

SHARING HERITAGE REFLECTIONS AFTER EYCH 2018 ABOUT THE PLACE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR FUTURE COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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Abstract

During the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 we offered new ways for participation of the broader society. We used the motto SHARING HERITAGE to invite everybody to join in the opportunities and events all over the country during 2018. Especially we invited to discover the European dimension of our local and regional located cultural heritage. To stimulate new European experiences in known or unknown and divers cultural heritage that was one of our central aims. During and after EYCH 2018 we got a lot of positive response and we can reflect some important messages for the future work in heritage communication, education and European cooperation. EYCH was a great success and much more than a year of events. It gave a us a lot of impulse to go on with SHARING HERITAGE.

Keywords

Cultural Heritage, Sharing Heritage, EYCH

1. *Cultural Heritage - it's like a textbook on exchange and European history*

Some statements that may seem commonplace. We know that

- cultural areas are the result of a dense network of cultural links and relationships;
- culture and cultural heritage are formed by and are part of the process of exchange and movement, they are shaped by cultural transfer, adoption and adaptation, then undergo their own process of further development and find expression in a wide range of local and regional variants that, at the same time, are also the result of other stimuli - similar to glass beads of different shapes and shades on a string.

For centuries, our continent has been crisscrossed by exchange routes, mostly for trade with goods followed by many other forms of exchange especially ideas.

Just two examples to illustrate this:

For a long time, Flanders was referred to as the marketplace of the whole Christian world.

Genovese, Venetian, Florentine, Spanish and French merchants were present there, as were the cogs of the German merchants from the Baltic region or the English, Scots, Irish, Dutch and

Frisians. And, indeed, merchandise from as far away as the Levant, the Baltic region and Russia bore witness to the enormous distance over which this exchange took place.

Together with these goods, Flemish painting and architecture spread far into the Baltic region where this style was selectively adopted and adapted. The Flemish Renaissance was the source of inspiration for many of the splendid buildings throughout the Baltic region.

And another example from the Baltic region: 12th-century baptismal fonts from the Isle of Gotland demonstrate the flowering of stonemasonry at that time. They were highly prized and made to order for many churches throughout the Baltic Sea region. Their iconographic diversity bears witness to cultural influences from Western Europe, on the one hand, and Russia and the Byzantine Empire on the other – an artistic exchange based on trade relations in the early years of the Hanseatic League.

These examples show how Europe's identity was shaped and enriched through cultural exchange generating an enormous diversity which today constitutes its wealth.

The rise of nationalism in the 19th century marked a turning point.

The focus on national identity was accompanied by a process of dissociation from neighbours, which had always been culturally close and inspired each other.

Dissociation became the principle for forming national cultural identities.

Yet another example to illustrate this:

During the process of German national unification in the 19th century – slow and difficult at first, then vigorously pushed by the Prussian leadership – Gothic art was overnight declared “the national style”.

Finishing Gothic cathedrals became a national mission. Cologne Cathedral and the German Emperor’s personal commitment to its completion bear eloquent witness to this. The cathedral was completed at a time of strong national sentiment and renewal with the aim of unifying the German territories through “blood and iron”. To mobilize the masses, culturally dissociating Germany in particular from France came in very handy.

This was by no means only a German phenomenon; countries all over Europe pursued this path. Portraying national identity and cultural greatness with much pathos in paintings, buildings and memorials was typical of the 19th and early 20th centuries and thus shaped the sense of national identity for generations.

The results are all too familiar: wars and conflicts, millions of people killed, innumerable works of culture lost or destroyed. This was followed by difficult peace treaties and shifts of the borders – both in 1918 and in 1945 – and the creation of new states.

Learning the lessons of the devastating destruction caused by two world wars, today’s Europe has turned into a continent of peaceful cooperation based on economic interaction.

The European Union has become a large-scale peace project, unique in European history. That is the greatest victory of our era!

This is also why in 2012 the EU was rightfully awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. This has been the crucial lesson that we have learnt from European history and that we consider an obligation and a mission for the future.

For my feeling the end of the cold war period in 1989 was the greatest gift we got in our generation, because the reunifying of Europe started with the fall of the Berlin wall. Now we have to continue the great European project!

Due to the many border shifts in the course of European history, a territory defined by national boundaries today often boasts cultural heritage of different historical, cultural and ethnic origins that cannot be clearly traced to just one nation. Certain cities are especially good examples of such a crossroads or melting pots of different cultural identities:

To mention five of these cities:

- Lviv, or Lwow in Polish and Lemberg in German

- Trieste

- Toledo

- Wroclaw, or Breslau in German

- Plovdiv

- Visby

These are culturally rich cities marked by different cultural influences and encounters.

