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NET-HERITAGE

EUROPEAN NETWORK ON RESEARCH PROGRAMME APPLIED TO THE PROTECTION OF TANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Instrument:

Deliverable 4.4

Outcomes of the EU-project NET-HERITAGE

Report to European Governments, EU Council, Parliament and Commission

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Dissemination Level		
PU	Public	x
PP	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)	
CO	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

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Setting of task 4.4. of NET-HERITAGE

Task:

Support for European policy in relation to protection of tangible cultural heritage within Environment, Education, Energy, Agriculture, Transport, Regional, Enterprises, Competition, Employment, and Tourism Policies.

This task addresses the interface between the scientific community and policy-makers at various levels within the European Union but also its linkages with the regional and global levels. The pooling of the capacity at the European level and the "translations" of new insights into the policy domain both nationally and internationally need to be strengthened.

D 4.4.

A forward look document on timely and policy-relevant information delivery to European Governments, EU Council, Parliament and Commission. (month 36)

M 4.2

Second milestone and expected result is the implementation of the protection and safeguarding of the European cultural heritage in the sustainability strategy of the EU and/or within Member States. The organisation of a Parliamentary hearing on cultural heritage issues is planned, either in a Member State or in the EU Parliament, or a joint activity of both bodies, which will contribute to reaching the second milestone.
(month 36)

1. POLICY TEXT

Strategic proposals to policy makers

The document describes the most important outcomes of the ERA-NET project NET-HERITAGE and addresses the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Council, and national governments of the member states as well as stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage. Decision makers should reward the efforts that have been undertaken by 14 European Member States from 2008 until 2011 by implementing a catalogue of research priorities for cultural heritage research at European level.

NET-HERITAGE succeeded in bringing together for the first time national ministries and other national funding bodies of cultural heritage research to reach agreement on a common framework for research applied to the protection of tangible cultural heritage. While reaching a common research agenda, the project also uncovered many shortcomings concerning the field of research, which will be discussed more in detail in this document.

All surveys and tasks that have been completed within the project can be downloaded at www.NET-HERITAGE.eu/Deliverables.html.

Cultural heritage at risk

Millions of **tourists** enjoy Europe's historic cities, museums, monuments and landscapes every day. Cultural heritage in times of rapid societal challenges has become a point of reference for European citizens. It is an invaluable, non-renewable resource that provides both the foundation to Europe's identity and to its economic success as the world's premier tourist destination.

Cultural heritage is part of our environment and is threatened heavily by climate change, other adverse environmental influences, and financial pressures. The increasing instances of catastrophic events (e.g. floods, earthquakes etc.), pollution caused by increasing traffic and industry as well as the permanent rise of temperature in many regions of the EU threaten valuable heritage objects. There is a need to contribute to disaster preparedness and into preventive conservation measures, in short, to apply modern technology to the upkeep of European Heritage.

The protection of cultural heritage comprises of a wide range of measures, from maintenance, to conservation and restoration work. Expert knowledge on the latest and most efficient technologies is needed to protect artifacts as diverse as paintings, historical writings, objects and buildings made from natural stone, wooden structures or stained-glass windows from a variety of influxes such as humidity, exhaust fumes or climate change. According to estimates, due to the lack of maintenance and proper conservation, objects in the value of EUR 14 billion are lost every year within the EU alone.

In the last decades, EU researchers were able to save valuable cultural heritage objects for future generations with the help of **new technologies**. The research on the protection of tangible cultural heritage has thus become a **key competence of European researchers**. The know-how of these researchers is demanded not only in Europe but also world-wide.

The Consortium of NET-HERITAGE representing European Member States proposes to the European Commission (EC) that the protection of cultural heritage as it is a non-renewable resource should be integrated into its sustainability strategy.

Second, a dedicated strategy should be worked out at the European level, on how to preserve cultural heritage. Partners of NET-HERITAGE suggest that the research on preventive measures to protect cultural heritage should be supported.

The economics of cultural heritage

Europe is the leader in research on the preservation of cultural heritage, thanks to continuous funding since 1986 within the European Research Framework Programmes. European institutions must help safeguard this technological and know-how edge, as it is the backbone of both competitiveness of European research, and the upkeep of an economic asset. Cultural heritage today provides a solid background for Europe's tourism industry with more than 9 million jobs linked to it directly and indirectly. The value of measures of conservation of cultural heritage is estimated at EUR 5 billion per year. The **construction sector** needs expert knowledge for the preservation of historical buildings. Many **small and medium enterprises** work in the field of cultural heritage.

