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Title: The Added European Value of Cultural Heritage : The European Heritage Label

Year: 2018

Version: Accepted version (Final draft)

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The added European value of cultural heritage. The European Heritage Label.

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Abstract:

Europe's cultural heritage plays a strategic role in the EU politics. Heritage is viewed as a shared resource and common good that eventually can produce a broader acceptance of the EU. The article focuses on the exploration of European heritage in the context of the European Heritage Label (EHL), a recent EU heritage action. It first gives an overview of the EHL action and examines the significance attributed to the European dimension of heritage. Then the article discusses the added value of the EHL network of heritage sites for the promotion of European heritage in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) 2018. The two initiatives share similar approaches and the possibility to complement one another. The designation of the EYCH 2018 attempted to communicate to a broader European public the understanding that cultural heritage is more than conservational memory but also a source of new perspectives for the future. The EHL offers new approaches to heritage that challenges national discourses and exclusionary narratives of belonging. The article concludes that the promotion of European heritage serves the political objectives of European integration but may indeed strengthen a sense of belonging to Europe as a cultural and political community.

Keywords: Europe, cultural heritage, European Heritage Label, EYCH 2018, political and cultural community

Introduction

The EU has recognised the important role of heritage in EU legislation and policy-making since the late 1970s, long before the Maastricht Treaty (1993) gave a special legal basis for the EU heritage policy.[1] While heritage protection is primarily a matter for national, regional and local authorities, the role of the EU is to complement national and regional programmes in line with the EU Treaties and in respect of the principle of subsidiarity. The EU is to 'protect and enhance the intrinsic and social value of Europe's cultural heritage, to strengthen its contribution to

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[1] See T. Lähdesmäki et al. (eds.) *Dissonant Heritages and Memories in Contemporary Europe.* Palgrave Macmillan (Manuscript). forthcoming.

economic growth and job creation and develop its potential for the EU's public diplomacy'.[2] Heritage also plays a central role in the EU policy for managing the crisis of legitimation and for evoking a positive public perception towards the EU and its institutions among Europeans. As Lähdesmäki[3] writes, the EU cultural policy is based on ideological goals, in which heritage is used as a political tool for governance for defining and legitimizing the EU. Heritage reflects identity-building capacity based on the process of cultural integration and at the same time fulfils expectations of economic development and sustainability in European regions.[4] The view of heritage as a strategic resource for forging cultural identity and social cohesion in the EU becomes also visible in various EU heritage initiatives, such as the European Heritage Label, the European Heritage Days or the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage.[5]

The European Heritage Label (EHL), established in 2011, is a recent EU flagship heritage action that promotes European cultural heritage with an emphasis on common values and a shared past in Europe. The emphasis on the European dimension of heritage helps to differentiate the EHL as a label with a specific mission to 'bring to life the European narrative and the history behind it'[6] by selecting heritage sites according to their symbolic value for Europe's history and integration. The Label recognises different cultural monuments, cultural landscapes, memorials and intangible heritage associated with a place that symbolise European integration, common European values, and the history and culture of the EU. Hence, the designated sites stand for a broad geographical, temporal and thematic variety, ranging for instance from prehistoric times (Krapina Neanderthal Site, Croatia) over ancient Greece (Athens) to the collapse of the Soviet Bloc (e.g. Gdańsk Historic Shipyard) and the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. Since the EHL heritage sites mediate events and processes from different times, it may seem difficult to define what could be a common denominator of

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[2] COM (2014) 477 final. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe*. European Commission, 2014, Brussels, p. 3.

[3] T. Lähdesmäki, *Rhetoric of unity and cultural diversity in the making of European cultural identity*, "International Journal of Cultural Policy", 2012, Vol. 18/1, pp. 59-75, p. 72.

[4] EC 1988. European File. The European Community and Culture. European File 10/88. Commission of the European Communities 1988, p.4. See also European Agenda for Culture. Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture. "Official Journal of the European Union", 2007, C287/1; COM (2018) 267 final. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A New European Agenda for Culture*. European Commission 2018, Brussels.

[5] See E. Niklasson, *The Janus-face of European heritage: Revisiting the rhetoric of Europe-making in EU cultural politics*, "Journal of Social Anthropology", 2017. Vol. 2, pp. 138-162; M. Sassatelli, *Becoming Europeans. Cultural identity and Cultural Policies*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, Basingstoke and New York; T. Lähdesmäki, *The EU's explicit and implicit heritage politics*, "European Societies" 2014, Vol. 16/3, pp. 401-421.

[6] EHL website, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label_en .

'European' heritage. At the same time, however, the EHL action participates in forming a unifying European narrative of what constitutes 'European' heritage by appropriating the Label to specific sites. Such a selective discourse contributes to construct the EU in terms of an inevitable, positive trajectory based on extraordinary achievements and similar historical processes or phenomena in Europe's past that strengthen the idea of a 'shared European cultural heritage' that is nevertheless highly heterogeneous by taking into consideration national and regional cultural differences.[7]

There is a growing academic interest in European cultural heritage and recent EU heritage initiatives. Scholars have begun to explore new areas of research related to the European dimension of heritage, and specifically of the EHL sites. This includes a range of interpretations of cultural heritage in a European perspective, the co-existence of different local, regional, national and European scales, the exploration of new ways of participatory governance put into practice, and ways to share heritage experiences.[8] New theoretical approaches place the past in a broader context of interpretation and in relation to the present and future, which contest traditional views on heritage as a national legacy or inheritance. Rather, they suggest overcoming the divide in cultural and political conceptions of heritage by stressing the connectivity of places as a product of historical processes and transnational encounters.

