

EHHF 2009

STATEMENT ON THE HERITAGE STIMULUS IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC RECESSION

The 4th meeting of the EHHF in Bratislava and Vienna in May 2009, calls upon all national European governments to recognise the pivotal role of heritage in the development and implementation of sustainable economic recovery packages, as already demonstrated by France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia.

Cultural heritage has a major contribution to make. Heritage is not only about Europe's past – it can play a major role in its future.

All the evidence demonstrates that investment in heritage is an inherently sustainable, long term and measurably successful solution to economic recession. We know that investing in the restoration or reuse of historic buildings and sites produces more jobs and more economic activity than building new ones; that heritage lies at the heart of communities and stimulates social cohesion and a sense of identity and place. Heritage makes you feel at home.

The heritage stimulus is active in 3 key areas:

- **Economic:** historic rehabilitation/restoration/conservation is labour intensive and enhances local job creation, particularly in small and medium sized business. Public sector grants and tax incentives for heritage attract private sector investment at a ratio of up to 1:7. Investment in heritage has a direct impact on the growth of cultural tourism which leads to long term social and economic benefit.
- **Environmental:** traditional building materials and building techniques have been proven to be environmentally friendly. The rehabilitation of historic buildings not only preserves the embodied energy and material resources used in the past but also minimises the production of costly and potentially ecologically damaging new materials.
- **Social/Cultural:** Awareness of, and concern for, heritage is growing even in a period of economic uncertainty. People care about heritage. History and heritage are instinctively linked to one's sense of local, national and European identity. Shared heritage is a key component in social cohesion, community and integration. Historic places are an important factor in quality of life – heritage is one of the principle reasons why people chose where they live and work.

The EHHF reminds governments of their obligations towards international conventions on protection of cultural heritage and their duty to ensure that national policies, including economic recovery packages, have a positive affect on heritage.

Given the short and long term benefits of heritage investment, the EHHF calls for the inclusion of a specific budget for the conservation/rehabilitation of historic buildings and sites in national economic recovery packages. Heritage is an effective instrument in the stimulation of economic recovery and job creation.