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EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS
A joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Union
and in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture
and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland
and the National Heritage Board of Poland

FOURTH EUROPEAN HERITAGE FORUM

ON THE THEME OF

**“VALUE THE HERITAGE!
EUROPEAN HERITAGE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT”**

Wrocław (Poland), 10-12 October 2011

Meeting Report

**By Noel Fojut
General Rapporteur**

**Ministerstwo
Kultury
i Dziedzictwa
Narodowego.**



**NARODOWY INSTYTUT
DZIEDZICTWA
NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD OF POLAND**

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Presented separately on Website:

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Table of all comments collected during the Round Table debate
(unedited, in English and French)

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The European Heritage Days

The European Heritage Days are the most widely celebrated participatory cultural event shared by the citizens of Europe. Following independent pilot schemes in several countries, the Council of Europe launched the initiative in 1985, and in 1999 the Council was joined by the European Union to create the joint action which has continued up to the present day.

Held in September each year, EHD events – often called Heritage Open Days or Doors Open Days – take place in the 49 countries party to the European Cultural Convention. These events permit access to a large number of buildings and other sites, many of which are either closed to the public or accessible only by private arrangement.

In keeping with the Council's principle of joint progress through shared experience, but also bearing in mind the principle of subsidiarity which is applied to cultural heritage matters within the European Union, EHD events are organised on a national basis. The European bodies offer support in the form of technical advice, guidance and other forms of encouragement. Within each country, it is common for further devolution to occur, with regional and local authorities, civic and private groups and individuals organising and running events.

One of the newer actions undertaken by the European bodies, always in collaboration with a national partner, is the convening of the annual European Heritage Forum, to which all participating states are invited and welcomed. This Forum offers an opportunity for the interchange of ideas and experience in the context of the EHD programme.

1.2 The purpose of the European Heritage Forum

Although EHD provides the context for the annual Forum, the presentations and discussions always range much more widely, around three core aims:

- To take stock of changing practices, methods and techniques in the interpretation, communication and dissemination of the cultural heritage. The Forums will contribute to updating the debate on changes facing society, encouraging people to take a new look at heritage.
- To be a meeting place for a broad range of professional categories which may vary according to the theme chosen each year: heritage professionals, cultural mediators, public administration and local authority officials, tourism and cultural industry professionals, teachers and educators in school and out-of-school contexts, the initial and in-service vocational training sectors, researchers, members of voluntary organisations, and representatives of international governmental and nongovernmental organisations.
- To provide input to a process of networking experience and know-how by creating the right conditions for innovation and creativity in the heritage sector.

1.3 The Fourth Forum: “Value the Heritage! European Heritage and Economic Development”

The Fourth European Heritage Forum was held in Wrocław, Poland, on 10-12 October 2011, in partnership with the National Heritage Board of Poland. Its theme was “Value the Heritage! European Heritage and Economic Development”. The emphasis in the presentations was on the many ways in which the sustainable use of cultural heritage can bring practical benefits to the people of Europe. However, the presentations and even more the discussion ranged widely, serving to emphasise the multiple values which heritage supports, from the financial to the spiritual. The theme of identity emerged as a linking element on many occasions.

The method was one of short, focussed presentations followed by round-table discussion, with trained facilitators at each table using computers to feed ideas from each table back to a central coordinating panel. [See technical report from Natasha Walker.] The full programme is at Appendix 1.

The report which follows, after some introductory remarks, offers short summaries of the 8 presentations with very brief comments. These are followed by a synthesis of the comments and discussions of the round table session. A closing declaration was prepared during the course of the day, and this forms the third section. The final section attempts to draw some conclusions about the value of the Forum and offers some reflections on future working methods.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1 Context

The context of the Forum was agreed after preliminary discussions between the sponsors and the hosts, but needed little debate to reach consensus. The theme “Value the Heritage! European Heritage and Economic Development” effectively selected itself, because of the extraordinary economic events of the preceding years, in Europe and the wider world.

At a time when major national economies have been brought close to collapse, with financial instability and major threats to livelihoods in almost every country, the intersection of economics and cultural heritage was an obvious and timely topic to explore. On the one hand, there was obvious concern that, in the preoccupation with national economic recovery, the needs of the heritage may be neglected. On the other hand, there was a feeling that a future, in which central government activities are constrained by a lack of financial resources, might offer an opportunity to “repatriate” heritage to a much wider constituency, with new opportunities for civic engagement.

2.2 Preparations

The broad shape and main themes of the Forum were mapped out at and following a brainstorming session in Paris in February 2011. Subsequently the Chair, Rapporteur, Facilitator and others prepared a short set of notes, along with a list of keywords, sub-questions and possible discussion topics.

These were intended to provide a framework to structure the Forum, and to guide speakers as to the intended content of each theme. These notes were sent to all who had been invited to give presentations. Presenters were given free rein within their chosen topic, but were asked to keep the overall framework in mind when preparing their material.

The guidance notes are quoted at the start each section of the report which follows, and the discussion questions are listed at the start of the section dealing with the round table.

3. THE FORUM

3.1 OPENING SESSION

Short speeches of welcome were made by:

- Ms Paulina Florjanowicz, Director of the National Heritage Board of Poland and Chair of the Forum;
- Mr Noel Fojut, Head of Policy and Legislation, Historic Scotland and Rapporteur General of the Forum;
- Mr Daniel Théron, Head of the Culture, Heritage and Diversity Department, Democratic Governance, Culture and Diversity Directorate of the Council of Europe;
- Mr Alessandro Senesi, Deputy Head of the Culture Programme and Actions Unit, European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, and by
- Ms Oksana Vasilyeva, EHD Coordinator for the Ukraine, who spoke on behalf of Mr Konstantin Gryschencko, Foreign Minister of the Ukraine and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, who unfortunately was unable to attend in person.

3.2 INTRODUCTION: MULTIFACETED HERITAGE AS A RESOURCE

The introductory session offered two presentations designed to emphasise the richness and diversity of the heritage of the region in which the Forum was situated, and to offer a local viewpoint on the many values of heritage, the ways in which values may be negotiated or changed, and the way in which heritage values may be contested.

Gabi Dolff (Germany) introduced her lively and thought-provoking presentation with the question, “Whose heritage matters, for whom?” She drew attention to key ideas from the Faro Convention, especially the concept of a right to engage with the cultural heritage of one’s choice, independently of ownership – the relationship with heritage, as seen by Faro, is one of affiliation, not appropriation – and also the idea of cultural heritage communities, a way of relating to heritage which is not local, regional or national, but open.

Using recent images of Polish cities, including some of Wrocław taken just the day before, Gabi Dolff explored the theme of borderlands, taking the cities along the River Oder as her example. Her unifying message was that, along borderlines, neighbours have different pasts, rather than sharing a single past. Their monuments and memories of the same places may be very different, depending on their experience and history. Thus the heritage of borderlands is not shared, so much as negotiated: there is discourse rather than commonality.

The lands along the Oder / Odra are seen as territory lost from a German cultural perspective, but as territory regained from a Polish viewpoint. Significant German heritage sites may have less significance for the Polish people who now live there, and in some instances the original meaning of monuments has been re-configured. As well as transfers of land between nations, there have been significant transfers of people between and within nations.

The first example was the former Prussian fortress of Küstrin / Kostrzyn, which was destroyed by the Red Army as they advance to the Oder / Odra. Nowadays this is a flattened series of ruins, with the bricks and stones quarried and taken to Warsaw for the post-War rebuilding there. The population of the area had been moved away to Germany. This was, perhaps, “heritage in the wrong place”, a landscape of loss and pain. What was the correct heritage approach – to rebuild as a replica, to create a new town on the site, or to preserve as an archaeological site – and who should decide?