With the designation of a European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH), the European Parliament and Council reaffirm the central role of heritage based on a principle of shared responsibility and historically rooted social values and political ideals that constitute the basis for the acceptance of the EU as a cultural and political community. Both the EYCH and the EHL promote Europe's cultural heritage in terms of a shared resource and common good for future generations that needs to be safeguarded, conserved and enhanced. This reflects a new understanding of the purpose and value of a common European cultural heritage as a fundamental source for democratic engagement and a facilitator of unity, belonging and

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[7] E. Niklasson, op. cit., p. 155.

[8] For instance, see: G. Delanty, *The European Heritage. A Critical re-Interpretation*. Routledge 2017a, London, New York; G. Delanty, 2018. *What unites Europe and what divides it? Solidarity and the European heritage reconsidered.* "Asian Journal of German and European Studies", 2018, Vol. 3/3, pp. 1-9 (open access); S. Kaiser, *The European Heritage Label. A critical review of a new EU policy.* (PhD Thesis). University of Illinois, 2014; M. Sassatelli 2009, op. cit.; T. Lähdesmäki, op.cit.; T. Lähdesmäki, *Politics of Tangibility, Intangibility, and Place in the Making of European Cultural Heritage in EU Heritage Policy.* "International Journal of Heritage Studies", 2016, Vol. 22/10, pp. 766–780; T. Lähdesmäki & K. Mäkinen, *Dynamics of Scale in the Making of a European Cultural Heritage in EU Heritage Policy.* In T. Lähdesmäki, S. Thomas and Y. Zhu (eds.), *Politics of Scale. New Direction in Critical Heritage Studies.* Berghahn Books 2019, New York.

identity based on a principle of shared responsibility and historically rooted social values and political ideals.

The article focuses on the exploration of European heritage in the context of the European Heritage Label. It thereby draws predominantly on policy documents produced during the preparation, launch and implementation phases of the EHL initiative[9] and the official reports published by the European Commission[10]. First, the article gives an overview of the EHL action and examines the significance attributed to the European dimension of heritage. Next, it explores new approaches to European heritage offered by the EHL, which challenge national discourses of heritage by combining different local, regional and national perspectives and promoting a transnational interpretation of cultural heritage based on shared values and principles. Then the article discusses the added value of the EHL network for the promotion of European heritage to a broader public in the context of the EYCH 2018. Despite approaches offering fruitful outcomes and the possibility of the two initiatives to complement one another, cooperation failed. The article concludes that the EHL nevertheless possesses the capacity to initiate public debate that may promote a broader appreciation of European heritage and support social cohesion in Europe.

The implementation of the EHL

The European Heritage Label was launched as an intergovernmental initiative at the instigation of Spain and France in 2006 and in direct reaction to the rejected referenda on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (2005) in France and the Netherlands. However, as this form was not found efficient enough, the EHL was subsequently developed into an EU heritage action by the decision of the European Parliament and Council in 2011.[11] The official transformation was based on Article 167 of the Treaty on European Union, which gave formal legal competence to the European bodies to safeguard, develop and disseminate culture in

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[9] EC 2011, *European Heritage Label. Guide for Candidate Sites*. European Commission, 2011, Brussels; EP 2011, *Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label*. "Official Journal of the European Union" 2011, L 303, pp. 1-9.

[10] EC 2013. *European Heritage Label. 2013 Panel Report*. European Commission, 2013, Brussels; EC 2014. *European Heritage Label. 2014 Panel Report*. European Commission, 2014, Brussels; EC 2015. *European Heritage Label. 2015 Panel Report*. European Commission, 2015, Brussels; EC 2016. *European Heritage Label. Panel Report on Monitoring. 19 December 2016*. European Commission, 2016, Brussels; EC 2017. *European Heritage Label. 2017 Panel Report. 5 December 2017*. European Commission, 2017, Brussels.

[11] EP 2011, op. cit.

Europe.[12] The decision of the European Parliament and Council provided financial funding of 650 000 Euro for the implementation of the action during the period 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013.[13] After four selection rounds in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2017, the Label currently counts 24 participating EU member states, and 38 designated heritage sites in 18 countries (see Table 1, List of EHL heritage sites and year of designation). A recent roadmap envisions more than 100 heritage sites across the EU and in neighbouring countries by 2030[14], which reflects the increasing interest in the Label among European heritage sites and by the participating member states at a national level.

The change from an intergovernmental initiative into a formal EU action was a response to a call of various member states for a more transparent selection process guided by established and concrete criteria that applied to all member states.[15] The decision was also taken with the aim to enhance the Label's credibility, visibility and prestige in and outside of Europe, associated with concrete expectations to stimulate cultural tourism and intercultural dialogue and support economic and sustainable development in EU members states.[16] New criteria and selection procedures were introduced during the process of becoming a heritage action, and previously awarded sites were therefore asked to re-apply to the action.

