reflect changes in position on issues concerning preservation. The laws also reflect changes in society which have made the laws necessary for the protection of our cultural heritage. During the 19th century the protection of ancient remains was

strengthened which made it more difficult to remove them, and permits were required for archaeological excavations. Protection of the country's churches grew in the wake of the demolition of many medieval churches, then replaced by bigger churches in united congregations.

The 20th century brought with it great social change, world war and industrialisation and urbanisation. New laws on the protection of ancient remains and of remarkable cultural-historical buildings were introduced in 1942. In the same year a new law also came into effect for the protection of private-owned historical buildings which at the time required the voluntary approval of the property owner. In 1960 a new historic buildings law came into effect which meant that the general director could declare a property a listed building without the consent of the owner. All buildings were to be entered into a register. Now it is digital and can be accessed via the Internet, via the Swedish National Heritage Board's Buildings Register.

The latest heritage conservation act came into power in January 1989 and its purpose was to create a common act for all monuments: ancient monuments, listed buildings, churches with inventories and burial sites as well as cultural historical objects and place names. Since 1976 at least 100 old shipwrecks have been protected.

The opening paragraph of the heritage conservation act states that "it is of national importance to protect and preserve our cultural environment" and that responsibility for this is shared by everyone.

4. The principle motivation for a reform of the organisation of the historic environment in Sweden came in the spirit of the 1960s with reports, policies and engagement in environmental issues, physical planning, urban transformation, housing improvement and urbanisation processes; in short, the whole of the post-war period's creation of Sweden's welfare society.

Historic environment issues existed in a context where processes of rebuilding society were pervasive. Involvement in the environment and the preservation of the natural environment grew stronger and a step towards reforming the organisation of the historic environment work became an important step towards strengthening the protection of historic environments, similar to the way in which natural environment issues were treated. Involvement in the preservation of the historic environment also grew as a reaction to pervasive urban transformation which was carried out in many large and small towns and cities in Sweden during the 1950s and 60s.

At the international level in Unesco, Icomos and the European Council and, an intense discussion was also held on the values of historic heritage and the historic environment for the individual and nation. The debate and interest at the same time broadened historic environment issues. It was no longer only about cultural heritage as objects and monuments but issues were now raised on cultural historical aspects which could generally be aimed at the cultural landscape and the built-up environment. This meant that both the responsibility of the individual and society were emphasised. In addition, social responsibility for historic environments in Sweden was divided between the state and the municipalities.

Reform and decentralisation meant that historic environment work became an integrated part of physical planning; that is, the issue was presented as important to planning. This also meant a closer connection to the citizenry, giving them more influence and the opportunity to be part of the steadily growing awareness among people on the importance of the preservation of the historic environment.

The central organisation for the preservation of the historic environment with the NHB was the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and in part too the National Board of Public Buildings (in particular, the Office of Cultural History). The regional museums formed the base for knowledge development, general education and the management of decisions for the regional organisation of the country's historic environment work. The regional museums did not have an authority status but often a committee or foundation would be in charge and this resulted in all decision-making tasks being taken care of by the central authority, the NHB.

To enable the preservation of cultural heritage to collaborate with other social sectors on equal terms, both at the county level and centrally, the organisation needed reforming. The central level of authority needed to strengthen collaboration with all other sectors. In addition, decisions following special legislation were transferred to the county administrations which are the regional state organisation. The preservation of cultural heritage was now put on the same table as other sector issues to do with the preservation of the natural environment and physical planning in the county administrations. Many decision-making tasks could be transferred from the NHB to the county administration level.

5. Sweden is governed on three social levels, as presented in the picture here. This picture will help to provide an overview of the society's administrative and political structure in order to understand how the cultural environment work has grown, transformed and been organised and decentralised.

### **National level**

At the national level the people are represented by the parliament. The initiation of new laws is taken by the government which also carries through parliamentary decisions. To assist it, the government has a cabinet with a number of departments as well as approximately 300 state authorities and offices.