Attention was drawn to examples of modern architecture created during the reconstruction of cities devastated by war, which were often influenced by strong ideological and philosophical concepts – the construction of the society and therefore the cities of the future under the Communist regime. She observed how, in cities such as Stettin / Szczecin, large communal housing blocks of considerable architectural quality were being progressively replaced by smaller-scale dwellings, with a more individual character, often based on older, traditional, architectural forms. Was the heritage of the future, she asked, to be found in these new “retro” buildings, almost retreating from modernity, or in the once ultra-modern Communist-era blocks they are replacing?

Likewise in Wrocław, there was much of interest: the juxtaposition of high-quality modern architecture alongside restored older buildings creating a lively mixture, a series of thought-provoking coincidences which would not have arisen from a slavish “recreation” of the past alone, however much the rebuilt Rynek attracts tourists. The late 1960s modernist blocks of “Wrocław’s Manhattan”, by Jadwiga Grabowska-Hawrylik and her collaborators, stand as symbols as an international European heritage, linking Wrocław to post-earthquake Skopje, or Novi Belgrad, or other cities such as Berlin, where such buildings were erected at the same date.

This presentation with a plea, to recognise this “new” heritage of modernism for its own aesthetic and architectural merits, rather than seeing it as an uncomfortable reminder of abandoned political systems. This heritage, of high quality and trans-national significance, should matter to all Europeans just as much as the more “comfortable” heritage of earlier times, and should not be swept away in efforts to recreate a non-authentic idea of the past.

Wojciech Fałkowski (Poland) followed, with a presentation from the viewpoint of a historian, which looked at documentary sources and popular heritage. He drew attention to the way in which people re-visit and re-work their history in response to changing circumstances, continuously strengthening collective memories of a perceived past, with multiple and negotiable significances.

During the Communist era, the government ambition was nothing less than the creation of a “new people”, with Poland’s official history books re-written to support this. But the memory of the people persisted in the face of official dogma – this “disobedient memory” survived by the private re-telling of older histories. This “true” history was a source of strength in hard times, but itself was also subject to progressive revision, so that events of the pre-Communist past began to assume a “heroic” status – almost as much a mythology as the official government histories.

The older generation functioned as tradition-bearers, using symbols and images. The characters of patriots, tales of heroic deeds and simpler family memories were woven into an alternative past. The crises of the 19th century became a narrative of resistance to totalitarian regimes which offered comfort.

Even maps, in particular the outline on the map delineating the shape of Poland, came to become a symbol of loss and change. Cities such as Wrocław, formerly German Breslau, found themselves in the heartland of the new Poland, having previously been situated well inside Germany. Such geographical dislocation was matched by large-scale population transfer, with many families from around Lwów uprooted and transplanted to Wrocław. Thus a whole segment of society moved, and this is still visible today, nowadays partly the heritage of Lwów, partly the new heritage of Wrocław.

The fact that the former University of Breslau (the German name of Wrocław) had produced 7 Nobel Prize laureates was wiped from the official history, just as many of the faculty members were during the War. The University itself was re-established immediately after the War from Lwów, which itself had one of the leading mathematics faculties in the world, although its staff, too, had been almost destroyed, with only one professor, Hugo Steinhaus, surviving.

It was perhaps not surprising, in such difficult times and with so much physical, political, social and personal upheaval, that the people looked further back for a sense of identity, to times which were seen as a Golden Age. The icon of Polish greatness was the period of the union of Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine in the 17th century. This was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society which avoided major religious wars and civil wars at a time when much of Europe was in chaos. Yes, there were serious events, such as the Cossack uprisings, but these were relatively minor in the larger picture. Poles took pride in the 1573 Warsaw Confederation Act which assured religious toleration, or the 1791 Constitution, the first written constitution in Europe. These documents were regarded as examples of perfection in contrast with contemporary political conditions.

So why, this presentation asked, does remembering heritage matter, and particularly why does it matter in an economic context?

In short, continuity of tradition and collective memory supports a sense of stability, which can in turn support economic growth. By retaining and strengthening (even, admittedly, sometimes editing) a sense of identity, shared values and social coherence are negotiated and agreed. Knowing the past of a region and understanding its present day social and physical landscape must facilitate planning for the future. In essence, it is easier to know where one is going, if one knows where one has come from.

3.3 HERITAGE DURING THE FINANCIAL CRISIS – LUXURY OR NECESSITY?

The two speakers in this session were given the task of examining the question of where heritage should stand during difficult economic times. In preparing for the Forum they were given a free hand regarding the content of their papers, but asked to consider the following thoughts beforehand.

Strategies for regional development have recently been altered across Europe due to the economic recession. In these radical changes, there is a risk that short-term economic goals will dominate over longer-term vision. The sustainable use of heritage capital can offer secure benefits to society, but these can take many years to realise, and benefits can sometimes be difficult to value in comparison with competing priorities for public and private investment.

Keywords: immovable capital, investment, development, strategic approach, valuing benefits – especially non-financial benefits.

Sub-questions: Is heritage really more at risk due to the recession? If so, can we identify defensive strategies to neutralise weaknesses and avoid threats? What are the key obstacles in the path of heritage-based strategic development – and have these changed? Does good practice for a strong economic situation remain the same in a weak economic situation?

Christopher Young (United Kingdom) began, with a paper sharing the session title, “Heritage in the financial crisis: Luxury or necessity?” This looked at the situation in the United Kingdom, especially within England, and in particular looked at the difficulty of obtaining robust, reliable, data to measure trends and changes.

Recent surveys show heritage to be consistently popular with vast majority of British population, with some remarkable figures for participation:

- 70% of the adult population visited at least one heritage site in 2010/11
- The National Trust (the leading non-government heritage body) has 3.7 million members
- English Heritage (the government heritage agency) has 758,000 members

The value of heritage to society is widely recognised, for a wide range of reasons, including: sense of identity and diversity; sense of belonging (nationally or locally, or based on particular non-geographical community); a source of continuity and certainty in a changing world; contribution to pleasant places to work and live, and economic benefits.

Likewise, the essential baseline positions for heritage are widely accepted:

- heritage is irreplaceable (once gone, a building cannot be replaced)
- the long term need for conservation remains, regardless of any economic crisis, and
- the best way to sustain the heritage is to use it.

But what happens to heritage in hard times? In fact, robust data is difficult to find. English Heritage publishes two annual series of data: Heritage at Risk (going back to 1999) and Heritage Counts (going back to 2002 – an annual review of state of the historic environment). The 2011 Heritage Counts report was published on 10th October, the same day as this presentation was given in Wrocław. www.heritagecounts.org.uk

The theme of the Heritage Counts report for 2011 is the role of the volunteer. Voluntary participation in England is very strong: at least 500,000 people volunteer in the historic environment (1% of national population); Heritage Open Days in 2010 involved 39,000 volunteers with 4,463 events and estimated 1.2 million visits; the public recently contributed £900,000 to buy the Staffordshire hoard of early medieval metalwork and £200,000 to support the site of the Roman Circus in the city of Colchester. New opportunities are being taken up by the voluntary sector, which increasingly is performing a wider range of roles. These include: exerting pressure and campaigning on heritage issues and development proposals; providing advice and training; fund raising, and taking direct action, for example by taking on historic buildings which the public sector is struggling to support.