Currently there are only a few **studies targeted on the economic benefits of cultural heritage** available, such as the. Examples are the study "The Economy of Culture in Europe" (2006) by KEA European Affairs supported by Media Group, Turku School of Economics and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH, as well as "City Tourism and Culture" done by LA Groups & Interarts in 2005. While both studies hint that cultural heritage has a diverse and important economic effect, there is a need more case studies that on cultural heritage and that take into account the chances and risks of mass tourism, infrastructure and sustainable regional development of European Regions and Cities.

Working together in NET-HERITAGE, funding agencies discovered that although cultural heritage research received funding through the Framework Programmes, the **budgets allocated for this area of research are judged to be far too low**, both compared to the number of proposals the European Commission has received, and in view of the importance of cultural heritage. Research on cultural heritage and the maintenance of cultural heritage objects is heavily **underfunded** in many countries, with the result that unique and invaluable artifacts, objects and structures are lost.

At national level **private investors** are increasingly involved in the safeguarding of cultural heritage. While private investment for the upkeep of national treasures of art is welcomed, NET-HERITAGE partners underline the importance of decisions taken in accordance to a clear **strategy of conservation**. Priorities taken here must not be influenced by expedience, but by scientific proof, and overall necessity. It is pointed out that not all necessities can be fulfilled, as some include the prerequisite of a suitable technology of conservation or restoring that might still need to be developed, or proofed.

The responsibility of the preservation of cultural heritage lies at the Member States' level. Accordingly, there is no overall European strategy on priorities and desiderates in the preservation of cultural heritage. There is a clear lack of coordination in this field. Europe must safeguard its unique heritage, providing both identity and revenue, more seriously.

The Consortium of NET-HERITAGE representing European Member States asks national and European policy makers to take on responsibility for cultural heritage.

The NET-HERITAGE-Consortium proposes to European Institutions to support the network of cultural heritage researchers with dedicated support actions (conferences, networking platforms, webportals) due to its very fragmented nature.

Future funding actions of the EC should be paralleled by an adequate funding of Member States for cultural heritage research. EU funded cooperation mechanisms such as ERA-NETs have shown in the past that they have a positive leverage affect in mobilizing national funding.

The Consortium recommends that studies on the economic relevance of cultural heritage research should be funded.

Common research challenges and research priorities

Climate change is a major recent challenge for the preservation of cultural heritage objects. Technologies such as smart monitoring, and adequate preventive measures will become more important. Also, other major societal challenges linked to this complex: The question of reducing **energy** consumption is directly linked to the preservation of historic buildings. Concepts of how to increase energy efficiency in buildings must be adapted to historical buildings that due to the high degree of organic building material can be destroyed by the employment of modern materials. In times of **ageing** societies and progressive urbanization, questions of reaching a better access and a sustainable use of cultural heritage will become more important. This includes also the digital access to cultural heritage (museums, libraries, etc).

The NET-HERITAGE consortium has, in dialogue with 114 European experts identified RTD priorities for future transnational research priorities. The top four priority topics on which the consortium agreed on for a joint call are:

1. Investigation of damage mechanisms to establish preventive conservation strategies
2. Tele-survey and Geographic Information Systems for protection, inventory and management of tangible cultural heritage
3. Evaluation of treatments and materials used in conservation at present and over recent decades, assessing their suitability and future consequences
4. Environmental assessment and monitoring (pollution, climate change, seismic risk)

These research priorities clearly indicate topics of future research to be included in funding activities. The European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Council as well as National Governments are invited to consider these priorities, when launching calls and intruding new policy instruments to the domain of cultural heritage research.

The need to increase the visibility of the research field

A survey done within the project NET-HERITAGE showed that the research community of cultural heritage is small, ever shrinking, and, due to its interdisciplinary nature, very **fragmented**. Therefore there is a **need of enhanced coordination** and a need of building a strong **network** with stakeholders.

Within NET-HERITAGE different initiatives have been taken to strengthen the research community, to increase its visibility and to enhance an exchange of information.

NET-HERITAGE's web-portal (www.heritageportal.eu) has been set up. This website disseminates information about European and national research programmes and funding. It also provides scientific publications on the latest developments in research. Users can further make use of a social networking area and upload their scientific or company profile. The website disseminates news about conferences, project results and jobs and training possibilities. Groups targeted are experts as well as non-experts.

A consultative workshop with NET-HERITAGE partners and external experts held in September 2010 in London, provided additional stakeholder input of how to streamline the portal to the scientific community's need. Another effort to increase the visibility of the research field has been the **conference "Increasing Europe's Competitiveness through Cultural Heritage Research"** that took place on March 24th 2011 at the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. More than 170 participants from all over Europe attended the event. NET-HERITAGE partners have strengthened ties with cultural heritage organizations such as EUROPA NOSTRA, UNESCO, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property and the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers. NET-HERITAGE's progress was displayed, gaining the heritage community's consent.