*Cultural heritage management work is carried out within the Ministry of Culture and the Swedish National Heritage Board.*

### **Regional level**

At the regional level Sweden is divided into 21 counties. Political mandates at this level are undertaken in part by the county council, whose decision-makers are directly appointed by the people of the county, and in part by the county administrative boards who are a state body within the county. *The County councils are responsible for health care, culture, museums and theatres. On the county administrative boards there are cultural heritage departments which are led by county heritage officer or equivalent leadership.*

### **Local level**

Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities. In each municipality there is an elected assembly, municipal council, which makes decisions on issues pertaining to the municipality. The municipal council appoints the municipal executive board which in turn is responsible for the running of the municipality. *Cultural heritage management work is carried out in the municipality with the support of the municipal steering instruments.* The municipalities are also responsible for housing, planning, the environment and infrastructure.

### **Sharing of responsibility between the levels**

In the constitution there are provisions on the relationship between the decision-making and executive powers. In the 1992 municipal law, the municipalities' and county councils' organisation and authority are regulated. It also includes regulations for elected officials, delegates, boards and committees.

The dissemination of mandates between state, county administration and municipality has changed over the years. Activities have above all been moved from state to municipal bodies, for reasons to do with efficiency and democracy. In the municipality it is easier to maintain continual contact between individuals and decision-makers.

The government has appointed a Commission charged with examining the sharing of responsibility between different levels of society.

6. This had a significant impact on the role and responsibility of regional museums. Up until that point they had functioned as representatives of the NHB along with the regional museum directors. Their role in the preservation of cultural heritage did not end, it changed as their responsibilities focussed on knowledge data and inventories.

Cultural heritage departments were set up at the county administration boards but were under staffed. A county director general position was created with an administrative assistant as support. This meant that some duties would remain with the central authority, such as churches with regional museums as regional representatives.

**The advantages of the reform**, some examples: (Vadstena meeting, p. 50 Bengt O H Johansson)

The preservation of the historic environment directly included in strategic considerations at the regional level

- Direct influence on municipal planning
- Strengthening of the role of antiquarian as authority
- Museums and voluntary organisations such as the local community movement could freely take part in debates and influence opinion and contribute with knowledge for the practice of authorities at county administrative boards
- Improved legal procedures at the local level
- The status of the preservation of the historic environment in society grew stronger through reform and decentralisation

(Each period has its challenges and opportunities. Here I will provide a history of the process towards the decentralisation of cultural heritage management work which began in Sweden in the 1970s and is still ongoing.

Since the 1970s, the country's county administrations have been in charge of the regional supervision of the historic environment but under the auspices of the NHB. The responsibility for church monuments is shared by the state and the Church of Sweden.

The concept of historic environment in the Heritage Conservation Act reflects a new orientation in cultural heritage work.

To tackle the threat of environmental destruction and increasing exploitation, preservation of both the natural and cultural environments was integrated within social planning and at the same time these issues were decentralised to the regional state level and transferred to the county administrations.

This also meant a greater focus on whole environments and countryside areas compared to previously when ancient objects in the form of remains and buildings were of central priority.

Legislation, decentralisation and integration into social planning have also meant that more recent cultural heritage such as industrial heritage and modernist buildings can now be included in cultural heritage management work.)

## 7. Disadvantages:

The regional museums found it difficult to adjust to their new roles and conflicts arose between regional museum directors and county heritage officers

Unreasonable workloads for lone county heritage officers

Lack of clarity in the pooling of responsibilities caused confusion among the general public

A discussion on financing via state subsidy to the regional museums. The county heritage officers depended on the regional museums' services but had no funds to pay for them

Knowledge production and decision making were separated

8. The NHB's role, above all in the decentralised system, is to provide coordination and an overall view. A joint and national coordination of efforts is created by distributing budgets to the regions' building preservation efforts. To create a joint exchange of experience and inspiration as part of what we do, the NHB organises conferences, such as the autumn meeting, in order to bring together everyone involved in cultural heritage management work.