During the preparation phase of Label, 'lively' debates about the EHL took place in the European Parliament. MEPs from the European Freedom Group (now Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group), dominated by anti-European national and right-wing parties, such as the UKIP and Lega Nord, suggested to reject the proposal for the action, arguing that European sites would be in conflict with regional and national identities.[17] However, a majority in the European Parliament approved the legislative resolution and official transformation of the Label at their voting sessions in 2010.[18]

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[12] TEU. *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union and the Functioning of the European Union. 13 December 2007*. "Official Journal of the European Union", 2007, C 326.

[13] EP 2011, op. cit., Art. 20.

[14] EC 2017, op. cit., p. 8.

[15] S. Kaiser, op. cit., p. 31.

[16] COM (2006) 134 final (17.3.2006). Communication from the Commission. A renewed EU Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism. European Commission 2006, Brussels; COM (2010) 76 final. *Commission Staff Working Document Summary of the Impact Assessment. Accompanying Document to the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union Action for the European Heritage Label*. European Commission 2010, Brussels, p. 4.

[17] BBC. 'Euro MPs back creation of a 'European heritage label', by A. Rendall, 16.November 2010. See also Kaiser 2014, op. cit., pp. 35-37.

[18] P7_TA (2011) 0502. *European Parliament legislative resolution of 16 November 2011 on the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label*. European Parliament 2011, Strasbourg.

The EHL is open to the voluntary participation of all EU member states including those member states, which did not previously participate in the intergovernmental initiative (e.g. Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK).[19] While the prospect of a 'Europeanisation' of cultural heritage may account for the hesitation of the UK, which sees a conflict of interests between national and supranational levels, this is not necessarily the case for the other countries. The abstention of Sweden can be interpreted in terms of a prioritization of either or both the international and Nordic geopolitical context. Sweden became member of the European Union in 1995 and has rejected participation in the Euro zone. As a result of the recent financial crises, the level of confidence in Europe has diminished in Sweden as in many other European countries. However, a recent document of the Swedish National Heritage Board reveals that Sweden's absence from the Label accounts more likely to a strategic assessment of the costs and effects of the EHL for Swedish heritage sites based on a careful analysis of Denmark's experience as regards the EHL application procedure in 2013.[20] All three Danish proposals were rejected on grounds of not fulfilling the Label's criteria.

The Swedish document supports the participation in the EHL and recognizes the added value of a European cultural heritage for serving common interests among European states in a time of increasing nationalism. However, Sweden's National Heritage Board concluded it would be unlikely that the nation's heritage sites to meet the Label's criteria and therefore recommended against participation. The Board did not rule out a future participation. The reasons as stated by the National Heritage Board is based on Sweden's neutrality in both the First and Second World Wars, and Sweden did not directly contribute to the development of the European Economic Community in the 1950s. This reveals a rather narrow reading and understanding of Europe's cultural heritage and complex historical entanglements as well as sheer neglect of Sweden's role during the Second World War. In Finland, the Minister of Education, Culture and Sport, Sampo Terho, officially announced Finland's participation in the EHL on 28 November 2018, giving up the country's hitherto waiting attitude, based on Sweden's official assessment. The Finnish National Heritage Agency plans to host preparatory workshops for

It should be noted that the proposal against the label tabled by the EFD Group was rejected by 517 votes to 59, with 63 abstentions. See for detailed votes of the second reading on the EHL on 16. November 2011 also the website: parltrack.euwiki.org/dossier/2010/0044(COD).

[19] EC 2011, op.cit.

[20] Riksantikvarieämbetet. *Rapport från Riksantikvarieämbetet, Europeiskt kulturarvsmärke*. Riksantikvarieämbetet 2016, Stockholm. Document shared by the Finnish Heritage Agency, the Finnish National Board of Antiquities.

core stakeholders in 2019 in order to access interest among heritage sites and discuss possible strategies of implementing the Label.

By definition, the European Heritage Label covers a diverse selection of heritage sites and 'embraces all types of cultural heritage from all periods'.[21] This selection includes a variety of historical, archaeological, urban, natural and cultural heritage sites as well as intangible heritage and cultural objects associated with a place, books or archives, which are eligible to apply provided they can prove their contribution to the progress of European history, integration and unity.[22] The EHL also encourages the joint application of a number of transnational and national thematic sites, which are eligible for the Label if complying with the criteria and demonstrating the European added value of their joint application and a clear thematic link. In the implementing decision of 2 March 2012, the Commission stresses that the Label will only designate sites, which have played a key role in the history of Europe and which offer activities that will facilitate peer learning.[23] The Label is awarded to successful applicants based on the following three categories of criteria:

(1)   the symbolic European value of the site

(2)   the quality of the project proposed to promote and communicate its European dimension to European audiences

(3)   the quality of the work plan showing that the candidate site has adequate operational capacity to implement to submitted project and thereby meet the criteria required for the label[24]

The first category is about the permanent features of a site. The heritage sites need to demonstrate one or several of the following criteria concerning: their pan-European nature extending beyond national borders of a member state; their links with key European events, personalities or movements; or their role in the development and promotion of common values that underpin European integration.[25] The EHL seeks to safeguard and strengthen the process of European integration with an emphasis on shared values, history and culture founded on the principles of freedom, democracy, respect for human rights, the appreciation of national,