Their monuments, buildings and collections and the music, theatre and literature generated there bear witness to mutual influence, stimulation and fascination, and also to conflict.

And, indeed, attempts that range from elevating and segregating one’s own culture to displaying hostility and humiliating the neighbours have also left their traces in these cities, as they are visible in many other places. These traces, too, belong there and are valuable to impart an understanding of the long and sometimes painful path to peaceful co-existence.

Our cultural heritage is like a big textbook, an open-air museum of European history. You could also describe it as a tool box for cultural and historical education.

Reading it and discovering it is of interest not only in order to look at our history in retrospect. No, its real importance lies in enabling us to live together and to shape Europe’s future together.

This heritage will be even more valuable for us today if we are able to emphasize, against the backdrop of Europe’s cultural diversity, what unites us and make this our leitmotif.

This is a major difference to previous approaches.

Not what divides us, but what unites us must be the driving force behind discovering, unlocking and sharing our heritage as a foundation for living together and developing a shared sense of identity.

This is not about constructing a presumably uniform European cultural identity, but about discovering and living what unites us and what we have in common in Europe, despite our local,

regional and even national diversity and differences.

The Viennese historian Wolfgang Schmale once said that we have to think Europe differently, and stressed that diversity and unity are based on difference and acceptance.

This means not only discovering and explaining cultural heritage or joint remembrance, but also sharing responsibility for preserving our cultural heritage and for teaching about it, for example in border areas or other areas of cultural encounter (for example Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau's Park stretching along both sides of the German-Polish border on the river Neisse). Current debates about the culture of remembrance show that there can be very different ways to understand and practice remembrance. Making an effort at least to understand our neighbours' perspective and to explain our perspective to them can also help bring us together.

This was exactly the idea behind the proposal for a European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018!

And this was also the approach followed by Germany expressed in its motto "SHARING HERITAGE – take part and share".

This was and is meant as a friendly invitation to society at large to join in and come together as Europeans and neighbours.

This motto refers not only to Europe and our neighbours, but also to the challenges within our own countries regarding social cohesion. Our cultural wealth is a good basis also for an intercultural dialogue. However, in order to use it for this purpose, we need better strategies and resources.

This raises a number of questions that are not at all easy to answer. We have to discuss about it!

What does common cultural identity mean in a society, what determines it and how does it change? Do we need it? How does it relate to other cultural identities?

How do people develop a feeling that the cultural heritage belongs to them and is theirs, and how do they foster this? How can this be achieved together with others and thus create a sense of community?

Can a European sense of identity be reconciled with the yearning for a strong local or regional identity or feeling of belonging? Recently, the German word "Heimat", which roughly translates as "homeland", has experienced a somewhat questionable revival. We

certainly have to be aware that, while many people on this continent have long found it natural to regard Europe as their home, many others do not think along these lines and instead define "home" in local or regional terms. Are these diverging consequences of global development mutually exclusive? What kind of bridges are conceivable?

These are interesting and important questions that merit reflection and discussion even beyond 2018 to give this topic the attention and significance it deserves.

To my mind, the main point here is consciously identifying with and preserving, as well as teaching and talking about cultural heritage. I would like to illustrate how we intend to foster this sense of ownership regarding the cultural heritage, how we intend to use SHARING HERITAGE in Germany to this end and what our expectations are.

What are we doing in Germany to develop this sense of ownership and to foster this exchange on cultural heritage?

The European Year of Cultural Heritage was not intended to be a random series of projects and events. Early on, the German Cultural Heritage Committee and the National Programmes Advisory Board outlined a thematic framework for SHARING HERITAGE. It will guide us through this year and, at the same time, leave enough room to account for the heterogeneity of our cultural heritage. European cultural heritage is exciting and enriching, but often also ambiguous, uncomfortable and controversial. Five themes illustrate this diversity and provide the framework for all official projects that will take place under the roof of SHARING HERITAGE:

Theme 1, "Europe: Exchange and movement" understands Europe as a network of diverse relations and ties shaped by the exchange not only of goods, but also of cultural techniques, values and ideas.

Theme 2, "Europe: Border and encounter regions" focuses on the connective aspects of borders and neighbouring regions.

Theme 3 deals with the European city, evolved over centuries, always subject to change. As a cultural melting pot and home and workplace of many people, it is an essential part of our cultural heritage.

In 2018, we also commemorate European wars and peace accords. With Theme 4, "Europe: Remembrance and new starts" we want to recall

that European history has been marked by a long sequence of conflicts followed by a century-long path to peaceful co-existence.

Theme 5, "Europe: Heritage lived" asks how Europe sees itself and defines its own identity, and looks at how the tangible and the intangible cultural heritage interact.