European institutions are asked to continue their support for networking in this field, making the research community of cultural heritage stronger and more visible. Measures have to be taken to promote interdisciplinary research in the domain.

Need for professional training

Within NET-HERITAGE, information on opportunities for advanced training courses in conservation-restoration and science for conservation in the Member States were collected.

Stakeholders have recognized the importance of professional training and of a **continuous funding of cultural heritage research**. A survey completed within NET-HERITAGE concludes that in many countries the field of conservation science is being perceived as an artistic domain, not a field of applied science, and in turn receives scarce funding. The severe underfunding in most European countries became apparent. This will lead to accumulated expert knowledge which could benefit conservation science being lost, as excellently trained university graduates and alumni of PhD courses are not activated in the field of cultural heritage because of lacking employment options.

Based on these conclusions, **a set of recommendations** concerning education and professional training in the field of cultural heritage was worked out and agreed upon by NETHERIATGE partners. The findings were drawn up in a letter of support signed by all partners of NET-HERITAGE, stakeholders and such as national ministries and agencies. Furthermore, the recommendations were presented to 150 experts in the field of cultural heritage on April 6th 2011 in Warsaw.

In order to disseminate results of recent European research two **knowledge exchange workshops** were offered on the occasion of the NET-HERITAGE meetings. The first one, "Managing heritage and access in an uncertain future" presented the results on recent research projects on the impact of climate change on built heritage. The second workshop, "Efficiency in micro-climate control", introduced possibilities to manage indoor microclimates in large facilities.

Policy makers , administration-staff and funding agencies are asked and encouraged to fund workshops and training possibilities in the field of cultural heritage research in order to increase researchers' knowledge, speed the dissemination of research results, and to increase international network-building.

The NET-HERITAGE consortium further invites policy makers to consider the following set of recommendations on research and training within the field of cultural heritage:

- 1. Adequate funding of doctoral research should be ensured.***
- 2. Development of generic skills should be embedded into the PhD training.***
- 3. It is important to reward long-term commitment by talented, enthusiastic PhD students and early-stage post-doctoral researchers for the heritage field.***
- 3. One of the key national institutions should act as a secretariat of the network of institutions offering opportunities for research for a doctoral degree.***
- 4. Long courses that do not lead to a doctoral degree should provide knowledge, skills and competences that are clearly recognised according to the Bologna system.***
- 5. The value of the short Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses depends on the quality of the pedagogy. Organisers should articulate learning objectives and outcomes explicitly in the publicity material of each course.***
- 6. National agencies funding research projects should encourage and support workshops for knowledge exchange organised at the end of research projects which are promoting and disseminating novel research results.***

Future funding

Partners of NET-HERITAGE have confirmed their interest to further develop future **common strategic activities**. The basis for a common research agenda has been set up by the identification of research priorities and of best funding practise at the national level. Many NET-HERITAGE partners have joined with other member states to advance cultural heritage as the first focus of the new JPI-instrument. Starting in 2009, preparations have been taken up to establish a consortium to take the issue on, and reach operational status after the completion of NET-HERITAGE in 2012. **In order to strengthen the appeal of the JPI-process, a group of NET-HERITAGE partners has agreed to place a common call, prepared by the memorandum of understanding developed within NET-HERITAGE, in the take-off process of the JPI-action within the field.**

The EC is invited to support these common activities that demonstrate the willingness of partners to cooperate beyond the framework of NET-HERITAGE.

2. Conclusion

NET-HERITAGE has been welcomed throughout the European Member States as a substantial chance for the improvement of a network of scientific excellence on things most European cultural heritage. It has provided a possibility of joint action in this field. By close cooperation between funding bodies, programme-managers and the scientific community, important results were achieved. Among them, the vastly improved knowledge-basis, such as on funding possibilities, active organisations and individuals, recent but under-published results of research, and important future topics have been embraced by both the scientific community and funding bodies. Surveys taken within NET-HERITAGE have provided Europe with solid and comprehensive information on common priorities, and the state of play of the scientific field. Fragmentation of the scientific community was addressed and partly remedied in well-attended public workshops and parliamentarian events both on the European level as well as in member states. Common action has clearly indicated the eminent economic importance of cultural heritage to European communities, both on the local and the regional level, as well as to the member states. It also is a strong issue for the cooperation with countries outside the European Union, and provides a chance to let the world profit from European excellence – as well as leading to economic opportunities for European SMEs. The lack of a greater centralisation but also of proper funding was clearly felt, and is now indicated to the European Union.