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[21] EC 2016, op. cit., p. 6.
[22] EP 2011, op. cit, Art.2.
[23] EC 2012. *Commission Implementing Decision of 2.3.2012 on the adoption of the 2012 work programme of a European Union action for the European Heritage Label*. C (2012) 1317 final. European Commission 2012, Brussels, p. 4.
[24] EC 2011, op. cit., p. 6.
[25] EP 2011, op. cit, Art 7.

regional, cultural and linguistic diversity, tolerance and solidarity. It further attempts to increase the importance of heritage in the economic and sustainable development of regions and foster democratic values and human rights, including its promotion as a catalyst for contemporary creativity.[26]

The second and third categories refer to a specific project and management plan, which the candidate sites must submit with their application to ensure their operational capacity to carry out activities related to the site's management, protection, quality, public access, promotional capacity and communication of its European significance.[27] The application procedure for the EHL and the subsequent monitoring of the participating EHL sites pays specific attention to the heritage sites' operational capacity and projects for facilitating and strengthening communication of the European dimension to European audiences, and thus increasing the Label's visibility at large. Likewise, the operational capacity of the EHL heritage sites connects to concrete strategic expectations of raising the profile and attractiveness of European heritage sites as tourist destinations in the context of global competition and sustainability and anticipate the Label's status in terms of a high-quality label that allows competing on equal terms with other known cultural initiatives.[28]

The selection of candidate sites takes place in two stages. While the member states participating in the EHL are responsible for the pre-selection and monitoring of the sites in their respective territory, a panel of independent European experts (European panel) makes the final decision, thereby limiting the selection to one site per member state.[29] The European panel tries to avoid double awards if possible, so that sites and initiatives already included in the Council of Europe initiative (Cultural Routes) are unlikely to receive the European Heritage Label.[30] Similarly, the monitoring of the sites takes place in a two-step process at a national and European level to ensure that each EHL heritage site continues meeting the criteria and respecting the project and work plan submitted in its application. First, the National Coordinators collect information from the sites, prepare a report and send it to the European Commission. Then the European panel issues a report based on these reports with the recommendations to be taken into account.[31] There exists the possibility of withdrawal or renunciation of the Label based on the

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[26] EP 2011, op. cit.
[27] EC 2011, op. cit, p. 8; EC 2016, op. cit., p. 8-10.
[28] See EP 2011, op. cit
[29] EC 2011, op. cit, p. 9.
[30] Ibidem.
[31] EC 2016, op. cit.

monitoring results in terms of meeting of the criteria and respecting the submitted project and working plans.[32] According to the decision implementing the EHL action, the Commission makes all reports, recommendations and notifications of the European Panel public.[33]

New approach to heritage: an explicit European dimension

The EHL differentiates from other heritage initiatives such as the UNESCO World Heritage List, the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe or the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Award by putting a particular emphasis on the symbolic European dimension of the designated heritage sites. The focus of the Label is not the preservation of the sites or their aesthetic or architectural quality as in the other cultural initiatives but the promotion of Europe's common past and values.

The UNESCO enlarged the concept of heritage from a local and national level to an international level by embracing the understanding of heritage as a colocation of values and objects and sites they embody. Hence, heritage is not just 'something old' but also generated in the present in terms of intangible performances and qualities.[34] The UNESCO World Heritage List was the first supranational compilation of sites of cultural value but also the European dimension inherent in the EHL supersedes local, regional and national heritage and thereby follows the UNESCO interpretation of intangible cultural heritage. However, UNESCO uses values to protect the past as well as national and cultural diversity with an emphasis on the conservation of sites and intangible cultural practices, whereas only sites with rigorous management and excellent maintenance are awarded the Label. The EHL shows a shift in the understanding of heritage from mere conservation and protection to an increasingly political instrument that serves identity-building purposes and expectations of economic benefit and sustainable development in the European Union.[35] However, the request for an EHL designation is generated by regional and national actors[36], and not the EU, presenting thus a decentralised approach. Thus, it may be argued that the EHL award shows what local, regional and national actors consider European heritage and not what EU institutions might identify as such. This approach corresponds to the EU cultural policy of recent decades that

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[32] EP 2011, op. cit.

[33] Ibidem. See also the publications EC 2013-2017 op. cit.

[34] UNESCO. *Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* (Adopted by the General Conference at its seventeenth session Paris, 16 November 1972), Unesco 1972, Paris, Article 1, 6. UNESCO. *Text on the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. UNESCO 2003, Paris.

[35] EP 2011. op.cit., pp. 1-9.

[36] EC 2011, op.cit.

proposes treating 'Europe' as a brand product and promoting a sense of shared unity and commonality as well as the benefits of membership in the EU as 'products' that should be mediated to the European public.[37]

Fieldwork in the framework of a broader academic research project studying the EHL[38] reveals that local and European levels try to promote and mediate 'European' values in terms of universal social and moral values and mindsets that are closely linked with historical processes in the European context and therefore considered of importance for understanding Europe's entangled past. Similar to the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (known as the Faro-Convention)[39], which introduces a new understanding of the purpose of cultural heritage for the present and future relationships in civic society, the EHL highlights the social dimension of Europe's common heritage. The EHL thus offers new approaches of understanding cultural heritage that connect to the facilitation of unity and belonging and democratic participation and engagement rooted in social values and political ideals.