In its national work, the NHB's tasks have above all been about deepening collaboration with other actors and sectors in society. The authority's most important task is to strengthen the status of cultural heritage as a positive force in the development of a long-term sustainable society. The clearest example is the NHB's task as an inter-sectoral authority in the work on Environmental Objectives – as presented by Maria Wikman this last year in Copenhagen.

Other central processes that the NHB works on are agricultural policy, structural funds and regional development. An enormous task is the inter-sectoral work on social planning with adjacent authorities.

## **Internationally**

The NHB's role has also developed through international cooperation. For example, long-term cooperation was established in Africa in 2009, in collaborative agreements with Tanzania and directly through working with World Heritage.

## **Challenges:**

A major task for the preservation of the heritage environment is large scale structural changes in society which affect our heritage environments. One of the most spectacular examples we have here is the mining, expansion and requisitioning of new areas of land. The mining town of Kiruna was established in the north of Sweden for the mining of iron ore. In the beginning the town was

a new settlement with primitive dwellings. At the turn of the century a new social structure was established, places to live and in the post-war period institutions were set up to form a modern model society with structures and town planning by the country's leading architects and artists.

Today the city of Kiruna faces the difficult challenge of having to be moved. This relatively young society has to be uprooted and rebuilt some hundred kilometres north of its current location. Great heritage environment value and all capital investment value into the building of a society are under discussion here. Kiruna is a city in the north; on the face of it Sweden's biggest. The government commissioned the NHB, within the authority's field of activities, to follow and support development in Kiruna and Iron Ore Rock (Iron Ore fields). What prompted this is the enormous impact that increased mining has had on communities as well as cultural heritage and the heritage environment. We have attached a research group to us as part of a project to study these changes in order to contribute to a deeper discussion.

From the 1950s onwards Sweden experienced an enormous immigration of workforce. In the last 10 to 15 years a significant number of refugees have immigrated to Sweden too. Currently, 20 % of Sweden's population has an immigrants background, the majority of whom reside in the larger cities. An important part of the heritage environment's work today and in the future is for it to reflect everyone's cultural heritage, including that of the new groups and their inclusion in the public debate.

9. The next phase has already begun; centralisation at the national level is occurring. The findings of two Swedish Government Commissions were presented, in February of this year, The Committee of Inquiry on Cultural Policy and the Museum Coordinator

#### **New objectives**

“Proceeding from democracy and freedom of speech, national cultural policy will contribute to the development of society through promoting open communities and arenas accessible to everyone. Communication between individuals and groups will be made possible, which will create conditions for cultural experiences and education as well as working to provide everyone with the opportunity of freely developing his/her own creative talents.”

#### **New structure**

The national organisation is now being made more efficient in the area of culture at the same time as collaboration between states, county administration and municipalities is growing. Decentralisation proceeds in this vein with new organisational models.

10. On the basis of the nature of their tasks and areas of responsibility, state authorities and institutions will work

- to promote diversity, cultural pluralism and international collaboration,
- to support artistic creativity and to provide a place for the artist's ability to create, break with patterns and broaden the realm of possibilities,
- towards the preservation, use and interpretation of our cultural heritage,
- for the use of cultural skills and creativity in order to contribute to a social, environmental and economically sustainable development, towards the accessibility and provision of information and knowledge.

11. A model for interaction between state, county council and municipality with regard to cultural political issues ought to be applied. The model will:

- build upon dialogue and negotiation
- to result in an agreement
- indicate investments in culture in the county
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Negotiations based upon criteria provided by ordinance in consideration of national cultural political goals.

Knowledge data and strategies need to be produced before dialogue both at the state and regional levels. The state should be responsible for follow-up and evaluation.

The model requires changes in organisation at the state level.

It has been proposed that certain state funding be covered by the model. Other state funding ought to be viewed as associated with the model.

12. Support the entire sector by developing core activities

- Statistics support
- Produce knowledge and decision guiding documents
- Meetings on the central museums' cooperation on development and efficiency
- Allotting development funds
- Coordinating museum issues applying to all ministries
- Testing forms of non-financial promotion instruments
- Preparation for 8.3 and the operative management of 8.4