

A Dialogue for Landscape Action:
European Cultural Landscapes at a Crossroads

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Research on Cultural Heritage has featured very prominently in all EU research Framework Programmes since 1986 and more than 150 millions of Euros have been invested in more than 100 Research Projects on cultural heritage over these years.

The focus has been on safeguarding cultural heritage for future generations with an emphasis on damage assessment, preventive conservation, advanced materials and technologies.

The environmental research Programme where I work under the 7th Framework Programme has funded 27 projects involving 354 partners from 41 countries and with a total EC contribution of 63 million EUR.

Some of the salient features of the funded research, to mention but a few, were the assessment and monitoring of the impact of pollution on outdoor and indoor cultural heritage; the mapping and monitoring of the state of preservation of movable and immovable cultural heritage assets (including underwater); the prediction of the impact of climate change and extreme events (earthquakes, fires and storm); development of methodologies, technologies and tools to protect and rehabilitate the European patrimony etc.

For the same period and in view of the cross-cutting nature of Cultural heritage, other Programmes like Social Sciences and Humanities, Digital CH, e-Infrastructure etc. have also invested 40 M€ on research projects on cultural heritage.

Also under FP7, it is worthwhile mentioning the Energy efficient buildings public-private partnership which has as one of its focus Energy efficiency in historic buildings and urban districts. It is an initiative that tries to leverage additional resources for research in the area through enhanced synergies among private and public sector.

Similarly, the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) in the area of Cultural Heritage, a MS initiative launched in 2010, can be a very powerful tool in further promoting and consolidating the European Research Area in Cultural heritage through coordination of national research programmes and priorities.

Cultural heritage continues to figure quite high in the political agenda at the EU level.

In his recent Declaration on the New Narrative for Europe, President Barroso has set out a vision of Europe with culture being at its very foundation and has called upon Europe as a political body to

recognise the value of cultural heritage as a powerful instrument that provides a sense of belonging amongst and between Europeans.

So it is not surprising that cultural heritage research and innovation received very strong political support from the EP and the Council during the inter-institutional negotiations on Horizon 2020, the new EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014 to 2020 and as a result, Cultural Heritage related research and innovation appears under all three pillars of the programme, notably excellent science, industrial leadership, and societal challenges.

A sub-challenge dedicated to cultural heritage was added to the Commission's proposal during these negotiations under Societal Challenge 5 'Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials' to address preservation and management of cultural heritage against risk from climate change and other environmental and human risk factors.

Under the Societal Challenge 5, we will aim to develop an innovative policy framework and a research agenda for Cultural heritage that would foster a multi-, cross- and trans-disciplinary research. We want to involve scientists, policy makers, stakeholders, actors from the economy and the finance sector, the insurance companies, enterprises, the construction sector, stakeholders, NGOs and the society at large in co-defining the problems and co-developing the science, innovation and solutions to address them whilst maximizing the societal benefits from the numerous opportunities that are offered by cultural heritage, including new services and ways of use.

We want to explore innovative ways for sustainable investment and financing, entrepreneurship and governance of cultural heritage within a multi-stakeholder perspective.

Possible linkages between cultural and natural heritage will also be further explored.

The results from HERCULUS will have high relevance to several EU policies, such as Common Agricultural Policy, the EU Cohesion Policy, Green Infrastructure Strategy, the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy, to mention but a few.

We very much welcome this first HERCULES workshop. It provides a wonderful opportunity for the HERCULUS consortium to demonstrate how the research findings and outcomes from the project could be of value to the stakeholders' needs and the stakeholders themselves to inform of how can be relevant to their activities.

Last but not least. Under the "Sustainable Management of Natural Resources" part of the Societal Challenge 5 on 'Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials', there are plans to engage in an initiative to promote nature-based solutions to address societal challenges like floods mitigation, CC adaptation, greening the cities in order to enhance the economic, social and environmental resilience and improve risk management.

A project like HERCULES can provide some concrete evidence of how issues such as nature based solutions, biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem services and cultural and natural resources management research and innovation can be addressed in a systemic and integrated way.