First, the EHL promotes a transnational interpretation of cultural heritage substantiated by the emphasis on shared values and principles and the appreciation of national and regional cultural diversity that challenges the typically dominant national discourse of heritage. The Label attempts to illustrate a broader approach to the meaning of a European heritage by showing the impact of transnational networking and exchange of ideas on diverse philosophical, cultural, social and political developments at different times and places in Europe.[40] By implying that the EHL sites belong to a 'very special club', the European panel highlights the extraordinary aspect of the EHL discourse on Europe's shared heritage and history and seeks to mediate to European citizens that 'there is something "European" about us and about our heritage'.[41] Hence, the fostering of the European dimension of cultural heritage is assumed to possess the

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[37] See Kaiser, op.cit, p. 13. See also W. De Clercq. *Reflections on information and communication policy of the European Community. Report by the Group of Experts chaired by Mr. Willy De Clercq, Member of Parliament.* European Community, March 1993, Brussels.

[38] In the framework of the project 'Legitimation of European cultural heritage and the dynamics of identity politics in the EU' (EUROHERIT), an independent academic research project at the University of Jyväskylä, fieldwork was conducted at eleven EHL sites in ten countries between August 2017 and February 2018. See for more information: http://www.jyu.fi/euroherit

[39] CETS 199. Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society 2005. "Council of Europe Treaty Series - No. 199". Faro, 27.X.2005

[40] See T. Lähdesmäki & K. Mäkinen 2019, op. cit.

[41] EC 2016, op. cit., p. 40.

capacity to trigger emotional experience and ideally produce a sense of belonging and solidarity among European citizens.[42]

Second, the EHL has a clear educative objective, namely providing high-quality information to the widest possible public that help Europeans to 'learn about our shared cultural heritage, the history of Europe, the building of the EU, and the democratic values and human rights underpinning the process of European integration'.[43] The designated heritage sites are requested to design didactic activities aimed specifically at young European citizens in order to support the process of European cultural and political integration by increasing appreciation of European values and benefits of belonging to the EU and strengthening a sense of identity and belonging to Europe.[44] The activities at the EHL sites also aim to facilitate intercultural dialogue and underpin the understanding of Europe's past in terms of a shared, yet diverse, cultural heritage by drawing attention to the interconnectivity of histories and cultures.[45]

Third, the EHL distinguishes from other initiatives by the emphasis on the heritage sites forming part of a network, through which the sites can support each other to promote their European significance.[46] The EHL network of heritage sites participates in the narration of the origin of the EU. The narratives of founding myths serve to emphasise the historical continuity in the transmission of a common cultural legacy on the one hand and on the other communicate a temporal break that resulted in the development of a European civic and political community after World War II.[47] However, as the designation of the Label include tangible cultural and natural heritage sites as well as social and cultural practices associated with a specific place, the network of different heritage sites helps to convey the understanding that a European dimension of heritage is not static or frozen in a specific historical event or cultural practice. Instead, the EHL network offers shared heritage experiences at a European level that facilitate the understanding of the European dimension of heritage in terms of a process and interrelated with different local, regional and national perspectives, which in turn help to emphasise the transnational aspect of European heritage.

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[42] See T. Lähdesmäki, *Politics of affect in the EU heritage policy discourse: an analysis of promotional videos of sites awarded with the European Heritage Label.* "International Journal of Heritage Studies", 2017, Vol. 23/1, pp. 709–722.
[43] EC 2011, op. cit. p. 4.
[44] See EP 2011, op. cit.; EC 2017, op. cit.
[45] T. Lähdesmäki 2014, op.cit. p. 407-409.
[46] EC 2017, op. cit.
[47] T. Lähdesmäki, *Founding myths of European Union Europe and the workings of power in the European Union heritage and history initiatives*. "European Journal of Cultural Studies", 2018, pp. 1-18.

The EHL needs public visibility for attaining its objectives to raise the appreciation of shared European values and benefits among European citizens and in particular among young Europeans.[48] The Label operates on the assumption that conservation, transmission and public awareness of cultural heritage for future generations depends on the ability to reach a large number of citizens and get them to perceive, understand and appreciate European cultural heritage as a value and quality, as stated in the decision implementing the action.[49] The success of the EU's integration policy strongly depends on the efficiency of the European Commission to communicate to diverse European audiences what it means by a shared 'European' heritage and how it can positively affect European integration and produce a sense of cohesion and solidarity across national borders. The European dimension of heritage as promoted by the EHL is not viewed as fixed or singular but instead the narratives are based on notions of cultural plurality and shaped by manifold historical processes and transnational developments that recognise interconnected memories and networks that go beyond Europe.

