

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

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European Heritage Label: Changes, Challenges & Perspectives

Kraków-Łuźna, 17-19 September 2018

The year 2018 has been declared by the European Parliament and Council of the European Union as the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). In Poland, 300 sites and/or events were granted the auspices of the EYCH. The main event prepared within this framework by the Polish National Coordinator of the project – the International Cultural Centre in Kraków (ICC) – was the conference “European Heritage Label: Changes, Challenges & Perspectives”. The organization of this three-day-long event, which took place in Kraków and Łuźna on 17-19 September 2018, was supported by the Department of Restoration of Kraków’s Monuments and National Heritage of the Małopolska Provincial Office and the Łuźna Municipality, with financial support from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

In accordance with the title of the event, its main objective was to gather experiences connected to the European Heritage Label (EHL) programme, present the research on the topic, and identify the available and eligible tools for improving upon its current state. The conference brought together officials

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involved with the EHL, prominent heritage researchers of various backgrounds, and members of the EHL Expert Panel, including managers of the EHL sites, National Coordinators of EHL, as well as other participants interested in the topic.

The first day of the conference was devoted to a general reflection on the role of memory in the European narrative – from more general notions to a focused look at the EHL. The session was opened with a welcoming and introductory speech by Agata Wąsowska-Pawlik (Director of the ICC), who later moderated the session, and Michel Magnier (Director for Culture and Creativity, European Commission). During his speech Michel Magnier gave his assessment of the EHL programme, characterized by its low recognition, small number of sites, and lack of incentives for sites to apply for the label. As remedies to these drawbacks, which can be applied even before the restructuring of the legal basis of the programme after 2019, he suggested enhancing the communication of the programme, the development of networking and capacity building, and making better use of the Creative Europe framework, especially by focusing on the experiences of European Capitals of Culture. He announced two substantial incentives for sites in his speech – a grant for establishing a network among the EHL sites (with a secured funding of €1.5 million over three years), and grants awarded to newly-inscribed sites after 2021.

Igor Kąkolewski (Director of the Centre for Historical Research in Berlin at the Polish Academy of Sciences) presented a paper entitled “European Landscapes of Memory. How to Transform EHL Listed Sites of Memory into a Living Memory of Europeans?”. The suggested answer to the title question was to incorporate actions derived from grassroot movements, as exemplified by the activities of the Cultural Society Borussia, which is involved with the memory realm of Masuria, rendering the EHL project more authentic and the development of incentives and support mechanisms by the European Union.

The next lecture “Sites of Memory on the World Heritage List” was presented by Jean-Louis Luxen (Professor emeritus at the Catholic University of Louvain). In his elaborate lecture Prof. Luxen contrasted the evolving understandings of the concept of *lieux de mémoire*, for example under criterion VI of the World Heritage Convention, alternative UNESCO programmes, ICOMOS’s and ICOM’s doctrines, the activity of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, and the World Heritage Committee’s Decision 42 COM 8B.24 from Manama, which put a moratorium on inscribing sites of memory to the UNESCO List until 2020.

In the next keynote lecture Bénédicte Selfslagh (President of ICOMOS Belgium, Chairperson of the European Heritage Label Panel) presented the development of the EHL since its inception as an intergovernmental initiative, its objectives, its interpretation of the notion of heritage, the criteria for awarding the EHL, and the challenges and lessons learned hitherto from the functioning of the EHL and its Expert Panel.

The first day’s session concluded with a discussion between Beatrice Kelly (Head of Policy and Research at the Irish Heritage Council), Csilla Hegedüs (head

EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Marek Świdrak

of the Transylvania Trust and a member of the EHL Panel) and Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović (Secretary General of Europa Nostra), moderated by Jacek Purchla (President of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO, Kraków University of Economics, ICC). This fruitful discussion addressed such matters as the possibility of a shared common European narration; ways of identifying European places of common memory which facilitate international unity; the level of the EHL's integration of tangible cultural heritage with intangible heritage; the asymmetry between the UNESCO List and the EHL; and ways to further develop the programme.