Some hard facts from the 2010 – 11 audit work in England illustrated the situation. The number of historic “buildings at risk” is dropping (the biggest fall since 2006, and lowest overall since start of the register in 1999). The number of planning applications is still 32% lower than peak year of 2004/5, so development pressure on the historic environment should be less. But resources are also dropping – public funding for heritage in England is set to fall between 25% and 40% by 2014, with figures for the rest of the UK not much better. Perhaps most crucially, there are fewer heritage professionals working nationally and locally for government. Increasingly, government staff with heritage qualifications and experience find themselves in work which does not require them to deploy their expert skills, but to act more as managers or administrators.

The logical consequences of these trends for the heritage are definitely being seen in reality. There is an increased willingness to accept economic arguments in support of developments which threaten heritage, leading to demolition or excessive change in return for a sometimes questionable economic promise. Because of lower returns on investment, it is proving more difficult to develop viable schemes for heritage-led regeneration. There is simply less money to spend on repair and maintenance, and even if money can be found, there are fewer sources of professional advice.

In these difficult times, what strategies might be adopted, the presenter asked?

The key must be to maintain the importance of heritage in the public eye. But beyond this, we should consider adopting cheaper, temporary remedies for repair and maintenance – e.g. “mothballing” – rather than expensive “permanent” projects. We must try ever harder to identify beneficial uses for buildings, even if these are not traditional uses. The public sector, rather than allowing buildings in its care to decline, must seek to increase philanthropic involvement, perhaps by transferring buildings to voluntary groups. This last approach might include providing one-off endowments to community groups to take responsibility for key buildings at risk.

And finally, the official heritage bodies may well find themselves forced to re-focus their efforts, perhaps changing in character from bodies who “deliver” heritage for the public, to bodies who “facilitate” the public in managing heritage for themselves. One sensed that the presenter was less than happy with this vision of change for the government heritage sector – a sentiment shared by several other speakers (and the Rapporteur) who work in that sector.

Anna Kowalczyk's presentation offered a strong contrast to the previous paper, looking at the theme from the perspective of an international body active in many countries. Addressing the topic, “Why cultural heritage is important for the World Bank in Europe and Central Asia?” the audience were treated to an information-packed summary of the activities of this major financial institution in relation to cultural heritage. What follows here is a summary of the key points, and a wealth of detailed information is contained in the presentation, which is available elsewhere on the EHD website.

The World Bank is a vital source of assistance to developing countries, fighting poverty by helping people to help themselves and their environment. The Bank provides resources (especially low-interest loans, interest-free credits, and grants) and supports a very wide range of initiatives to share knowledge, build capacity and forge partnerships in public and private sectors.

One of the Bank's strategies is to promote “compact cities”, which have potential to be environmentally friendly and low-carbon. In developing countries, cities often feature historic cores that house poor residents and feature valuable cultural heritage assets. These cores can become the pivot of sustainable urban development. By investing in such cores, it is possible to create links between communities and local economic development. Permanent job opportunities reduce poverty and stimulate the local economy, and can support bottom-up social development.

From the Bank's viewpoint, cultural heritage is important: it supports sense of identity, can contribute to integrated economic development and offers social benefits which should be accessible to all. The Bank recognises the potential contribution of cultural heritage to its objectives, but also the conservation needs of cultural heritage, which are not usually well met in developing economies. An impressive list of heritage and community-based tourism projects have been supported since 1996 in Russia, Georgia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azerbaijan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Armenia, Croatia, Uzbekistan, Montenegro. Notably, many of these are shared or cross-border projects.

Investments in cultural heritage conservation have been varied, not just conserving historic buildings and streets and adapting historic buildings to create new uses and income streams, but also upgrading inventories, training for heritage workers and craftsmen to raise conservation standards and preserve/maintain skills and increase income. Small competitive grants to encourage community interest and innovation have been a particularly effective tool. For tourism development, good analysis is important to support realistic investment and expectations, as is training for tourism providers to raise levels of service and profitability.

Well-conceived projects have the capacity to deliver wider social benefit, teaching skills around group formation, participatory decision making, local planning and development of existing facilities such as museums. In the larger picture, these skills help promote community cohesion and reconciliation, can empower civil society and increasing government accountability.

Institutional capacity building has been a feature of supported projects, and in many cases the grass-roots approach has been balanced by effort at national level, for example improving skills at Ministries of Culture and Conservation Institutes, raising information and operational standards, contributing to legal and administrative changes, and the establishment of heritage management / development agencies and partnerships. Multi-agency approaches are standard, realizing institutional synergies.

A range of brief examples was provided, such as the Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage programme in Russia, which runs from 2011-2016 with a total project cost of 2017 \$250 million, \$100 millions met by an IBRD loan.

In future, the Bank sees itself continuing to be strongly involved in cultural heritage, and not just in tourism and local development (with a special emphasis on income generating activities). Urban revitalization is likely to be a focus, with more classic renovation projects with strong social/economic impacts. Work in the areas of intangible cultural heritage (post conflict, urban migration and youth issues) will grow, with cultural heritage seen as a medium for promoting minorities and post conflict social and infrastructure reconstruction. An emerging theme will be cultural heritage preservation & climate change/disaster risk management: not just physical resilience but also awareness-raising around climate change and natural disasters.

3.4 THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF HERITAGE BEYOND TOURISM

The two speakers in this session were asked specifically to look at areas in which heritage could support sustainable economic growth beyond the tourism sector. This was because it is not uncommon to find that politicians frequently do not look beyond tourism when considering the value of heritage. To some extent, this is because the quantification of values in other areas of economic activity can be problematical: even when it can be seen that benefits have accrued, how are these to be evaluated and compared with other possible activities?

Once again, the speakers were left free to create their own presentations, but asked to consider these ideas:

The most common strategy to use the economic potential of heritage is tourism. While important, tourism is not all. Many heritage sites cannot easily be made accessible to conventional tourism, or could be made accessible but would not attract enough attention to repay investment. How do we open the eyes of decision-makers to the economic potential of heritage beyond tourism?

Keywords: value, evaluation, social capital, real estate values, non-tourist heritage, inaccessible heritage, multi-path approach to development, spatial planning, identity building.

Sub-questions: Why and how do we value heritage? What are the main threats to its protection if tourism potential is the only criterion? How do historic surroundings influence local communities – and how do we measure this?

Terje Nypan (Norway) opened his exuberant presentation with a reflection upon the heritage of a can of beer* from France, featuring images of French cultural heritage sites and brewed according to the ancient rules of German brewing – as he said, there is “heritage *on* the can, and heritage *in* the can”. [* Note: the can was invisible, having been confiscated by airport officials who failed to appreciate its pedagogic and heritage values.]

Neatly following the previous speaker, the formal part of this presentation began with a quote from President Zoellick of the World Bank:

“Conservation of cultural heritage assets, regeneration of historic cities, as well as protection of natural heritage are resources for economic and social development. Investment to conserve and integrate them into the sustainable development of local communities can generate income, create employment, reduce poverty, stimulate enterprise development by the poor, foster private investment and leverage additional resources for conservation.”

Values arise in many forms: aesthetic value, experience value, existence value. Any development in artistic, educational or social areas which draws upon cultural heritage is in effect an economic movement, an element of production based on the heritage.

Of course, economic values are relative, with supply and demand operating in heritage as elsewhere: more popular objects or activities have higher values, while objects with apparently no value can be given value by being mobilised, by being “put into production” (as in the French concept of “valorisation”). By wise stewardship and sustainable deployment, heritage assets can become the basis of value-added industries. But this must be more than negative, static, preservation: the key is to add value by making preserved assets more valuable than they were before, often by making them more accessible to a wider range and greater number of people.

