

Current Affairs Committee Meeting, 39th Session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities – Remote meeting, 16 September 2020

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Report “ Culture without borders: Cultural heritage management for local and regional development [CG-CUR(2020)15-03]”

Remote meeting, 16 September 2020

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have heard the main points of the report.

With this resolution, we want to highlight how cultural heritage management can contribute towards an inclusive society.

We want to contribute to changing the perspective on cultural heritage. It must be an inclusive concept, bringing together different communities.

This also means that cultural heritage must not be seen as an isolated issue. It interacts with a wide range of issues and can benefit many other policy areas.

In our resolution we invite local and regional authorities to take action on several fronts:

Firstly, they can use cultural heritage to bridge gaps and strengthen social inclusion in different ways:

- They should include a wide range of communities in their cultural heritage management. It is especially important to reach out to young people, migrants and marginalized communities.
- They can use public spaces as platforms where citizens can come together and discuss. Public debate about contested heritages can help resolve or prevent conflict.
- They can use cultural heritage to help develop remote areas and to avoid the people there feeling left behind.

Secondly, in the resolution, we highlight the potential economic benefits of strong cultural heritage policies.

Cultural heritage can be a powerful tool for the sustainable development of cities and regions.

In the resolution, we call on local and regional authorities to promote sustainable cultural tourism. We have seen cities struggle with over-tourism, that is why we encourage a 'responsible tourism' approach.

To understand the benefits of cultural heritage management, local and regional authorities should develop tools to measure its impact.

Thirdly, it is important that local and regional authorities work with partners to achieve sustainable cultural heritage management.

Cities, in particular, are important players of cultural diplomacy. Programmes such as the European Capital of Culture are good examples that can be expanded. Cities can also help develop networks of diaspora communities on cultural heritage.

Local authorities can join networks such as the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe".

Universities can also be important partners of local and regional authorities. They can help promote democratic values through the implementation of projects on cultural heritage.

Colleagues, now we come to the recommendation.

In general, governments should support local and regional authorities in the realization of the resolution.

They can do this in several ways:

- They can develop guidelines to help local and regional authorities include more people in cultural heritage management.
- They can include cultural heritage in other policy areas too. By including it in school curricula, they can raise awareness amongst children about the importance of cultural heritage.
- They can provide resources to help local and regional authorities measure the impact of investing in cultural heritage.
- They can also support and finance European initiatives on this issue.

Lastly, we invite all countries who have not done so yet, to sign and ratify the "Faro Convention" and the European Landscape Convention.

Dear Colleagues, Europe is going through an identity crisis. Conflicting narratives and identity politics are pitting different communities against each other. Sustainable and inclusive cultural heritage management can help bridge these gaps.

Our cultures, root and patrimonies are the foundation of our history. Their diversity as well as their common elements can unite Europeans and help uncover our common values.

This I why, colleagues, we ask you to approve this resolution and recommendation.

Thank you for your attention.