On the second day, the conference resumed with a focus on the challenges faced by the EHL as exemplified by management practices. During the panel moderated by Łukasz Galusek (Deputy Director of the ICC), participants listened to presentations given by five EHL site managers. Markus Wachter presented the case of the Archaeological Park Carnuntum; Krzysztof Modras OP – the Union of Lublin; Sara Zanatta – Fort Cadine; Vaidas Petrulis – Kaunas of 1919-1940; and Zsuzsanna Szijártó – the Sopron Pan-European Picnic Memorial Park. These presentations gave a picture of the great diversity between particular sites in almost all of the aspects discussed. Some of them were EHL sites from the time of the first designations (e.g. Carnuntum), while others have just recently received the title (Fort Cadine). Some were run by a company, others by a municipality, district, or central government, and one by multiple stakeholders (the Union of Lublin, which is managed collectively by the Mayor's Office, the City Museum, and the Dominicans monastery).

After the discussion which followed the presentations, the floor was passed to Gloria Lorenzo-Lerones (the Manager of the EHL programme, European Commission). She gave a detailed presentation on the current changes introduced to the programme, with special focus on the networking and financing opportunities for the EHL sites available through the action announced by Michel Magnier the previous day.

Following her presentation, the participants took part in a workshop session divided into three groups, which were moderated by Beatrice Kelly, Gábor Sonkoly (Vice-dean of the Faculty of Humanities of the Eötvös Loránd University, Member of the EHL Panel) and Marek Świdrak (ICC). In these workshops the participants devoted their time to analysing the drawbacks in the procedure for becoming an EHL site as well as in their experiences managing them. After the sessions the moderators gave a summary of the workshops, which once again proved the great diversification between the sites, their operational frameworks, and the expectations from the EHL programme.

The conference proceedings were closed by a final session moderated by Michał Wiśniewski (Kraków University of Economics, ICC) devoted to a panel discussion between Csilla Hegedüs, Beatrice Kelly, Jacek Purchla, Bénédicte Selfslagh, and Gábor Sonkoly. Although all of the participants were enthusiasts of the EHL scheme, some troublesome issues were mentioned; e.g. the problems with

interpretation of the term “European significance” (one of the criteria for awarding the EHL title). Nevertheless the speakers praised the progress made in the implementation of the programme – which was visible in comparison with the results of the monitoring action in 2014; applauded the new networking opportunities introduced by the European Commission; and dubbed the current stage of the EHL as satisfactory in comparison with the state of implementation of the World Heritage Convention at the time when it was, like the EHL now, a new fresh instrument.

On the third day of the event participants went on a study tour to Łużna-Pustki – a First World War Eastern Front Cemetery No. 123, one of around 400 such structures connected to the battle of Gorlice. The site, designed by Jan Szczepkowski and Dušan Jurkovič, was designated as an EHL site in 2016. The visit to the site was preceded by a lecture by Agnieszka Partridge, who discussed the history of the site and the management and restoration works carried out with the perspective of applying for the EHL title. Apart from the main destination, the participants also visited Biecz, the Wooden Church in Binarowa (a UNESCO site), and the Krzysztof Penderecki European Centre for Music.

The value of the conference lay primarily in the fact that it was the first such event dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the EHL programme. By bringing together all the various types of the EHL stakeholders and experts in the field – coming from both practice and academia – it proved to be not only engaging but also very fruitful and stimulating. The many perspectives from which the topic was approached were supplemented by the study tour and two exhibitions displayed at the ICC during the conference – a photography exhibition showing all of the sites, prepared by Creative Europe; and an exhibition devoted to the Constitution of 3 May 1791 prepared by the Central Archives of Historical Records.

The last issue of this year’s ICC’s journal “Herito” will be devoted to the EYCH and the EHL. The video material from the conference is available at the ICC’s YouTube account.