From an early stage, German museums, too, have played an important part in shaping the German contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The National Programmes Advisory Board counts among its members the German Association of Museums, the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Association of Palaces and Gardens in Germany. After all, one thing was soon clear: In order to reach as wide an audience as possible for the European Year of Cultural Heritage, museums and exhibitions had to become an integral part of its implementation.

2. Projects with a high demand for participation and common view on heritage

The European Year of Cultural Heritage has now been officially concluded and we can reflect the results. The year's projects included several high-profile and innovative exhibitions. A very special exhibition project, "Peace. From Antiquity to the Present Day", was be simultaneously launched in several museums in the city of Münster: at the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, the Kunstmuseum Pablo Picasso, the Stadtmuseum Münster and the Archäologisches Museum at Münster University. After all, 2018 marked the anniversary not only of the beginning of the Thirty Years War, but also of the Peace of Westphalia. But what does "peace" mean on a continent torn by so many conflicts and ruptures? Not only have the museums addressed this question in Münster, but there were two more special events being part of this overall project called "Peace. Europe": At Munster's town hall, an historic site of the signing of the Peace of Westphalia, the exhibition commemorating the event was being digitally overhauled, and the nearby city of Osnabrück, the other site of the signing of the Peace of Westphalia, held an international youth meeting ("Labor Europa") on this topic. Young people from all over Europe came together on historic places of the Westphalia Treaty and find their own cultural expressions and creative reflections about the role of war and peace in Europe.

A major exhibition "Bewegte Zeiten" was held very successfully in Berlin. More than 120.000 people visited that exhibition in the Gropius Bau. This phantastic large scale exhibition told European stories of cultural exchange and movement during the centuries by archaeological artefacts. Artefacts from the most important excavations of the last 15 years in Germany opened up European history of exchange processes and made apparent how decisive new perspectives on our heritage can be. These questions are of high social relevance for our present and the future.

SHARING HERITAGE's very diverse activities were meant to be beyond just a few large-scale events . Altogether we were able to count more than 400 projects all over the country. At the heart of every contribution there was always a piece of cultural heritage, a memorial, a historic site, an authentic place of remembrance or the people who were and have been linked to this heritage in the past and the present.

In Germany exhibitions, school student competitions, workshops, music festivals – the formats were highly diverse, and the commitment behind the cultural heritage year was equally divers. The cultural heritage year was largely borne by a broad-based enthusiasm for the topic. Many of the activities have been initiated by small cultural institutions, by civil society and private bodies. Most of the events have were implemented without any extra public funds. The EU, the Federal Government, the federal states and the towns and cities, however, have made some funds available.

The project "denkmal Europa", a joined initiative of the conservation and heritage protection boards, is marking a turning point in the work of these institutions. For the first time, 16 different boards came together for an unprecedented history and heritage mediation and education project. It was a major success, which will receive a European Heritage Award in 2019! The initiators understood that the EYCH 2018 was a great opportunity, using the financial support of the federal government. It is a prime example showing how to sustainably invest more - and more professionally - in the conveyance of cultural heritage.

Raising awareness of the common narrative of our heritage in Europe, we started "Ringling the bells". In and after the Thirty Years' War, a lot of bells were destroyed to make cannons. Bells

remember us to safeguard peace and the heritage in Europe, as they are a form of heritage one can hear across the borders of cities and countries, sending vibrations and raising emotions. In 2019, let us again ring the bells together for peace and our heritage on the International Peace day on the 21 of September!

In 2018, it got an enormous positive response and it worked very well. It was the first time that thousands of bells in churches, city halls, bell towers and memorial sites rang together for peace and the cultural heritage from Finland to Malta, from Ireland to Slovenia. Also, the collaboration of owners, bell ringers and other contributors all over Europe created a movement that manifested a positive experience, a movement which will continue to ring the bells and to discuss further future activities with a more common narrative on our heritage.

It was very easy to join in: Projects that have had a clear European dimension and thematically fit under the five guiding themes can be registered on the sharingheritage.de website. After their approval they were added to the online platform and the events schedule and communicated via the online communication channels. In addition, the projects could then be advertised using the official SHARING HERITAGE label, confirming that they were a contribution to the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. It worked and is doing so very well, still, while generating a high degree of identification.

3. *Cultural Heritage and the heirs*

We made some significant experiences working on new formats for the younger generation; addressing a younger audience that initially has little or no interest in "cultural heritage". We've broken new ground with the "#Vollerbe" campaign and a broad social media offering, targeting 14 to 21 year olds asking: What is your heritage? Employing a strong visual approach, the campaign corresponded to the communication habits of "Generation Z" and brought cultural heritage to a young world. The campaign was primarily implemented through Instagram, the most used network by teenagers and young adults besides YouTube. #Vollerbe addressed the needs of social media with its offensive approach, but at the same time offers more advanced communications introducing the followers to commentary, facts or quotes on cultural issues and backgrounds. For this, images,

videos and instastories with integrated voting were used.

