

Dear colleagues

With the coming of Spring, we take great pleasure in announcing our annual rendezvous which will be held this year in Belgium.

The three Belgian regional administrations in charge of cultural heritage have joined to welcome you on this special occasion and offer a programme which, we hope, will arouse your interest. The theme of this year is cultural heritage in urban context. We chose this topic for several reasons. First, it comes in the continuity of the conference organised by our Dutch colleagues in 2011 about changes in rural heritage. Second, urban questions have a central part in the current European agenda. Last but not least, it will allow us to develop original ideas on archaeology in urban context, the role of contemporary architecture in historic city centres, the urban approach to energy performance challenges, or the threats and opportunities of tourism in historic cities.

Some novelties will be introduced during this edition 2014. You have already received an online questionnaire in January about urban heritage. The results will be presented during a plenary session on the 23rd of May and will allow us to bring out some trends on the state of heritage in our cities. We also decided to open up to new partners by giving NGOs specialised in urban heritage the opportunity to speak at the meeting.

The venue will be in the town of Louvain (*Leuven* in Dutch), which is less renowned than Bruges but carries a significant historical value. Louvain hosts one of the oldest universities in Europe. Our working sessions will take place in the Great Beguinage where used to live a community of pious women back in the 17th century. It was one of the first Belgian sites to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

You will have the opportunity to discover this town full of charm at our welcoming reception; while the excursion planned on the second day will lead you to a central place in Europe's history: Waterloo Battlefield, which is currently preparing to celebrate its bicentenary. We will visit the panorama of the Battle and have a walk near the famous Lion's Mound to get some fresh air before ending the day in one of the most beautiful farms

of Wallonia, la Ramée Abbey. During the dinner, we will have the privilege to listen to Mr. Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council.

Again, may we take this opportunity to extend a cordial invitation to you from our country.

We are looking forward to welcoming you.

Yours faithfully,

Sonja Vanblaere
Administrator General,
Heritage Agency,
Flanders



Pierre Paquet
General Inspector,
Department of Heritage,
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Thierry Wauters
Director, Department of
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