The European Commission pursues a particular objective with the promotion of European cultural heritage as a shared and common experience, based on the idea that its broader and public recognition adds value to the EU integration processes. However, heritage is equally an important category in nationalistic and anti-European discourses of populist movements, which contribute to the polarisation in European societies by exploiting the idea of European heritage for their own goals and evoking partiality and prejudice against certain groups.[50] Whether the concept of a European heritage emphasises a greater networked space between different cultures and societies (i.e. through migration) or the processes affecting social relations in terms of creating a global space, contemporary European societies are shaped by conflicting conceptions of political community rather than by one founding tradition.[51] Current approaches in heritage studies view the past in a broader context than a form of legacy and highlight its relevance as a form of social and cultural action that facilitates social cohesion, shared identity and public engagement both for the present and future.[52] The past can be constructed in various processes that have the capability of generating solidarity and the discursive meaning-making

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[48] See EP 2011, op. cit. Art. 5; EC 2017, op. cit, pp. 7–8
[49] EP 2011, op. cit.
[50] G. Delanty 2017a, op. cit.; C. De Cesari, *European heritage and cultural racism*. Presentation at the Conference: The Cultural Heritage of Europe @2018. Re-assessing a concept and re-defining its challenge; E. Niklasson & H. Hølleland *The Scandinavian far-right and the new politicization of heritage*, "Journal of Social Anthropology", 2018, Vol 18/2, pp. 121-148.
[51] G. Delanty, *Entangled memories: How to study Europe's cultural heritage*. "The European Legacy", 2017b. Vol. 22/2, pp. 129-145, p. 135.
[52] Ibidem; See also R. Harrison, *Heritage. Critical Approaches*. Routledge, 2013, New York.

process of European cultural heritage connects to the questions of what heritage implies for shaping a sense of belonging in contemporary European societies and who participates in this process. While civic solidarity does not overcome differences, it makes possible plural interpretations of the past, as solidarity can be employed both in an inclusive and exclusive perception of community, which has the potential to maintain and challenge the political status quo at the same time.[53]

Complementary approaches between EHL and EYCH 2018

The series of initiatives and events across Europe during the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) 2018 encouraged people to explore diverse forms of cultural heritage, such as tangible and intangible, natural and digital heritage. The motto of the year 'Our heritage: where the past meets the future' supported the understanding that cultural heritage is more than conservational memory but rather a source of new perspectives for the future. The designation of a European Year served to strengthen a sense of unity in Europe, which complies with the political and cultural agenda of creating a 'People's Europe'[54]. It equally promoted acceptance of European integration based on the idea that the present-day EU can be traced back to Europe's past and a shared cultural community constitute the basis for the ensuing political community in current times.

The EHL action and the EYCH share similar approaches and offer the opportunity to complement one another in their emphasis on developing transnational dialogue, intercultural exchange and broader participation. The EYCH 2018 aimed to encourage the appreciation of Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space by engaging and addressing young people in particular. Its series of activities and events also included educational activities and programmes for raising greater public awareness of Europe's common history and values.[55] Furthermore, the EYCH encouraged the exchange among actors from various national, regional and local public administrations and private and civic organisations, which aided in sharing experiences and best practices[56] and constituted a resource, to which the EHL network on its own has no access.

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[53] V. Čeginskas and S. Kaasik-Krogerus, *Politics of solidarity at two European Heritage Label sites.* "International Journal for Heritage Studies" (forthcoming).
[54] C. Shore, *Building Europe. The Cultural Politics of European Integration*. Routledge, 2000, London and New York.
[55] EP 2017. *Decision (EU) 2017/864/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018)*, "Official Journal of the European Union", 2018, L 131/1, pp. 1-9.
[56] Ibidem.

The EYCH was present in social networks and the media and could offer a bigger platform for promoting a European and transnational dimension of cultural heritage to a broad and diverse European public. In turn, the EHL network of heritage sites provides an explicit European dimension of heritage that can facilitate insights into the ways, in which historical transformations and contemporary processes interrelate and how European heritage supports meaningful connections and a sense of shared history in society based on complex entanglements.[57] However, the EYCH 2018 was, to date, a one-time-event, which aims to 'celebrate' European heritage across Europe. Despite the various campaigns, events and activities it did not necessarily manage to convey a coherent understanding of European cultural heritage as aimed by the European Commission. In contrast, the EHL is a long-term action and the focus on presenting European heritage through the network of heritage sites has the ability to produce a better understanding of what constitutes a 'European' dimension of heritage, which may result in strengthening social cohesion and belonging among European citizens and residents.

The EU's cultural and integration policies depend on the tangible presentation of European heritage not as something abstract or theoretical but in terms of something concrete with which people can identify in a durable way. However, scholars point out that the European Union tends to emphasise a story of the extraordinary or a saga of Europeanism[58] that mediates specific ideological positions, moral codes as well as social and societal values, such as peace, democracy, justice, rule of law and human rights, tolerance and solidarity. At the same time, the emphasis on the European symbolic value of heritage gives the designated EHL sites freedom in the interpretation and actual representation of 'European' heritage and history to the broader public.[59]

The EHL network adds value to European heritage and assumes a two-fold responsibility. The heritage sites account both for producing and realising examples of 'European' heritage and communicating the complexity of the meaning of what implies the European dimension of heritage to European societies. The EHL sites do not focus only on the extraordinary but also include banal routines and practices that help in situating the visitors in the contemporary socio-political world and establish connection between people, places and practices across

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[57] G. Delanty 2017b, op. cit; R. Harrison 2013, op. cit., 39.

[58] See H.-J. Trenz, *The Saga of Europeanisation. On the Narrative Construction of a European Society*. Arena Working paper 7/2014. "Arena Centre for European Studies", 2014; See also T. Lähdesmäki 2018, op. cit.

