

# EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Marius Müller\*  
Maïke Schwiddessen\*\*

---

## The European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH). A European Cultural Heritage Movement

### Earning the Common Heritage

In 2004 Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, Europa Nostra's Secretary General, emphasized the special role civil society organizations must play to achieve the necessary mobilization towards the European Cultural Heritage.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by this appeal and encouraged by the Call for participation of the German Cultural Heritage Committee (DNK), the European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage was founded as a cross-border initiative on the occasion of the "European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018". Beyond 2018 the ESACH vision is to contribute to the year's objectives as a recognized young and interdisciplinary network at European universities.

---

\* **Marius Müller**, a law student at the University of Passau, Germany. He holds a BA in Historical Cultural Studies with a Major in Art and Architectural History; co-founder of the ESACH, reporter for ICOMOS Germany during the EYCH 2018 and volunteer of the platform ArThemis of the Art-Law Center at the University of Geneva.

\*\* **Maïke Schwiddessen**, a law student at the University of Passau, Germany; research assistant at the Chair of Civil Law, German and European Legal History at the University of Passau.

<sup>1</sup> S. Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, *Enlargement = Enrichment. A Plea for a Europe-wide Mobilisation in Favour of Cultural Heritage*, in: S. Quaedvlieg-Mihailović, R. Graf Strachwitz (eds.), *Heritage and the Building of Europe*, Maecenata Verlag, Berlin 2004, p. 105.

Cultural heritage reveals what being a European has meant throughout time. It is a powerful instrument that provides a sense of belonging to and among European citizens. For this reason, Europe as a political body needs to realize the unifying force of cultural heritage. National responsibilities and common action are not in contradiction: heritage is always both local and European. It has been forged over time, across borders and within various communities. Heritage is made up of local stories, which together make up the history of Europe.

## The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

Cultural heritage has a decisive influence on the reality surrounding us.<sup>2</sup> It affects the cultural, social, environmental, and economic aspects of life. Eight million people are employed directly or indirectly in the field of cultural heritage.<sup>3</sup> The European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) aims to focus on this economic role of cultural heritage, as well as to raise awareness for EU programmes involving cultural heritage<sup>4</sup> and to increase the access to cultural heritage for all.<sup>5</sup>

“Sharing Heritage”, one of the motivating mottos of the upcoming year, means understanding that cultural heritage is not only conservational memory, but also a source of new perspectives for the young generation and something that can be built on in the future.

## ESACH Passau

The ESACH was founded in February 2017 by a group of enthusiastic law students interested in cultural heritage at the University of Passau. The initial aim of ESACH was to raise fellow students' awareness of all forms of cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), and to promote an understanding of cultural heritage as a common responsibility. Therefore, the ESACH sought to create a joint European spirit among students and other university members within Europe by establishing a European network of local ESACH groups.

The founding and coordination committee at the University of Passau provided and delivered access to different social media platforms in the English language. Furthermore, it offered support for all students and young researchers at European universities interested in cultural heritage topics, who are encouraged to contribute to the EYCH with their local heritage stories. Today, ESACH has

---

<sup>2</sup> E. Tropper, *Das Medium Ansichtskarte und die Genese von Kulturerbe. Eine visuelle Spurenlese am Beispiel der Stadt Graz*, in: M. Csáky, M. Sommer (eds.), *Kulturerbe als soziokulturelle Praxis*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck 2005, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *Commission Welcomes European Parliament's Backing for European Year of Cultural Heritage*, 27 April 2017, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-17-1111\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1111_en.htm) [accessed: 30.05.2017].

<sup>4</sup> Such as Natura 2000, Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, or Horizon 2020.

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, op. cit.

# EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Marius Müller, Maike Schwiddessen

---

become the first interdisciplinary and cross-generational network in the field driven by the vision to actively contribute towards a reconnection of the notions of heritage and culture in the related academic disciplines.

During 2018 we aim to connect the EYCH to and with our universities and to show how to “live heritage” through our activities. All these activities can be allocated to one of three pillars: Information, Intercommunication, and Interaction.

## Information

An “Information” lecture series and similar formats shall inform the university community, using the different scientific perspectives of different faculties, about cultural heritage and create awareness of these topics among students.

## Intercommunication

Just a few months after having been established, the ESACH network is already active in several European countries: Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and Sweden. As each ESACH group is realizing their own projects independently so far the different social media channels serve the important purpose of making the local stories of the ESACH network visible by unifying the “Heritage Mosaic”.

## Interaction

In order to render cultural heritage more tangible for our generation, excursions to local and non-local heritage sites in cooperation with different stakeholders in the field of cultural heritage will be carried out in order to generate a lasting awareness and consciousness regarding the common responsibility and necessity to protect the European heritage.

## Conclusions

Europe’s cultural heritage is deeply rooted in our common values and is a source of identity. Sharing our common inheritance means starting a dialogue that can lead to a united Europe, which would translate into unlimited “happiness, prosperity and glory for four hundred million people”.<sup>6</sup> However, we are convinced that this future for our common heritage needs the formal involvement of the young generation.

In the end it should be recalled that already in the 19th century comparative legal studies could cross the intellectual circles and that their interdisciplinary spir-

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul-Henri Spaak on the occasion of the signature of the Treaties of Rome on 25 March 1957, cf. [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/discours\\_de\\_paul\\_henri\\_spaak\\_a\\_l\\_occasion\\_de\\_la\\_signature\\_des\\_traites\\_de\\_rome\\_rome\\_25\\_mars\\_1957-fr-0d9aa0d0-ac45-43af-afd0-6ab08ddd3590.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/discours_de_paul_henri_spaak_a_l_occasion_de_la_signature_des_traites_de_rome_rome_25_mars_1957-fr-0d9aa0d0-ac45-43af-afd0-6ab08ddd3590.html) [accessed: 31.05.2017].

it was crucial for finding necessary contemporary approaches regarding national heritage issues and debates<sup>7</sup> – a point of reference for the actions of ESACH and the “Santander Art & Culture Law Review”.

## Do you want to become part of the ESACH network or find out more about us?

Web: [esach.eu](http://esach.eu)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/esach\\_spirit](https://twitter.com/esach_spirit)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ESACHspirit>  
Mail: [contact@esach.eu](mailto:contact@esach.eu)

---

<sup>7</sup> A. Swenson, *The Law's Delay? Preservation Legislation in France, Germany and England, 1870-1914*, in: M. Hall (ed.), *Towards World Heritage. International Origins of the Preservation Movement, 1870-1930*, Ashgate, Farnham/Burlington 2007, p. 146.