

## DISCUSSION GROUPS \_ REPORTS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Preservation and research under the pressure of development
2. Reaching out to the public
3. European Year of Cultural Heritage – EYCH 2018

### Discussion group 1

#### **Preservation and research under the pressure of development**

Moderator: Irene Hadjisavva (Cyprus)

---

Although the problematic is not new, it has re-emerged while our countries are trying to overcome the economic crisis and investments have been gaining value for the economic benefits they present. In this context, it seems that politicians are more sensitive to the investors' needs and less to heritage values.

Whether heritage is hidden in the soil, emerging during construction works, standing in a plot to be developed, or forming urban ensembles, it is often compromised by new development schemes. It is not rare that in this scheme heritage values are suppressed not only by economic indicators but also by the architects' ego.

As the heritage value is self-evident for the monumental sites this is a problematic is more relevant to the less monumental sites, that nevertheless form a great part of our environment.

During the discussion, some key notions were identified. The first is "dialogue". Dialogue between the heritage professionals and developers, planning authorities and lastly, but very importantly, politicians. In order to engage in a fruitful dialogue, it is important that heritage agencies broaden their expertise in competencies beyond heritage. This would enable them to offer informed, reality-based and business efficient solutions that would accommodate both heritage values and economic asset development. For this, research is needed in multisectoral studies but also in business models.

Arguments, however, do not need to be only economic, they are also environmental and social. Attractiveness and beauty, for example, are factors that may be used to convince people. Incentives have also an important role as they bring social justice and leverage the cost occurred by stricter guidelines and planning obligations on both new development and conservation projects.

Life in the city is evolving and new amenities are needed. The coexistence of new uses, spaces and forms raises the question: how can we manage contemporary architecture, how we answer the developers' questions, how we convince the owners and how we communicate with the planning authorities that will ultimately have to decide. And all this under the pressure of politicians who often (if not always) favour development. The answer is not to be afraid to extend our arm to the others, nor use the word

“no”. “No” refers to our fears. Start with a “yes” instead. Learn the language of the others, whether that would be economics and finance or urban planning, extend our competencies, be more involved in the planning process.

Other recommendations were also suggested:

- Strong regulations based on research,
- considering new engineering approaches,
- hiring people with real estate and construction knowledge
- go first where the “profit is thin”
- understand legislation which often lacks clarity and, why not, improve it
- consider underlying issues, such as bank pressures on asset guarantees
- try not to run after events but rather be proactive

Finally, we talked about “time”. This precious asset that we have that *is* negotiable. How? It has different value for developers and technocrats. For the first it means profit lost and capital trapped, while for the latter is just a commodity. So, we could negotiate it to obtain a result that is closer to an equilibrium between profit, heritage value and social justice.

The suggested process is not easy, as proven by our Nordic colleagues, who are already investing in dialogue without always obtaining the best results. We believe, however, that we could improve with the right tools: research, education, legislation and regulations, interpersonal skills, new competences, and why not, nudge!

## Discussion group 2

### Reaching out to the public

Moderator: Duncan Wilson (UK – England)

---

1. **Heritage is about people:** All of us who are professionals in the heritage "business" need to listen more to our public and hear what they think is important. There has been a recent programme in Scotland to ask people about their views on what they value and what should be protected. In The Netherlands there was an example where a community had come together to buy their own street from a developer to save it.

2. **Bridge the gap between us/them; our/yours:** Reaching out to people with a different cultural inheritance can build bridges with the heritage of their own areas. The project in Birmingham (England) with the women of the Bangladeshi community to tell their stories and those of the area in which they live, Handsworth, was an interesting example. In Oudenarde, Flanders an eco museum had created a successful community exhibition based on people's family histories and photographs.

3. **Involve people in our daily work:** listing, Archeology, idecision-making and visiting our offices. In England there has been a programme called Enriching the List which encourages people to add information and photographs to our statutory list descriptions. Social media was an essential

communication tool. This was an important part of the Swedish cultural heritage strategy. The programme in Slovakia to engage local people in the conservation of castles has also been successful.

**4. Telling More stories, personal engagement:** The importance of narrative in engaging with people could not be overestimated. Relating heritage to people's everyday lives was important.

**5. Importance of education strategy:** Children were enthusiastic about learning at school about heritage and archaeology (evidence from Iceland). Education programmes were a very good way of engaging with communities. Examples from Italy showed the power of harnessing children's enthusiasm in addressing the trade in illegally recovered antiquities.

## Discussion group 3

### European Year of Cultural Heritage – EYCH 2018

Moderator: Uwe Koch (Germany)

---

**1.** To make the EYCH successful it is important to give more opportunities for story telling about the historic places, memories and cultural heritage especially on a common European internet platform or social media used for the EYCH. Story telling as a result of discovering of the European dimensions of our cultural heritage by the younger generation and by different perspectives from different regions and countries will be important. Cultural routes, World heritage sites and places of the European Cultural Heritage Label should be good places for such story telling formats and activities.

**2.** The stressed role of participation and bottom up to push the European process of Sharing Heritage is fundamental important during the hole year.

**3.** National activities like the Norwegian campaign “Typical Norwegian ...” are very important to make the people thinking to understand that everything what we are like as typical in our cultural heritage is a result of exchange and cultural transfer about the history.

**4.** In addition of the national activities we need transnational, transboundary and European formats to make the common and the connecting dimensions of our cultural heritage visible.

**5.** We underlined the role of daily life dimensions to make sharing heritage understandable. The examples of our European food and table culture are very good low level accesses for that.

**6.** The extraordinary importance of EYCH 2018 and Sharing Heritage campaign is that it give us the opportunity to use that as a starting point to focus the role of cultural heritage for the European political topics of the next year. The EHHF should use the next year to stress the connecting role of cultural heritage for the European project and future.