[59] See T. Lähdesmäki 2014, op. cit., p. 412.

geographical, political and temporal boundaries. Heritage sites have the capacity to create affective connections and encounters between cultural ideas and people that emphasise commonalities between different groups based on shared cultural meanings and heritage.[60] The EHL heritage sites also assist in the deconstruction of national narratives and offer a critical exploration of the complex networks of power and entanglements by highlighting the dynamic and social processes related to Europe's past and raising attention to the political (ab)use of heritage for affecting people's experiences of social, economic and political structures and relationships.[61]

The network of EHL heritage sites consequently help to highlight the social dimension of heritage and the importance of human agency that can assist strengthening the understanding of European heritage as an inclusive and continuously evolving process based on the making, reproduction, interpretation and addition of heritage by different groups of people and individuals. Thus, the sites offer illustrative and tangible examples that can increase public awareness of the extent of historical entanglements and mutual enrichment in Europe's past.[62] The Label's public representation and visibility enables people to understand better the historical reasons for cultural belonging and heritage and the development of their multifaceted cultural, local, regional, national and European identities that also relate to topical issues, such as migration. Hence, the EHL network and EYCH 2018 together offered an opportunity for initiating a debate among a broader European public on what constitutes Europe's shared heritage and who belongs to Europe in terms of a specific cultural and political community by encouraging reflection on European history and its legacy in the contemporary world.[63] Such a debate based on heritage experiences highlights to a broader public the interplay between various developments, approaches and partnerships through which places, objects and values 'become' heritage and acquire shared meanings in an interactive process within a specific social context.[64]

Paradoxically, while the EYCH 2018 website lists a number of high-profile partners from cultural initiatives, organisations and stakeholders that cooperated closely with the EU to

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[60] P. Schorch, E. Waterton & S. Watson, Museum canopies and affective cosmopolitanism. Cultivating cross-cultural landscapes for ethical embodied responses. In: D. P. Tolia-Kelly, E. Waterton & S. Watson (eds.), *Heritage, Affect and Emotion. Politics, Practices and Infrastructures*. Routledge, 2017, London and New York, p. 98.
[61] R. Harrison 2013, op. cit., p. 113. See also G. Delanty 2017a, op. cit.
[62] See G. Delanty 2017a, op. cit.
[63] Ibidem.
[64] T. Lähdesmäki 2014, op. cit., p. 405.

promote the year, such as UNESCO, NEMO, Europa Nostra, ICOM Europe or the European Cultural Tourism Network, it omits any explicit mention of the EHL and the network of heritage sites.[65] While the EHL sites participated either alone or in cooperation with other EHL sites in the European Year, the European institutions missed the opportunity to create a visible and complementary synergy between the two initiatives. The absence of the EHL seems particularly odd in the light that the European Commission refers to both the EHL and EYCH in the context of promoting European cultural heritage as a basis for producing positive associations with the EU as a cultural community and for fostering a sense of belonging and identification with the EU as a political community.[66]

At this stage, it is only possible to speculate about the reasons for the failed cooperation at national and European levels. Future evaluations may provide concrete answers. However, the analysis of fieldwork data of the EHL action shows insufficient cooperation between the EHL national coordinators, which do not manage to develop synergies between the different national offices in the member states. It is therefore likely that a confusion of task division and resulting miscommunication between the two actions, in particular between the respective national coordinators' offices of the EYCH and EHL actions in the participating Member States, may account for the failure. Both actions would have benefitted of a joint and supervising office created at EU level to coordinate support and develop synergy between them. However, despite the Maastricht Treaty giving the EU legal competence for conducting cultural policy, cultural heritage (including the maintenance, restoration, accessibility and exploitation of cultural heritage) is still viewed as an inherent part of the competence and national realm of EU member states. The EU cultural policy is characterised by multilevel governance between different actors at different levels.[67] The current practices as well as the competing and uncoordinated structures among the EU member states make it difficult to develop synergies and collaboration across the different member states.

Furthermore, the missed opportunities to use both the EYCH as a platform and the strong European dimension inherent in the EHL network suggests serious difficulties in the EU's communication and promotion strategies for contextualising 'European' cultural heritage and mediating it to a broader audience at the national and European levels. It reveals a gap between the political intentions for developing a new understanding of European heritage in terms of a

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[65] EYCH website, https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/about_en .
[66] See T. Lähdesmäki 2014, op. cit., p. 407.
[67] See also COM (2014) 477 final op. cit., p. 2-4

larger framework that incorporates and connects manifold competing interpretations of memories, narratives and perspectives[68] and its practical implementations for increasing social cohesion across European societies. The increasing academic interest in the Label and other EU cultural initiatives may contribute to produce more transparency and help to improve the coordination of diverse EU initiatives for explaining what is European heritage and for promoting it to a broad public.

Conclusion

Many European societies currently face increasing social, political and economic insecurities and the crisis of political legitimation and representation affect both the EU and many European societies. The emphasis on a shared European heritage and interconnected past can be a topical and useful way for overcoming differences and mitigating the currently witnessed fragmentation in European societies. The European dimension of heritage refers to the idea of transnational entanglement and the interconnectivity of plural cultures and heritages in Europe's past that may also include non-European perspectives and result in the commitment to a shared world rather than in an original culture of its own.[69]

With the designation of a European Year, the European Commission pursued the objective to raise appreciation of Europe's cultural heritage as part of the collective memory and identity of European citizens. The aim of the European Year of Cultural Heritage was to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage across Europe and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. At the same time, the emphasis on cultural heritage at local, regional, national and EU levels challenged and linked traditional national and contemporary transnational perspectives of cultural heritage. While the EYCH 2018 did not result in a successful cooperation with the EHL as a network that explicitly promotes Europe's cultural heritage, other synergies with other initiatives and areas developed during the EYCH. The question is now how European institutions will manage to make use of such synergies and how to establish and integrate the ideas into cultural policies and cooperations.