Dr Nypan then conducted the audience on a tour of Poland, as it might be seen through the eyes of an imaginary Chinese businessman thinking of making a business deal, but also secretly assessing the prospects for opening a plant in Europe for his own company. How might heritage values manifest themselves to this outside, non-European, observer?

The immediate impression is a good one: the cities and countryside look well cared-for, the people economical and industrious. Their sense of attachment, of being rooted, conveys a sense of trustworthiness. The hosts explain how much money tourists bring into the economy, for example Krakow with its 8 million visitors each year and an estimated 5 billion euros income for the area. In the whole of Europe, it seems, heritage tourism may be worth 424 billion euros.

But this seems materialistic, and what impresses the visitor more is the deep sense of identity which he observes in the people, and their pride in their national history. He has read of the battle of Vienna in 1683, when the Polish Army halted the Ottoman conquest of Europe, and sees at the Palace of Wilanow evidence of the great wealth this brought. He also hears about the 1919 attack by the Marxist-Leninist Russian forces on Poland, which was repulsed while the rest of Europe stood by. These events, and the people’s pride in them, suggest to him resilience, strength of will, ability to improvise – all highly valuable business traits.

The hosts take the businessman to dinner, in high-end restaurants, where local foods have been transformed by skilled chefs into modern cuisine. He notes the creativity, meticulous attention to details, sense of quality and, in passing, the concern with local food and thus food security. Finally, at a restaurant where traders have been meeting since the late 14th century, the deal is signed over good food and wine.

The second part of the speaker’s hypothetical businessman’s mission was to consider locating a production plant in the country. Researching on his computer, he notes how the rein brands itself, with reference to the historic environment and the quality of the living conditions. He knows that historic environments are attractive to the skilled specialists his company will want: in his own country the same upwardly mobile individuals are keen to buy the recreations of European style housing which are being built there, as the economy develops rapidly. He is also aware that caring for these older buildings makes sense in terms of resource utilisation and environmental issues which are problems back home, and that such work is itself important for the local economy. He also knows that such environments are attractive to the cultural and creative sector, and he knows he will need people from these sectors, designers and inventors, for his factory.

In short, the outside visitor is as impressed by the cultural capital in the people as much as in their environment, and the fact that they two are in touch with each other. This looks like a place in which he can do more business. But in no sense has he conducted a financial appraisal: he has reached his conclusions on the basis of observation and an understanding of universal social and historic forces. He has conducted an economic evaluation rather than a financial analysis, illustrating that there are other approaches to deploy heritage value than through the balance-sheet.

In summary, then, there are many strands of cultural heritage, and many interested players. Sustainable development consists of these all being mobilised in harmony. But most of all, in difficult economic times, it is founded upon the preservation of the fundamental assets of heritage which will underpin future development. This is not a time, the speaker concluded, for throwing away babies with the bathwater.

Donovan Rypkema (USA) followed on, with another presentation which covered a huge variety of ideas and images.

The speaker suggested there are two fundamental requirements to receive full economic benefit from heritage: thinking beyond the narrow perspective of the monument or site, and a willingness to commit to adaptive re-use. When these preconditions are met, heritage conservation contributes to the economy in several ways: directly, indirectly, functionally and by providing context.

Conservation work itself is a surprisingly large contributor to many economies. The construction aspect is labour intensive and, requiring craftsman skills, is often relatively well-paid compared with new-build construction work. Talented decorative artists are required, as are suppliers and producers of appropriate and authentic components.

Nor does heritage simply offer benefits around income and payments. There are also savings to be made, for both public and private sectors. Infrastructure (roads, utilities, and supporting services) usually already exists in historic areas, and renovation is typically cheaper than complete new provision. Landfill costs, and transport costs, can be reduced significantly by re-using materials already on site. And well-built and properly maintained older buildings are often easier to heat than modern ones.

With so much of modern life centred on the cities, the importance of the core, the heart of the city, is key. Well-managed heritage conservation can support city centre revitalisation, and gives character to civic identities, underpinning competitiveness. Both identity and competitiveness require differentiation, and in a world where modern buildings are often standardised, it is the heritage which offers this. Quality conserved civic buildings can find vibrant new uses, as exhibition or fine arts venues, trade centres, as venues for the performing arts or for street theatre. Combination of these into arts districts, and the fine old buildings themselves, attract creative artists, reinforcing the cycle. Nor is it just the buildings: city spaces offer spaces for activities in social and family life, whether these are weddings, vibrant café life or quiet contemplation: heritage spaces are places where people want to spend time – and money – whether in the great cities or the smaller towns.

Many fine heritage buildings were originally built for educational purposes, and others can be converted. The quality of education can be inspired by the quality of the teaching environment, and vice versa, reinforcing the attachment of the younger generation to the older fabric of heritage.

Many historic buildings were built, and continue in use, as housing, with a whole range of occupants from palatial residences for the rich to the more humble residences for the working classes. These classes may change over time – as witness the increasing trend for commercial or industrial buildings to be converted into desirable “loft” style apartments. Nor is the heritage value of conserved domestic accommodation merely aesthetic: studies in Zaanstad in the Netherlands identified premiums in house value, with homes in designated monuments/buildings, close to such buildings or in historic districts all around 25% higher than the norm for similar-sized dwellings elsewhere in the town. Likewise in the United States, recent studies in the context of the economic recession noted that mortgage foreclosure rates were half the level in historic districts as elsewhere.

Used as business space, historic buildings add distinctiveness and cachet, whether providing market space for produce or craft goods, premises for small businesses or specialty stores. Food and wine business and crafts production, in particular, can be seen to prosper when located in well conserved historic buildings, with the luxury goods trade particularly drawn to high-quality converted city centre buildings. Even the spaces in between such places offer opportunities for the informal economy, with street traders doing business in the tourist districts, which almost always equals the historic district.

It is in this last way, by offering context for everyday life and business, that the historic environment offers much which has yet to be quantified,. But even beyond that, the actual business of conservation can in itself offer opportunities to develop new types of relationship, new ways for everyone in society to negotiate new partnerships in social, as well as civic, space.

3.5 HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In this final session, the two speakers were asked to look at how heritage contributes to sustainable development. The notes provided to them before the Forum were as follows:

Heritage can be exploited provided it is properly cared for and its authenticity is preserved: this is what sustainable development means for cultural heritage. This session looks at some of the most difficult situations for heritage, where serious questions arise about objectives, methods and even what we mean by authenticity. Long-term regional development strategies can be heritage oriented, with best practice combining reflection on these questions with positive action.

Keywords: sustainability, interdisciplinary approach, spatial planning, EU policy and funding, landscape value and potential, non-renewable assets.

Sub-questions. Is context important in sustainable heritage protection, or just a background interest? How do we value landscapes: are the principles differ from sites/buildings? What are the risks when non-renewable heritage is exploited? And what are the risks if it is not? Who are the stakeholders?

Lucie Pára (France) addressed the topic of heritage as leverage for sustainable development, describing the "Grands Sites de France" network, This is a national association which brings together elected local authorities responsible for both day-to-day action and long term evolution, conservation and presentation of heritage sites both natural and cultural, protected for their landscape value. With 37 sites and 27 million visitors annually, these sites experience very strong tourism pressures which pose major challenges for their managers, in finding and maintaining the balance between the need to protect the heritage and the desire to exploit its tourism potential? Conservation needs the resources which tourism brings, at the same time as tourists bring problems. A proper balance, perhaps, equals the goal of sustainability?