What memories and remembering do we need for Europe's future? That was the main challenge of some youth exchanges taking place during the Cultural Heritage Summit in Berlin. Young people from the Netherlands, Britain and Germany came to discuss in response to the impressions of cultural and historic places of memory.

After the end of the year we seek to turn certain formats, most expressly for young people, into something more permanent. A new working group will further dive into developing educational formats for cultural heritage issues. Formats need to be evaluated about their success and the fulfilment of qualitative standards. In doing so, interdisciplinary cooperation of various experts and institutions will take place. We hope that we can share valuable experiences and results with our European counterparts.

4. *Outlook for future work in Europe*

Aim of the European Year of Cultural Heritage is not to forge a uniform European culture, but to ask how society, culture and the European idea can be brought together again.

I believe that only by more vigorously and consciously acknowledging the cultural and historical developments and experience of Europe can we breathe life into the European idea. This also requires more sharing in Europe, it requires new initiatives that build on existing formats and cooperation, and develop them further.

We already have European formats intended to encourage greater interest in our European heritage and to strengthen those elements of our identities that unite us in Europe.

This is also the way to understand the European Heritage Label and its aim to strengthen a sense of community among Europeans and to stimulate an intercultural dialogue by highlighting prominent sites that stand for European unification, our common values, history and culture and by harnessing them for the purpose of cultural education and encounter. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and the values and substance they stand for also lend themselves to promoting appreciation and education about our European cultural identity.

As European Capital of Culture in 2016, Wrocław highlighted its European character with

its cultural wealth brought about by the many and diverse historical and cultural influences that left their mark on the city.

The recently inaugurated House of European History in Brussels pursues a brilliant and modern educational approach to foster understanding of our European history.

We have to continue to think about how we can further develop these institutions, formats and projects so that they help to strengthen a sense of European identity on the part of Europe's citizens.

In *Les lieux de memoire* in the 1980s and 1990s, the French historian Pierre Nora developed a new approach to memory and remembrance. Instead of dealing with a historic site under general thematic or chronologically linear aspects, he advocated a more comprehensive appreciation of historic sites, in particular of those which, in his eyes, have special significance as memory spaces. In the French context such memory spaces are, for example, the royal tombs in Saint-Denis, the Eiffel Tower or even intangible cultural heritage such as *La Marseillaise*. In his view, it is these tangible and intangible memory spaces that, taken together, bring the collective memory of France to life. He even included certain more pronounced regional characteristics resulting from diverging cultural or religious traditions or regional or political conflicts into his memory spaces.

Can we and should we define such marked historical and cultural learning and identity spaces also for Europe in order to better tell and share the story of Europe?

Spaces connected to the Iron Curtain, spaces of peace, of enlightenment and humanism could, if merged into a network, make it possible for us to experience and share cultural heritage in its authentic places.

Just as in 2018 young people from all over Europe will be invited to Osnabrück and Münster, the two towns of the Peace of Westphalia, which in 1648 marked the end of the first European war, and will talk about paths towards peace and develop a sense of shared ownership of European

history, I can imagine this sense of shared ownership emerging in future even more strongly if we connect and enhance historical memory spaces in Europe. Why not link the history of the Peace of Westphalia as told in Münster and Osnabrück to Prague Castle and the story told there about the defenestration in 1618 and establish a collaboration between these historic sites?

How can the European Year of Cultural Heritage contribute to this? How can it enhance the political power of culture and cultural heritage in Europe? These are the issues we started to discuss at the European Cultural Heritage Summit in Berlin.

The Berlin Call to Action is an important political statement to use the EYCH 2018 for a much higher role of cultural heritage in EU policies and heritage work.

Not only the fire of Notre Dame in Paris underlined the importance of European cooperation, especially the resurgent of nationalist ideologies made it clear that we need more cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. A relapse into nationalistic explanatory models is unacceptable.

Europe needs the integration of broader social circles. We have to take advantage of an inclusive view on our culture and heritage.

The new EU Forum for Cultural Heritage has given advice to the EU Commission specially to level the paths for more support and ideas for European cooperation and contributing to accelerate change in the cultural heritage sector and beyond.

Heritage is not an end in itself. We need it to create a future in Europe!

The European Year of Cultural Heritage helped to foster change and innovation in the heritage sector. The EYCH and SHARING HERITAGE marked a turning point for much more than impressive events. It started an important discussion for a modern and innovative cultural heritage communication.

SHARING HERITAGE is going on now!



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