Inherent to the current EU cultural policy is still the understanding of the economic and political use of culture. However, this risks the danger of reducing cultural processes to mere tools for

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[68] G. Delanty 2017b, op. cit.
[69] G. Delanty 2017a, op. cit.

managing and achieving social, economic and political goals. The promotion of the EHL could help broaden the understanding of what culture and heritage means to people and thereby facilitate synergy between the urgent issues of sustainability and economy on the one hand and the social and cultural dimension of culture in people's lives on the other.

The EHL currently (in 2019) still forms a small and 'exclusive club' of designated heritage sites but it would be in the interest of the European Commission to raise awareness of the EHL action among a broader European public. Despite the clear political and educative objectives connected with its implementation, the EHL action nevertheless possesses the capacity to initiate public debate on what European heritage is by engaging with a broader spectrum of European citizens and actors beyond the cultural, academic and political spheres. The strength of the EHL action consists in the network of designated heritage sites that promote different facets and a transnational understanding of cultural heritage. They assist to maintain and produce a sense of shared values and history in terms of a larger framework that incorporates and links manifold competing interpretations of local, regional, national, transnational, universalistic and cosmopolitan viewpoints, including non-European or even migrant perspectives.[70] Thus, the EHL network can assist in disclosing how national narratives of heritage and a national instrumentalisation of heritage affect different aspects of everyday life. At the same time, the highlighting of shared European heritage in the context of the EHL has the ability to increase the understanding of Europe as a political and value-based community by helping to construct and support meaningful social connections and historical interconnections.

The explicit focus on a European heritage challenges national discourses and exclusionary narratives of heritage and belonging by communicating to a broader European public the understanding that cultural heritage is more than conservational memory or national legacy but rather a source of new perspectives for creating and developing a common future. While the promotion of European heritage can produce an inclusionary understanding of heritage that serves the political objectives of European integration, at the same time, it may strengthen a sense of belonging to Europe as a cultural and political community based on a broad societal consensus on shared values and complementary interests across Europe. There is no contradiction between national responsibilities and the EU action as heritage is always both local and European and has been forged over time and across borders and communities. There

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[70] Ibidem.

is no doubt that European citizens would benefit on concentrating on what unites them in present times. European heritage offers a focus on what connects Europeans instead of what separates them, which may be a topical way of reducing the prevalent sense of societal polarisation across European societies and strengthen the position of rule of law and respect of human rights in EU member states.

Acknowledgement

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Table 1 List of EHL heritage sites and year of designation

Krapina Neanderthal Site, Croatia (2015)	Dohány Street Synagogue Complex, Budapest, Hungary (2017)
The Heart of Ancient Athens, Greece (2014)	Mundaneum, Mons, Belgium (2015)
Archaeological Park Carnuntum, Austria (2013)	Peace Palace, The Hague, The Netherlands (2013)
Abbey of Cluny, France (2014)	Javorca Church and its Cultural Landscape, Tolmin, Slovenia (2017)
Olomouc Premyslid Castle and Archdiocesan Museum, Czech Republic (2015)	Residencia de Estudiantes, Madrid, Spain (2014)
Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Barcelona, Spain (2014)	World War I Eastern Front Cemetry No 123, Łużna-Pustki, Poland (2015)

Leipzig's Musical Heritage Sites, Germany (2017)	Kaunas of 1919-1940, Lithuania (2014)
Great Guild Hall, Tallinn, Estonia (2013)	Camp Westerbork, The Netherlands (2013)
Sagres Promontory, Portugal (2015)	Former Natzweiler concentration camp and its satellite camps, Alsace-Moselle, Haut Rhin / France - and Baden-Württemberg, Hessen, Rhineland-Palatinate / Germany (2017)
General Library of the University of Coimbra, Portugal (2014)	Franja Partisan Hospital, Slovenia (2014)
The Imperial Palace, Vienna, Austria (2015)	Sighet Memorial, Sighet, Romania (2017)
Union of Lublin, Poland (2014)	Bois du Cazier, Marcinelle, Belgium (2017)
Münster and Osnabrück – Sites of the Peace of Westphalia, Germany (2014)	European District of Strasbourg, France (2015)
The May 3, 1791 Constitution, Warsaw, Poland (2014)	Museo Casa Alcide De Gaspari, Pieve, Tesino, Italy (2014)
The Historic Ensemble of the University of Tartu, Estonia (2015)	Robert Schuman's House, Scy-Chazelles, France (2014)
Hambach Castle, Germany (2014)	The Historical Gdańsk Shipyard, Poland (2014)
Fort Cadine, Trento, Italy (2017)	Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park, Sopron, Hungary (2014)
Charter of Law of Abolition of the Death Penalty, Lisbon, Portugal (2014)	Village of Schengen, Schengen, Luxembourg (2017)
Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary (2015)	Maastricht Treaty, Maastricht, The Netherlands (2017)