



EHHF Annual Meeting  
20-22 May 2015  
Dublin, Ireland

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Thursday 21 May 2015 – Plenary session (St Patrick’s Hall, Dublin Castle)**

**16:30 Feedback from workshops (abstracts provided here to respect the ‘Chatham House rules’)**

### WORKSHOP SESSION 1 – THEMATIC ISSUES

#### **1. Fiscal Incentives** *Moderator: Martin Colreavy, Ireland*

In the current economic climate, the ability of many governments to provide direct capital assistance for the conservation and repair of historic buildings has become severely limited. Alternatives to direct grants as a means of supporting architectural heritage can be explored including through the use of fiscal incentives. Tax reliefs can be used in a number of different ways. They can assist private owners to undertake conservation works to their properties. They can also comprise area-based incentives to encourage the private sector to invest in regeneration schemes in historic cities and towns.

The evaluation of the success and effectiveness of fiscal incentives in supporting architectural heritage conservation is important to ensure that the incentives are used to the benefit of the heritage and not to its detriment. Fiscal incentives should be structured to set strong criteria to ensure that the standards of conservation are met. An analysis and comparison is needed of existing fiscal and financial incentives currently being deployed across Europe together with a review of their effectiveness. Are there lessons to be learned from these?

#### **2. Adaptive Re-use** *Moderator: Mikko Härö, Finland*

Learning from the lessons of the recent past in Ireland, which in part produced an unsustainable level of new-build and suburban or peripheral development in our

towns and cities, there is now a focus on the adaptive reuse of the existing and historic building stock and on the regeneration and consolidation of existing urban areas and communities. Investing in the conservation and reuse of historic buildings is at the heart of sustainable development. It incentivises investment in existing assets, reduces pressure for development on green-field sites and maximises the use of existing infrastructure such as public transport, schools, shops and recreation facilities.

This workshop will discuss how heritage needs to be integrated into planning strategies for an area. How can a balance be struck between giving a building or an area a new use while protecting its historic character and interest? How can forward planning allow for redevelopment while retaining the qualities and values of the heritage of an area? What level of change can the historic environment sustain?

### **3. Development and Planning** *Moderator: Jesper Hermansen, Denmark*

In interviews with the secretariat, a number of Heads raised the issue of the difficulties that arise in dealing with private developers. Compromises may be sought by developers that are unacceptable to the statutory authorities yet sometimes, the long-term future of the historic building or site is dependent on it having an economic value to its owner and to society at large. Local communities may be supportive of private-sector developments as they provide employment and short-term gains but this may be at the expense of the long-term well-being of the heritage of the site.

This workshop will facilitate an analysis and comparison of the standards applying in different countries to the private development of historic buildings and sites. How can discussions and negotiations between statutory authorities and developers be made more productive? How can statutory authorities ensure that the heritage is adequately protected during redevelopment works and that standards of quality and workmanship are met? Where should the line be drawn between the conservation of heritage and its regeneration or adaptation to a new use?

### **4. European Funding Opportunities** *Moderator: Siim Raie, Estonia*

In a time of limited available financial resources for the support of conservation projects, it has become necessary to cast the net wider when seeking sources of funding. There are many funding programmes at European level from which support could be obtained for heritage projects. However, it can be difficult to identify relevant funding programmes. The complexity and time-consuming nature of the application process often acts as a disincentive and favours the large company or corporation over the type of SME (Small or Medium Enterprise) that specialises in high-quality conservation projects. As the funding organisations may be unfamiliar with the sensitivities of heritage projects, it can be difficult to ensure that acceptable standards of conservation are met.

This workshop will investigate how heritage can benefit from existing funding programmes. What programmes are there that can be accessed for the benefit of heritage sites? How can conservation projects be tailored to meet the requirements of these funding programmes? To what extent can governments assist in setting up projects that will attract funding? How can they support NGOs in devising projects and applying for funding? What examples are there of successful projects?

## WORKSHOP SESSION 2 – HEADS' ISSUES

### **1. The public perception of heritage**

*Moderator session 2a: Oliver Martin, Switzerland*

*Moderator session 2b: Boris Deanovič, Slovenia*

In the light of the recent adoption of the Council Conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage and the increased debate on the role of society in protecting heritage, this workshop will discuss how heritage authorities are perceived by society at large and what measures can be undertaken to increase mutual understanding and cooperation. In many countries, while the value of heritage is broadly accepted, heritage conservation and the associated statutory protection measures sometimes have a negative public perception. With the constantly expanding concept of heritage (intangible heritage, modern heritage, cultural landscapes, etc.), national governments are increasingly reliant on public trust and engagement to ensure that protection measures are effective. Heritage policies can have a profound impact on the cultural identity of citizens and it is consequently necessary to promote public engagement to ensure acceptance of these policies. More transparent and informed systems of policy and decision-making may reduce the incidence of conflict and even result in economic efficiencies.