In France, national policy works through cooperation with local authorities to manage sites with respect for their cultural and/or natural values, the sense of place and the needs and wishes of local people. The policy objective is to create local economic development linked to the sites' heritage values without damaging the sites themselves. Local authorities, working to plans agreed with the national administration, lead in the implementation of sustainable tourism development based on and around heritage sites.

The national administration guarantees legal protection of the Grands Sites, determines how they are designated and issues/refuses consents for restoration or changes within protected areas. But only a few major monuments are directly managed by the state. The large majority are managed by local agencies created and run by elected local authorities.

The Grand Sites are not just places of outstanding beauty and immense value, and they are more than the monument or protected area in the centre of each. They represent territories where people live and work. Whether in an urban or a rural setting, site managers must integrate the reality of everyday life into their plans and operations. Sites cannot be seen as exclusively for tourists, but also as living spaces, and the participation of local populations is essential, to support economic development and bring better understanding and pride to the inhabitants.

The presentation showed examples of practical actions on the ground, focussing on the key role of local authorities in the partnership between tourism and conservation, and showed how tourism planning is integrated into management of the heritage. The key need is to work, and to be seen to work, not only for tourists but also for local people, to achieve a truly sustainable development in all its senses: environmental, social and economic.

The 4 examples were chosen to illustrate good (and some bad) uses of heritage, to develop general principles for a sustainable development policy built on heritage value.

- Mont Saint-Michel and its Bay (Brittany). This internationally famous location, with the rocky island crowned by medieval Abbey, the beautiful sandy bay and causeway, is one of the most instantly recognisable sites in France. The area is currently working towards membership of the Grands Sites network. Many major issues are still to be faced. Tourism is essentially day-tripping, with very few overnight stays. Although the fantasy-like image draws many visitors, few penetrate as far as the heritage core, the Abbey itself – less than 30%. The masses of apparently aimless trippers and their cars act against the mystical sense of place. Benefits from tourism activities are strongly concentrated, mainly in the hands of just 3 commercial groups.
- Grand Site du Marais Poitevin (Poitevin Marsh) (Western France). This is a rural landscape with land and water harmoniously inter-mingled. Managed for centuries for the production of reeds (for thatching) and agriculture, with cattle grazing on the many small islands, the boat was the traditional means of transport. However, the way of life was not easy, and many old practices were falling onto disuse. Tourism development, planned in collaboration with the local population, has opened up the area more, with a network of cycle tracks and pathways allowing access into the remoter areas, complemented by boats access with local guides. Local accommodation providers have information to offer to visitors, and the average visitor stay has risen from 1.5 days to 7 days. This increase in tourism revenue has allowed traditional practices, such as transport of cattle to the remote island grazing areas, to be maintained, in turn supporting the preservation of the area's unique blend of cultural and natural heritage.
- Grand Site du Puy Mary – Volcan du Cantal (Central France). This is the largest extinct volcano in Europe. Set in a very remote and sparsely populated area, most of the tourism development here is small-scale, deliberately in keeping with the character of the area and the wishes of the local population. Local mayors are particularly important actors in this area. Individual and small group walking and nature/geology study feature strongly. The fact that this will never grow into "mass tourism" is recognised and welcomed – sustainable economic development means working effectively with what one has, not going beyond the capacity of the land and people.

- The Grand Site Sainte-Victoire, near Aix-en-Provence (Southern France). Although the name may not be familiar, many will recognise the landscapes of this area, especially the mountain itself, from the works of Paul Cezanne and those who followed him. Here a cultural landscape, essentially a landscape of association, is managed within the wider context of a landscape protected for its natural heritage interests. There is a strong shared local goal: development through preserving, managing, and promoting the site within a sustainable framework. This means, essentially, concentrating on quality, whether the quality of light and landscape or the quality of food and accommodation. Again, this is not a Grand Site which will ever accommodate large numbers, so the agreed strategy is to offer quality in return for a premium, not in a sense of negative explication but in the sense of maximising the value for each visitor as well as for the local economy.

From the 4 examples, Ms Pára drew the following conclusions for site managers :

- Preservation, management and tourism promotion should be in balance.
- Harmony between visitors and locals is the key to local economic development.
- Partnerships are essential.
- Heritage sites are not theme parks, and short term economic gains should never be a site manager's first aim.
- Heritage sites must be treated as a whole with the territories/regions that surround them.
- Remember that tourism is not the only means for local development.
- Heritage sites' impacts on local economy are important but indirect and will be attained only through management in a framework of sustainable development.
- If a site is well managed, all funds being invested in it contribute to the economic development of the area.

[Since 2010, the Grands Sites de France network has begun to expand into an international dimension, with the creation of the International Francophone Centre for exchange and training of heritage site managers. This is intended to reach out to French-speaking site managers worldwide, whether they come from French-speaking countries or not, who wish to manage their sites in a sustainable manner, exchange opinions and share their experiences with their peers who are tackling similar issues. Initially, the Centre will concentrate on three main areas:

- 1) building an international network and a platform for information resources,
- 2) offering a centre for training, and
- 3) setting up twinning arrangements between pairs or groups of sites.

More information will be available on: <http://www.polepatrimoine.org>.]

Kārlis Dambergs followed this with a fascinating site-specific presentation of the case of the Kalnciema Quarter, Riga, Latvia, where a heritage-inspired approach has been taken to securing the future of 6 old wooden buildings dating from 1890-1910. A key feature is that, although this project has called upon the help of heritage professionals, it has been led from the beginning by businessmen who are convinced of the values inherent in heritage – this is private-sector led heritage development.

The project began in 2000, with clear aims. These included the idea of approaching the renovation, reconstruction and new work with an appreciation of heritage values, showing that such work did not need major public sector investment to succeed, and attaining a harmonious and functional blend of traditional and modern. The conceptual model was of a series of social and commercial activities taking place in a public space. The project has been taken forward in collaboration with the municipality and the local media, focussing throughout on creativity.

Mr Dambergs took us on a quick tour of the buildings, noting how in each case a different mix of approaches had been taken, ranging from careful repair and retention of original materials right through to complete rebuilding and even modern additions. He made the point that while principles are important, it is also important to find workable solutions, and this can require compromises. The important feature of such an approach is that compromises must be conscious and, so far as is possible in matters of opinion, agreed by consensus.

The tour of Kalnciema:

- The Big House had retained all key dimensions behind a restored façade. Larger windows had been introduced at the sides and in the courtyard, with minimalist styling matched to the modern interior work. This building had been specifically tailored to the needs of the client, but at the same time retained considerable potential for flexible use, should the client's needs change or a new owner take over.
- The Brown Corner House, now used as the office for the Quarter, had been reconstructed, keeping the original external dimensions, with limited facade restoration. A veranda has been added, while internally the e layout was open=plan, in contrast to the original small rooms. The overall effect is on of appealing traditional craftsmanship combined with modern functionality.
- The Orange Building was a mix of restoration, especially the facade, and reconstruction. A raised attic offers more space inside, and the open plan layout makes for flexibility. Newly created details in the historic setting create the sense of “a play with historical atmosphere”, offering a pleasant background for commercial activity.
- The Blue Building was almost completely restored and repaired, both externally and internally. The floors and windows had to be replaced, with facsimiles of the original. The end result has a strong sense of history, a feeling of enduring ambience.
- The Small House was the first to be tackled. The faced was restored and almost all of the original details retained internally as well. Additions were built to house a modern kitchen and sanitary facilities. The mood might be described as enduring and authentic.
- A completely new building in a very modern but simple style had been built as a commercial gallery, replacing old wooden sheds which were in poor repair and of no great distinction.
- The final house, the Green House, has yet to be completed. At present there are two options under consideration. One is a substantial reconstruction and addition of a veranda, to serve as a bakery and shop, while the alternative is a much more simple approach, repairing and repainting, to serve as a carpentry workshop.

