

Celebrating European cultural heritage in 2018

A Commission proposal paving the way to the designation of 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage is due to be voted in plenary in April. 2018 will be dedicated to European cultural heritage and its role in the continent's shared history and values, following a recommendation from Parliament.

Background

In December 2014, the Education and Culture Council adopted [conclusions](#) on the participatory governance of Europe's cultural heritage – both tangible and intangible – and called on the Commission to consider a proposal on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH). A 2014 [Commission communication](#) on an integrated approach to cultural heritage highlighted, among other things, the favourable impact that investing in cultural heritage could have on the economy. A European Parliament [resolution](#) of September 2015 supported this position, and recommended that 2018 be designated as the EYCH.

European Commission proposal

In August 2016, the Commission published a [legislative proposal](#), in which it recognised the contribution of cultural heritage to enhancing social capital and economic development, as stated in the Council's May 2014 [conclusions](#) on 'cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe'. The proposal set a number of objectives for the EYCH, among them promoting the role of European cultural heritage for cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; ensuring its contribution to the economy and society through the cultural and creative industries; adopting measures to safeguard, conserve and digitise it; exchanging cultural heritage practices; and developing its role for social cohesion, sustainable tourism and local employment.

The Commission would not seek new funding for the EYCH; instead, it proposes to secure €4 million from the Creative Europe programme for events, promotional campaigns, exchanges of good practices and awareness-raising initiatives, together with funds from Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Europe for Citizens programme. National, regional and local authorities would organise events, while cooperation with Unesco and the Council of Europe would contribute to building the EYCH's international dimension. The [European Heritage Days](#), giving access to heritage sites in 50 European countries, the [EU Prize for Cultural Heritage](#), granted to 387 sites and projects, and the [European Heritage Label](#), granted to 29 sites related to European integration, ideals and history, will also contribute to the endeavour.

European Parliament position

On 8 November 2016, the EP Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) adopted its [report](#) on the Commission proposal following a simplified procedure, in which it added an article earmarking €15 million from the EU general budget for the EYCH. Furthermore, the report called for establishing synergies between the EU's Structural and Investment Funds, as well as between national, regional and local funding programmes, to support the EYCH. The report also insisted on involving the EP in a working group set up to plan EYCH-related activities and to decide on other topics touching upon events' organisation. It highlighted the need for common governance involving Member States, regional and local authorities, and for the engagement of civil society, NGOs, professionals, associations and youth organisations.

Trilogue negotiations among the EP, the Council and the Commission on 9 February 2017 resulted in the introduction of a specific article allocating to the EYCH a budget of €8 million, of which €3 million would come from the Creative Europe programme without jeopardising other activities funded by it. It also accepted the EP being present as an observer during national coordinator meetings. At the initiative of the Council, film heritage was included as cultural heritage. The CULT Committee endorsed the agreement on 28 February.

First reading/single reading: [2016/0259 \(COD\)](#); Committee responsible: Committee on Culture and Education (CULT); Rapporteur: Mircea Diaconu (ALDE, Romania).

