

Good afternoon everyone,

As you know, the Committee on Culture and Education I chair is very active and interested in the domain of cultural heritage, seen not only in itself, but in its broader dimension of vehicle of growth, jobs, tourism, environment and many other for Europe.

The ratio at the basis of the own-initiative report on "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe" that the European Parliament has adopted during its plenary session of last 8 September is exactly this: to highlight the need for a **holistic approach** to the domain of cultural heritage, highlighting its potential in terms of economic and social improvement.

A few weeks ago, a consortium called Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe (CHCfE), composed of 6 NGOs operating in the domain of European cultural heritage, has presented to the European Parliament its report, which has offered some outstanding key remarks on the added value that cultural heritage brings to Europe.

Just to quote some of them, Cultural heritage sector is estimated to produce **up to 26.7 indirect jobs for each direct job**, much more than, for example, the car industry (with a quotient of only 6.3).¹

The number of persons directly employed within Europe in the cultural heritage sector is estimated at over 300,000 but **the potential of cultural heritage lies also in inducing job creation in other sectors — indirectly created jobs amount to 7.8 million person-years.**²

At the European Parliament, we have recently hosted a meeting with the AEERPA (Association Européenne des Entreprises de Restauration du Patrimoine Architectural). That meeting made us thinking more in depth on the extraordinary chance we could catch. In fact, the common assumption sees cultural heritage as a cost to society; a financial burden tolerated, principally, just as a moral duty at the expense of the great public. On the contrary, what came out from that meeting was **that cultural heritage could - and should- represent a crucial component of the economic upturn as well as European innovation process, competitiveness and welfare.**

¹ Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe report - page 154

² *Ibidem*

Just think about the fact that renovation and maintenance represent **more than a quarter of the value of Europe's construction industry**³. It is estimated, for instance, that repair and maintenance on historic building stocks in England supported **180.000 jobs in 2010 (that become 500.000 if one considers the indirect effects on other sectors)**.

With the Diaconu report of the CULT Committee, the European Parliament has meant to incentivise the valorisation of the cultural heritage by:

- increasing the involvement of private actors by **encouraging** the public-private partnerships,
- creating a **single EU portal** on cultural heritage, bringing together information from all the EU programmes funding cultural heritage, and
- incentivising the Member States to **set up fiscal incentives** (like reductions in VAT or other taxes) **for the enterprises working in the restoration, preservation and conservation sectors**.

In fact, we should never forget that a notable part of our cultural heritage is also managed by private bodies.

An integrated approach, horizontal to different DGs of the European Commission, is therefore needed, as Mr Michel Magnier, Director for Culture and Creativity of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission, has recently confirmed on the occasion of the meeting with AEERPA hosted by the European Parliament.

Let me conclude by remarking the importance of the request, included in the Diaconu report, to set up for 2018 a ***European Year of Cultural Heritage***, which should be provided with an adequate budget.

I am a strong supporter of the role played in the European integration process by the "European Years", and having the European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the end of the World War I, is absolutely a priority for the European agenda.

Thank you for your attention

³ Getting Cultural Heritage to work for Europe, Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on cultural heritage.