Around these buildings, the public life of the Quarter is enlivened by a street market, with many quality craft goods for sale – a good example of micro-economics. There are free concerts, creative artists work in the area, there are opportunities to eat and drink. The concept which has been maintained from the beginning is free public access to permit “unconstrained solidarity for the integration of society” – in short, making a place where people are not only free to come, but positively want to come, to share in quality experiences in a quality heritage-based modern setting.

3.6 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

A note on the working method

The Round Table discussions were organised and facilitated by Natasha Walker, with the help of trained local volunteers. Each volunteer acted as facilitator for one of the tables, which were organised according to working language (Polish, French, English). The tables were each asked to deal with a particular topic, and allocated pre-arranged questions which related to that topic.

The facilitators collected the ideas, comments, arguments and suggestions arising from each table and entered these into a computer programme, which was linked to a central editing facility staffed by Natasha Walker, Noel Fojut and Paulina Florjanowicz, with the help of several others. The editors grouped the incoming ideas into broad themes within each question, to permit the production of a condensed summary of the main strands which emerged in discussion.

One hour was allocated to the discussions, with the editors then working for an additional hour to allow the Rapporteur to be able to report back to the Forum after the lunchtime break.

While the working method was highly effective in stimulating ideas from the tables, it proved impossible to group and summarise the conclusions using the computer software in the time available. This was not so much a failure of the method as the product of the incredible range of comments made – about 700 individual comments were gathered over the one hour working period. The Polish contribution was particularly strong numerically, and a sizeable number of Polish contributions could not be incorporated on the day. These have now been translated into English and a complete list of all of the responses collected by the facilitators forms Appendix 2 to this report.

As a working method, this approach could usefully be tried again, but the Rapporteur's view is that the following changes would improve it

- Ensure the editorial team is trained as well as the facilitators.
- Provide for more editors, to work in parallel.
- Set slightly fewer questions for discussion.
- Pre-set some of the likely headings for responses to each question.
- Allow a slightly longer period for analysis.

Analysis of discussion

Given the richness of the discussion, what follows is inevitably impressionistic, and is based partly upon the summary of conclusions noted on the day of the discussion, and also upon a period of reflection after re-reading the entire list of contributions. It is entirely possible that another observer, present on the day and presented with the overwhelming range of ideas, would provide a summary with a very different emphasis. There will be ideas presented here which some who were present may not think significant, and there will be ideas missing here which others think formed important messages. The art of reportage is not an exact science. For this reason, the full list of recorded responses is offered separately on the EHD Website.

The questions

The starting questions, agreed in discussions between the organisers before the Forum, were as follows:

Question 1: What effects is the financial crisis having on heritage (positive and negative): are these real or hypothetical?

Question 2: Which economic arguments can we deploy to persuade policy makers to invest in heritage despite hard times?

Question 3: What benefits, for individuals and society, arise from accessing or taking part in heritage (apart from tourism)?

Question 4: What are the positive (and negative) effects of heritage on local communities?

Question 5: How can benefits for local communities be increased (recommendations)?

Question 6: How do we measure the benefits to society of heritage assets (despite only a very few people ever experiencing these at first hand)?

Question 7: If heritage is a non-renewable asset: what are the risks to it?

Question 8: How can heritage be sustainably developed and protected?

Question 9: How can protection of, access to and participation in our heritage be supported by creative additions: where is the "heritage of the future"?

Question 10: Which policy areas need to integrate heritage and how can this be realised?

Question 11: Are there any other comments to be recorded?

For the Round Table discussions, these questions were grouped into three clusters, one associated with each of the 3 sessions of the themes covered by the presentations:

- Theme 1 – Heritage during the financial crisis – luxury or necessity?
(Questions 1 and 2)
- Theme 2 – The economic potential of heritage beyond tourism
(Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6)
- Theme 3 – Heritage and sustainable development
(Questions 7, 8, 9 and 10).

Summary of the debates

Question 1: What effects is the financial crisis having on heritage (positive and negative): are these real or hypothetical?

In the discussion around Question 1, there was a very clear clustering of the many ideas and comments at the tables. The participants felt that money, of itself, was perhaps not the main problem, with some noting that money has always been scarce compared with the needs and ambitions of those who care for cultural heritage, and wish to see it better cared for and more widely accessible. Rather, there are two key problems which already exist, and which are perceived (rather than an actual) shortage of resources was making worse. Firstly, it was felt that the shortage of expertise which has existed for a long time would have a more serious impact at a time when civil society is being asked to take on more of the heritage burden: even if the willingness exists, will there be enough experts to guide the willing citizens? Secondly, there was a real concern that the desire for economic development “at all costs” would place intolerable pressures upon those who are responsible for regulating change in the historic environment, to make them accept lower standards.

A final reflection was that the situation appeared to be very different in countries across Europe, and that we need to know more about the decision-making process in those countries (such as Norway) where the spending on cultural heritage has been increased. Is there something distinctive about the heritage of such countries, or is there something special in the way these countries perceive heritage, from an economic perspective?

Question 2: Which economic arguments can we deploy to persuade policy makers to invest in heritage despite hard times?

Question 2 produced fewer ideas in discussion, and these were closely grouped around three main areas of action. The importance of emphasising long-term strategies for investment in cultural heritage cannot be over-estimated, and schemes which offer a quick profit should be regarded with suspicion. Secondly, it is important to consider all possible sources of funds and non-financial support, to be creative about what projects are seeking to achieve and about how their success can be measured. Outcomes can be other than profit, and we need better measures for non-financial benefits. Finally, and a point which seemed to win general acclamation from the other groups, was the thought that, when we are seeking support from decision-makers, we need to mix our messages, to combine hard figures and emotional appeal.

Question 3: What benefits, for individuals and society, arise from accessing or taking part in heritage (apart from tourism)?

The debate around Question 3 was very interesting and lively, with two dominant themes: integration and quality.

It was considered that the ability of the cultural heritage to underpin initiatives with multiple actors and multiple benefits was a very strong point in favour of investing in heritage, especially if participation is open and multi-vocal. Properly managed (sustainable) projects can produce demonstrable benefits for all, even those who do not participate, simply by raising the general level of prosperity. When this is the case, it is important for those who support heritage to be clever about demonstrating how the improved prosperity has arisen from the heritage investment. The integrative power of heritage-based development projects can be great, because they should be “culturally aware” and therefore less likely to accidentally exclude sectors, groups or races.

The quality of life which cultural heritage can bring to society was felt to be a very significant factor. It is important to continue to strive for quality in all cultural heritage work, and ensuring quality adds value in itself – to the experience as actor or observer, to the end product and to the respect and remuneration given to actors. Successful projects help to build clusters of like-minded enterprises, with those who have similar principles and beliefs working alongside each other in a collaborative manner. But it is also important to ensure that these “clusters of excellence” do not become elitist and exclusive, and to balance personal sense of achievement and well-being with a sense of responsibility to society – to make heritage accessible and not to appropriate it for private ends.

Question 4: What are the positive (and negative) effects of heritage on local communities?

Question 4 produced a large number of very varied responses, with several themes recurring, notably context, collaboration, integration, inclusion and exclusion. A very valid general observation was made, that what might appear positive to one person in one situation might appear negative to another observer in a different situation.

