



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE (CDCPP)

CDCPP-Bu(2013)4

Strasbourg, 29 September 2013

**4th meeting of the Bureau
Strasbourg, 16-17 October 2013**

RESULTS OF THE LAUNCH OF THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS

DOCUMENT FOR INFORMATION

Item 3.3 of the draft agenda

The Bureau is invited to take note of the results of the launch of the European Heritage Days.

Background on the European Heritage Days

The European Heritage Days (EHDs) are the most widely celebrated participatory cultural initiative, shared by the citizens of Europe. The initiative was launched by the Council of Europe in 1985, and in 1999 was joined by the European Commission, and the two Organisations have continued to manage the Programme jointly up to the present day.

Held in September each year in 50 European countries, doors are opened to tens of thousands of monuments and sites for free. The experience provides access to heritage to Europe's citizens encouraging them not only to enjoy it, but also to become actively involved in the safeguard and enhancement of it for present and future generations.

Launch of the 2013 European Heritage Days

A launch of the annual EHDs 2013 was held in Yerevan in the framework of the Armenian chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers.

One of the key planks of the Armenian Chairmanship is to encourage and promote intercultural dialogue. The Armenian hosting of the "Launch event" of the European Heritage days Programme 29 August – 1 September gave a boost to this objective.

This year, the many thousands of events open to the public will reach an even greater audience and the Armenian launch played an instrumental role in this. In Yerevan, a highly innovative Portal was also launched. Using the map of Europe as its homepage, this portal enables all EHDs events to be visible together for the first time. The Portal went "live" in Yerevan and is designed to provide a mechanism by which all Europeans can gain access to their diverse and splendid common European heritage.

For this launch, 13 countries published a selection of their events for view during the September EHDs. All countries will be invited to use the Portal for all events for the 2014 EHDs. The launch in Armenia was also an opportunity to celebrate the dynamic cooperation, which has brought into being this extraordinary European culture and heritage network.

At the time of the launch of the European Heritage Days portal, a photographic competition was implemented. The most representative picture of the European Heritage Days was selected among those uploaded on the platform by the 13 countries. The prize was awarded to a local Norwegian event organiser, the Hedmark local chapter of Fortidsminneforeningen (The society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments), for a picture illustrating the event "Life in cottages and farmyards".

During the meeting, Mr Alessandro Senesi from the European Commission presented the Creative Europe Programme. The presentation focused on: the cultural and creative sectors; the objectives and budget; the lines of action being supported and the tentative timetable. Two general objectives of the programme - fostering the safeguarding and promotion of European cultural and linguistic diversity and strengthening the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors with a view to promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth were discussed with the National Coordinators in greater detail, together with the potential opportunities for the financial support in their respective countries. That the countries taking part in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) could now participate in the programme, was welcomed with enthusiasm.

The Launch event in Yerevan was followed by a meeting of the National Coordinators (NCs). Between February – September, five working groups had been actively involved in contributing to the 2013 Work Programme of the EHDs. The conclusions of these groups which focused on: EHD data collection; EHD working methods; EHD Platform; European Dimension of the Programme; EHD events and Audience Development were presented to the plenary meeting. The Secretariat then presented a draft proposal of the 2014 Work Programme. The NCs were invited to comment and take responsibility for parts of the Programme. This closer engagement in developing the Programme was welcomed by the NCs.

The NCs also discussed an alternative to the EHD Forum, which had been held annually for five years. The NCs agreed that it would be better to make a selection of international events in the field of cultural heritage and make proposals for participation. For 2013, the Department of Cultural Heritage of Lithuania will organise, within the framework of the EU-Presidency, the conference 'Cultural heritage and the EU2020-strategy – towards an integrated approach' from 13 to 14 November 2013 in Vilnius. During this international conference, the participants will discuss the wide range of possibilities for cultural heritage to contribute to the emergence of creative ecosystems conducive to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth across Europe. The NCs will be invited to participate in this conference and represent the EHDs Network. Such conferences represent alternatives to the annual Forum.

On 30 August a press conference panel was held, attended by more than 20 media representatives from Armenia.

Speeches were given by:

Ms Arev Samuelyan, Deputy Minister of Culture of Armenia

Mr Traian Hristea, Head of Delegation of the European Union in Armenia

Mr Alessandro Senesi, Deputy Head of Unit, Creative Europe Programme - Culture, DG Education and Culture, European Commission

Mr Oleksandr Pavlyuk, Head of the Council of Europe Office in Yerevan

Mr Ulrich Bunjes, Special Policy Advisor to the Director General of DGII - Democracy, Council of Europe

The Launch included the second annual National Coordinators meeting, followed by the Audience development training by two international experts – Ms Sarah Boiling, The Audience Agency and Dr Marianna Sigala, University of the Aegean.

Cultural visits included an excursion to Geghard Monastery – a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a special performance by local musical entity – LUYS quintet; visit to "Garni" Pagan Temple – winner of the UNESCO 2011 Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes; traditional Armenian Dinner for all guests at Garni Village; visits to Khor Virap Monastery; historical village of Areni and Areni Winery; Areni Archaeological Cave and Noravank Monastery; and the History Museum of Armenia open air exhibition "The Time for Gathering the Stones".

An official ceremony inaugurating the 2013 European Heritage Days was held at Zvartnots Cathedral – a UNESCO World Heritage Site, followed by the official dinner for the guests and a cultural show featuring a musical performance by local musicians.