How can heritage authorities foster a positive public attitude towards heritage? How can the public perception of heritage professionals and practices be enhanced? What type of initiatives have the potential to democratise knowledge and access to cultural heritage? How can heritage authorities increase public participation in decision-making? Are there new methods available that could be used to strengthen the public engagement with cultural heritage? (for example, using digitisation, new technologies, crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding). Are there limits to the amount of public support that can be expected for heritage protection?

## **2. Shifting mentality within heritage public administration**

*Moderator session 2a: Sonja Vanblaere, Flanders*

*Moderator session 2b: Cees Van 't Veen, Netherlands*

Statutory authorities charged with protecting heritage are often criticised for their conservatism and fear of change. As expressed in the latest European Council Conclusions as well as during recent international conferences on heritage, this situation is not sustainable, and intransigence risks relegating the heritage sector to the side-lines. The resistance to change observed amongst heritage authorities may lie in the fact that they see their function, first and foremost, to be the preservation of the authenticity and integrity of the historical environment. Many concentrate on the details of conserving monuments or sites to the exclusion of seeing heritage in the context of the larger needs of society. Yet, for historic buildings and sites to continue to be preserved and maintained they must have a value, whether emotional or economic, to society at large.

Heritage authorities may need to foster a change in mind-set within their own organisations. Management and decision-making processes may need to develop to take more account of the needs and values of the various heritage stakeholders and wider society. A dialogue should be established to ensure that the needs of society (private owners, municipalities, local communities, etc.) are understood and respected.

Heritage authorities may need to develop the capacity to think out of the box, to negotiate change and, sometimes, to make compromises in order to achieve the wider goals of sustainable development whilst maintaining the professional integrity of their organisations. What changes are needed and how can they be best implemented by the Heritage Heads? On the other hand, how can change be managed to avoid 'selling out' heritage to commercial interests and diluting standards?

The workshop will touch on how to encourage and implement a client-oriented approach to heritage and operate effective behavioural change (for example, providing user-friendly documentation, employee training, job mobility, etc.).

## **3. Making the case to government**

*Moderator session 2a: Duncan Wilson, England*

*Moderator session 2b: Kate Clark, Wales*

In many countries, support for heritage is low on a government's list of priorities in the face of other pressing needs. This trend has become more marked in tough economic times. For Heritage Heads, it is essential to be able to make a strong case to government on the importance of heritage. Part of the challenge is to ensure that politicians understand that funds are invested in, not simply 'spent', on historic

buildings and that relatively small amounts of direct grant aid from the public purse can trigger the investment of much larger amounts by the private sector. Investment in heritage can act as a catalyst for regeneration, create employment and support businesses. Advocacy for cultural heritage is a central task of competent national authorities; but what is the best approach to take when communicating the value of heritage to ministers and other politicians?

Governments need to be convinced of the potential for heritage to contribute to wider national policies and strategies including sustainable development, urban regeneration and social cohesion. Heritage Heads need to be able to produce convincing, evidence-based arguments to communicate the importance and relevance of their activities to their governments in order to gain the necessary support.

This workshop will touch on how the economic and social argument for heritage can be enhanced. What are the relevant policy demands on the agenda across Europe (for example, justifying public expenditure on heritage, providing educational opportunities, or engaging new audiences)? What can be learned from evidence-based models developed in other countries?

### Friday 22 May 2015 – Plenary session (St Patrick's Hall, Dublin Castle)

#### **12:00 European Commission report, by Erminia Sciacchitano**

See the presentation on the EHHF website:

[http://www.ehhf.eu/annual\\_meetings/2015](http://www.ehhf.eu/annual_meetings/2015)

#### **12:30 HEREIN report, by Gislaine Devillers**

HEREIN brings together European public administrations in charge of national cultural heritage policies. At present, 42 Council of Europe member States contribute to the dynamic of this project and form a unique co-operation network. HEREIN is administered by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France.