The localisation of heritage assets or practices in particular places or communities was noted as a key characteristic of cultural heritage, and one which has some automatic benefits from the viewpoint of sustainability. This specificity is important but can prove to be a problem. For example, a local craft may always have been practiced by a very specific community. If that community is reducing in numbers, is it acceptable for the craft to be handed on to a wider circle of practitioners, or does that in some way reduce the authenticity of the practice?

Localisation can also have negative impacts, when a whole place or community feels it is becoming a museum, and that people going about their ordinary lives feel like exhibits. Or, more simply, when a heritage place becomes so popular it is over-exploited and destroyed, both for the visitor and for those who live there.

However, it was generally agreed that well-managed development has many positive features, fostering a sense of stability, shared purpose and belonging. It was felt that this should make it easier to include newcomers into the community, because with improved prosperity and more jobs there should be less feeling that incomers were “stealing/changing ‘our’ culture”.

Again, there was caution about the idea of large-scale heritage-based development, because it was felt that “single-theme” economic developments of any kind (and not simply those based on heritage) could tend to force communities into unnatural patterns of activity and exclude those who were not actively engaged. This poses a problem, because it often requires outside assistance or finance to make projects happen, and this seldom comes without a countervailing loss of local democratic engagement – money comes with strings, expert advice with expert control, and so on.

Question 5: How can benefits for local communities be increased (recommendations)?

The participants brought many individual experiences to the table. The themes which emerged were around legislation (protection and tax), investment, awareness and planning/collaboration.

It was recognised that the foundation, before any ideas about increasing benefits, must be sound heritage protection law and sound administration of that law. No benefits can accrue to the community from heritage capital if the asset has been destroyed. It was felt that there was often a “vicious circle”, with a lack of awareness of the economic potential of heritage leading to a lack of willingness to protect, invest and plan, leading in turn to a lack of performance.

At a national level, taxation policy was seen as a problem for heritage. There was a feeling that owning and having to care for a heritage asset should convey some benefit to owners, in recompense for the added costs involved. Not all heritage assets command higher prices, and often realising the added value embedded in a historic house, for example, requires that house to be sold to realise that premium – which is the last thing a caring owner wants to do. Reductions in VAT rates for maintenance and repair were considered to be a good starting point. However, there was also recognition of the fact that monitoring a system of tax breaks could be difficult: how are the authorities to be certain that materials have been used on the heritage asset and not on some other project nearby?

Investment by municipalities was felt to be a recurrent issue, with low levels of investment or uncertain funding patterns a problem. It can sometimes be relatively easy to obtain a one-off capital sum, but heritage projects typically need long-term sustained investment. Support for physical works to heritage assets is only part of the picture, and obtaining support for running costs was much harder. This was particularly a problem where, as is common, a “loss-making” heritage asset provides wider benefits for the surrounding area.

Awareness of heritage potential, both within communities and more widely, was seen as a problem, and it was felt that better inclusion of heritage in education at all levels was a priority, as was more determined awareness raising with decision-makers. The nature of awareness-raising is crucial – too often heritage experts and activists are characterised as resisting all change, and we need to move to being seen advocates acceptable, sustainable and well-managed change, in the interests of heritage as well as of society.

Planning was felt to be an issue in some cases, with a lack of engagement and collaboration with the local population. Decisions can be made at a high, strategic, level which have unforeseen consequences and can result in local communities regarding themselves not as actors, but as being acted upon, and withdrawing from participation, leaving heritage opportunities to be exploited by outsiders, with a raised risk of loss of authenticity.

Question 6: How do we measure the benefits to society of heritage assets (despite only a very few people ever experiencing these at first hand)?

There was complete agreement that the measures which presently exist are limited, and too strongly biased towards financial profit. Measures of impacts (both long-term and short-term), of quality and of participation are all required. And we do also need measurements of money invested and profits realised – because however high-minded we may wish to be, most people do still care about money.

Long-term the difficulty is not so much in designing economic measures: there are many of these, on employment, average incomes, unemployment rates and so on. The difficulty is that most of these measures are at a very generalised level, national or at best regional, and that it is very difficult to make a strong case to attribute improvements in these indicators directly to investment in the heritage. When an area improves in prosperity, everyone wishes to claim the praise. More could be made of softer measures, for example the extent to which a heritage site is perceived as the regional “brand” in external public relations and marketing.

Short-term measures are hard to use for heritage investment, which is usually characterised by a need for patience and a long-term perspective. However, one idea might be to make more use of competitive approaches, for example awards to the most popular heritage project. To some extent these exist in individual countries and even across Europe, but could more be done to share good practice? Might commercial sponsors of prizes then be drawn into serious investment in conservation? Or are sponsors more likely to come from those already engaged?

Qualitative measures were felt to be important, but there was some debate about how these might operate. Does one judge the success of a project solely on financial criteria (jobs created, incomes raised and profit to shareholders). If one is using expert judgement, who agrees the criteria and who should act as the judges? Here the same questions arise as for the competition idea – who decides what is “best”?

Measures of citizen engagement were regarded as potentially very powerful, because they can demonstrate the extent to which heritage contributes to other social objectives, such as inclusion and a sense of community and solidarity. Data on participation by volunteers, by young people, but disadvantaged groups, by ethnic minorities – these would all be of interest to politicians. There was a sense that in some countries heritage may offer a relatively safe area of engagement, in which collaborative social structures can be built to support wider social cohesion – but what would a set of measurements look like for this? It might be that by combining heritage with other concerns, our sector could reach out to new participants, but this would in itself make measure the “heritage dividend” harder.

Question 7: If heritage is a non-renewable asset: what are the risks to it?

The discussion around Question 7 ranged very widely, but there were four broad themes, and general agreement that these were the most significant areas of concern.

Most important is the preservation of assets in the face of many pressures, ranging from physical redevelopment to the impact of globalisation on intangible heritage. Even when assets survive, there is a risk, both for intangible as well as tangible heritage, in that difficult compromises have to be made which can result in a loss of character/authenticity and thus a loss of value.

It was felt that heritage capital could also be at risk from the well-meaning application of standardised approaches, as “one size fits all” attitude. This requires special attention to each case, and while exchanging good heritage practice is always worthwhile, there is a need to be sure that local character is not lost. A particular risk is the current popularity of “high technology” approaches, with available funding invested in impressive interpretation and virtual access, while the underlying physical asset is increasingly neglected.

Prioritisation was regarded as important, to avoid trying to spread available resources too thinly. But even if prioritising systems are agreed by all the experts and politicians, and can be shown to be fair and reasonable, will they work? Everyone loves their local historic places or their local traditions, and never more than when there is the threat of any available resources being spent in the neighbouring village and not theirs.

But most of all, the participants had a strong message: do something, and start now. Too much time is wasted on discussions and debates, while cultural heritage is being lost at an alarming rate. It is no use to agree on a perfect European system in fifty years time. We need action now, however imperfect, and we will learn as we go.

Question 8: How can heritage be sustainably developed and protected?

This was perhaps the widest of any of the questions, and discussion covered a correspondingly broad range of topics.

Leadership and vision emerged as the highest-level consideration, with particular concern that the increasing enthusiasm for “democratic” approaches (what in England has recently been called “the Big Society”) must not to be used by national and regional authorities as an excuse to surrender responsibility. There is a legitimate role for government and a legitimate role for civic society: although the boundaries may be moveable, both are required.

The need to pursue holistic and integrative approaches was agreed as the core of what sustainable development must mean. Heritage-only approaches are probably not sustainable by definition, far less in practice. It is the whole environment, the total locality, which should be the focus, with cultural heritage contributing wherever it can, leading where it should, and not placed in a “heritage box” to receive separate and special treatment.

