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6TH JUNE 2009



EUROPEAN HERITAGE GRAND PRIZE WINNERS ANNOUNCED

6 June 2009 – Against the majestic backdrop of the Teatro Antico in Taormina, Sicily (Italy), the European Union and Europa Nostra announced the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Award Grand Prize winners at its awards ceremony last night.

Seven grand prize winners were chosen from the previously selected 28 winners for demonstrating outstanding heritage achievements across Europe. Having shown remarkable efforts in their various categories, the seven projects were singled-out from the original 138 awards entries that spanned 24 European countries.

The awards were jointly launched in 2002 by the European Commission and Europa Nostra to celebrate extraordinary initiatives within the field of Europe's cultural heritage with the aim to promote high standards and high-quality skills in conservation practice. The 2009 winners were no exception to this, demonstrating exceptional conservation, research and education efforts, as well as exemplary dedicated service in the field of cultural heritage.

The following grand prize winners received a monetary award of €10,000 and all award winners receive either a commemorative plaque (for conservation projects - seen above) or a trophy (for winners in other categories).

Calls for entry for the 2010 edition of the Awards scheme have already begun and the deadline for submissions is 1 October 2009. Conditions and application forms are available for downloading on the Europa Nostra website: www.europanostra.org.

Category 1 – Conservation

The Kesälahti Church Bell Tower, Kesälahti Finland – the Jury highly appreciates the strict methodology and skilful craftsmanship undertaken to ensure that the Kesälahti Church Bell Tower can stand as a unique piece of European Wooden Heritage for future generations.

Mátra Museum, Gyöngyös Hungary – the Jury has awarded a Grand Prize to the Mátra Museum as it presents an outstanding example of harmonious coexistence of a careful historical restoration and the incorporation of contemporary architecture. The ensemble has regained the authentic complexity and completeness of the property while employing high levels of standard and quality.

Chiesa di Santi Faustino e Giovita, Fasano di Gardone Riviera Italy – the Jury deems the restoration of the Church of Saints Faustino and Giovita is more profound than just returning it to its original state. The monument, ever vulnerable to seismic activity, has a central place in the socio-cultural identity of its community. It has also a strategic value in the landscape of Lake Garda, whose integrity continues to be transformed and compromised today.

High Level Bridge, Newcastle Gateshead United Kingdom – the Jury was enormously impressed with the level of engineering professionalism shown in this project, from original research into the fatigue performance of cast-iron, down to the restoration of the original lamp standards. The granting

of a Grand Prize represents the importance the Jury attached to the retention in day-to-day use of such engineering icons of our industrial heritage.

Category 2 – Research

The Noah's Ark Project – the Jury commends this groundbreaking and high quality research for its ability to clearly demonstrate the risk that climate change poses to Europe's cultural heritage. The Jury hopes that awarding a Grand Prize to this project will lead to efforts to conduct a pan-European cultural heritage environmental assessment that will be constantly updated.

Category 3 – Dedicated Service

Dr Glenn Murray, Segovia Spain – the Jury has given a Grand Prize to Dr Glenn Murray for his great efforts to save the famous Segovia Mint. He founded the Friends of Segovia Mint Association and for over 20 years has devoted himself to the on-going conversion of this historic site into an important museum.

Category 4 – Education, Training and Awareness-Raising

Sustainable Aegean Programme, Athens Greece – the Jury appreciates the programme's pedagogic approach, while combining the mobilisation of the local population to protect its own heritage through ongoing initiatives that integrate aspects of environmental protection with controlled building development within the urban spaces and by creating an alternative dynamic for the regional economy.

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Notes to editors:

Europa Nostra, which represents over 250 heritage NGOs active in 45 countries across Europe, is dedicated to putting heritage and its benefits in the mainstream of public consciousness and is committed to making heritage a priority for public policies both at European and national levels. Its specific objectives are to promote, at a European level, high standards of quality in the fields of heritage conservation, architecture, urban and rural planning and to advocate a balanced and sustainable development of urban and rural, built and natural environment.



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