Gislaine Devillers made a presentation of the 'HEREIN System' website ([link to the website here](#)). The website displays a unique database about state heritage management in Europe accessible by country or theme: financing, participants, legislation, inventories, protection tools, integrated conservation strategies, dissemination and awareness-raising, centres of innovation and digitisation of cultural assets. The database is compiled and updated by the national coordinators appointed by the relevant ministries. A multilingual thesaurus is also included to facilitate the identification of terms related to heritage policies.

**The Heads are highly encouraged to promote this tool by ensuring their respective national coordinators have access to sufficient information to complete the database.**

The new 'Crowdfinding' tool is also of great value for the Heads who wish to obtain a specific information from various countries. They can ask a detailed question which will be answered by each national coordinate (e.g. financial support and fiscal incentives for heritage in Europe). Two crowdfindings have already been initiated by France (Ministry of Culture and Communication) in the past few months. The first request concerned the project for a European event about gardens and the second related to the application of the European Regulation No. 1907/2006 REACH. The results of these crowdfindings are available to the public on the HEREIN website.

#### **13:45 EHLF report, by Wolfgang Göhner**

See the presentation on the EHHF website:  
[http://www.ehhf.eu/annual\\_meetings/2015](http://www.ehhf.eu/annual_meetings/2015)

#### **14:00 Task Force on Economics report, by Terje Nypan**

See the presentation on the EHHF website:  
[http://www.ehhf.eu/annual\\_meetings/2015](http://www.ehhf.eu/annual_meetings/2015)

#### **14:15 Secretariat report, by Benjamine Dobbelaere**

See the presentation on the EHHF website:  
[http://www.ehhf.eu/annual\\_meetings/2015](http://www.ehhf.eu/annual_meetings/2015)

#### **14:30 Financial contributions report and discussion, by Martin Colreavy**

The financial contribution figures for 2014 and 2015 were reviewed. The Heads were thanked for their commitment and support in creating the permanent secretariat. The secretariat has been operating successfully since the start of 2014.

The secretariat has a number of functions internally within the EHHF but also externally in assisting member countries with particular issues. The decision to allow the secretariat to provide support to the EHLF was welcomed.

Martin Colreavy recalled the value placed in having a secretariat for the network to assist hosting countries with their tight schedules and demanding workload. It is good to have a centre on that.

Martin Colreavy concluded by confirming the activation of a review instrument in the near future concerning the 3-year EHHF Permanent Secretariat project ending in December 2016. As taxpayers' money is given to the project, he agreed with the Heads on the need to consolidate, and where necessary, improve the current system.

As the chair of the plenary session, Martin Colreavy concluded by accepting the group's validation of the EHHF annual report for 2014.

#### **14:45 Next year's Annual Meeting, by Oliver Martin**

See the presentation on the EHHF website:

[http://www.ehhf.eu/annual\\_meetings/2015](http://www.ehhf.eu/annual_meetings/2015)

Oliver Martin proposed that the heads give a mandate to the new Troika to develop a review process for the secretariat to be carried out at the annual meeting in Bern.

**Save the date: 11<sup>th</sup> EHHF annual meeting, 18-20 May 2016 in Bern, Switzerland**

The theme of 'Change' is proposed for the next annual meeting: Have we been experiencing a real change in the heritage sector in terms of values in the past few years? Is there a gap between the official European statements regarding heritage and our national reality which is faced with various pressures? And if there is an effective change of the heritage business model, what are the underlying risks and potential outcomes that we should be aware of?

2016 will be another constructive year for cultural heritage with the adoption of a pan-European Strategy for Cultural Heritage by the Council of Europe as well as the preparation of the forthcoming European Year for Cultural Heritage. Consequently, it will be the opportunity for national heritage heads to discuss these issues in parallel with the other working groups gathered by the European institutions.

As with this year's meeting, the discussions will be held under 'Chatham House rules'. With this in mind, Oliver Martin has reserved the Hotel Bellevue Palace (built in 1905) as a venue for the meeting. This has traditionally been the place where international and national political decisions were taken at night on an informal basis prior their official announcement. Oliver Martin hopes that these walls will stimulate a spirit of dialogue among us.

#### **15:00 Handover of Troika members**

The new members of the Troika for 2015-2016 will be Ireland, Switzerland, and Iceland. Kristín Huld Sigurðardóttir, head for Iceland, kindly offered to host the EHHF annual meeting in 2017. It was recalled that Alexandra Warr, delegate for England, also participates to the Troika meetings as honorary adviser. The heads are invited to ask questions or make proposals to the Troika throughout the year via Benjamin Dobbelaere.

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