Open-minded and inclusive attitudes are key. It is not just heritage experts who can have good ideas about heritage: perhaps we are too familiar with our own world of experience, and need ideas from other sectors, even if these can seem shocking at first. All actors, all ideas and all possible investors must be engaged in considering the future. But at the same time we must be strong enough to reject what is unworkable. We need to manage change for the benefit of society and for the benefit of heritage, not simply accept all changes and then try to find good things in them to offset the damage they have done.

The role of the community as the focal point must not be under-estimated. In many cases, especially for intangible heritage, it is the community which has, over time, created what the visitor or consumer now wishes to access. The role of the community in continuously refreshing cultural heritage must never be forgotten. If there is any doubt about the correct point of balance between the needs of residents and the wishes of visitors, the decision must be made on the side of the local community.

And finally, we need to take time to demonstrate and raise awareness of successes. Too often, we are involved in projects, then we move on, without pausing to learn the lessons of what worked, what failed, and considering what we would be better if we could start again. We need to develop a heritage of good practice as we move forwards – and this needs to be shared across Europe. Is there a case for a European Cultural Heritage Observatory, and what would this look like? Might it be a virtual network, along the lines envisaged by the Faro Convention? Are the European Heritage Forums the seed from which this can grow?

Question 9: How can protection of, access to and participation in our heritage be supported by creative additions: where is the “heritage of the future”?

For Question 9, discussion also covered a wide range, and there was considerable overlap with the debates on Question 8, notably in the areas of integration, awareness- raising and the need to preserve authenticity. Comments covering these areas are not repeated here.

The discussions here looked more deeply into the methods by which a wider participation might be secured. The benefits and disadvantages of modern technology were considered, with its appeal to younger age groups and its undoubted potential to offer new ways of seeing the past seen as being offset by its increasing ubiquity, and the tendency for the virtual representation of the heritage to replace the actuality. In addition, there was some enthusiasm for welcoming ways of interaction which have not always been favoured by the “pure” heritage expert, for example battle re-enactment, costumed drama and even online war-gaming based on real historic situations.

There was a real divergence in viewpoints regarding the future. One perspective rejected totally the idea of a “heritage of the future”, not in the sense of disagreeing with the proposition that elements of our life today will in the future become heritage, but in the sense that we cannot specify which those elements will be, because we are too close to the present to be able to pre-judge the longer-term verdict of history. On the other hand, there was also a strong feeling that we must continue to strive for what the Faro Convention calls “quality in contemporary additions”, in effect that we should act as if everything we create may one day be considered as the heritage of the future.

Question 10: Which policy areas need to integrate heritage and how can this be realised?

The short summary to the conclusions of discussion on Question 10 was “all areas, and by any legitimate means”, but this does not reflect the variety of views and the ideas brought forward.

There was widespread recognition that, however much we may talk about working with heritage in an integrated society, in reality government functions tend to break society up into recognisable sectors, which structure the framework of discourse.

Thus financial policy must take account of the specific needs of heritage, for example through taxation regimes.

Planning and infrastructure policy must consider impacts on the cultural heritage – an area that may appear to be relatively well dealt with, within the European Union at least, by the Environmental Impact Assessment approach. But in practice there is a great variety of approaches, with some countries not even recognised the historic dimension as part of the “true” environment, defining the latter as purely natural. This even applies in some countries which have signed the European Landscape Convention.

Education policy was singled out as very important, with a desire to see heritage content used more widely, and not just within history classes: teaching could use examples with heritage content in, for example, languages, business studies or mathematics. At the same time, there was a specific concern expressed about the tendency of countries which have an approved national curriculum to focus on very limited, topic-based, views of history, and a desire to raise awareness amongst educators so that a wider and richer view of the past features in classrooms and university lecture halls.

One factor which is common to all policy sectors is evidence, and the increasing demand from decision-makers for data to support “evidence-based policy making”. It was noted that this automatically places innovative ideas at a disadvantage compared with the tried and tested. How does one demonstrate that a radical new idea will work, when the only real evidence, until it has been tried, is vision and faith? There was a feeling that, in difficult times, it seems harder to gain a hearing for new ideas, and that investment should be limited to what is known, for fear of catastrophic failure. The old proverb “better half a loaf than no bread” springs to mind.

Another common factor was the recognition that the exact geometry of interactions between policy sectors will vary from place to place and case to case, according to the specifics of the local situation. In some areas the most important heritage from a national perspective may not be of interest locally, while the strongest local interest may be in a heritage which the national experts have tended to ignore. Numerous examples were cited, such as the Silesian coal-mining heritage. But there was also a counter-feeling, against the steady expansion of the heritage definition, as this makes it harder to prioritise.

In concluding this summary of the round table discussions, it is fitting to comment that, in the discussion of this last topic, the participants returned to the theme of the Forum’s opening presentation, that of borderlines, with the reflection that the most promising areas for cultural heritage to make its mark can be found on the borderlines between different policy areas.

Question 11: Are there any other comments to be recorded?

The comments here have been distributed amongst the preceding summaries.

3.7 CLOSING DECLARATION

Background

In preparing for the Forum, the organisers agreed that they wished to issue some form of closing declaration. This was seen as being important for two reasons: to capture a high level summary of the key topics discussed, and also to provide guidance for taking forward the EHD programme, and the Forum itself, in future years.

However, the organisers also agreed that such a declaration would only have validity if it reflected the broad sense of the Forum discussions, and not if it simply imposed pre-formed ideas on the Forum.

A working method was adopted to meet these concerns. An outline draft was prepared before the event, but this was then taken into the Forum and adapted in the light of the round table discussions. The adaptation thus took account of the emerging consensus as it appeared to the Chair, Rapporteur and Facilitator.

The Rapporteur then offered the text to the participants, and took a quick vote (by show of hands) on each of the four main recommendations which were proposed. It should be noted that all four propositions were agreed by a majority, but that there was markedly less overwhelming support for the fourth proposition (increasing the “European dimension” of EHD) than for the other three.

What follows is the agreed text of the closing declaration:

Closing Declaration

The participants in the 4th European Heritage Forum, held in the city of Wrocław, Poland, on 10-12 October 2011:

- Recognising the value of heritage to society in this beautiful, historic and multicultural city and in all cities and territories throughout Europe;
- Noting a continued need in all sectors for a greater understanding of the potential which heritage can offer for quality of life and the needs for its integration in planning for an economically sustainable future; and
- Fully conscious of the current pressures upon resources, both public and private:

Recommend, in the context of European Heritage Days activities, that:

... all relevant actors should seek to balance the potential social, cultural and economic benefits when using heritage as a resource,

...strategies should be developed for evaluating and demonstrating the positive economic and social benefits to local communities of conservation and access to the heritage,

...a community-focussed approach has the potential to mobilise resources for sustainable heritage development, conservation and access,

...the EHD programme should focus resources on increasing the European dimension, encouraging exchange, collaboration and cross-border event development, with the object of promoting a vision of a common European heritage.

And, finally, **recommend** that future European Heritage Days be taken forward in the positive spirit and on the basis of our discussions here in Wrocław in a truly collaborative manner, emphasising diversity as a source of strength and not of division and highlighting our shared European heritage as well as our rich local, regional and national heritages.

3.8 CLOSE OF THE FORUM

The formal deliberations of the Forum were brought to a close by Paulina Florjanowicz, who gave a short speech thanking the many sponsors, organisers and participants for valued contributions.