



EUROPA
NOSTRA

Amsterdam Declaration on volunteers as added-value for Europe's cultural and natural heritage

As adopted by the Europa Nostra members during the General Assembly 2011 which took place on 11 June 2011 in Amsterdam, following the Europa Nostra Forum "Volunteers: added value for Europe's cultural heritage", organised in cooperation with Bond Heemschut and Erfgoed Nederland, on 10 June 2011:

Europa Nostra, which is comprised of 400 member and associate organisations with a combined membership of at least 5 million citizens from all over Europe, all of which are dependent also on the work volunteers and epitomise the spirit and power of example of the volunteering ethic, hereby declares:

REFERRING TO:

- The Portoroz Declaration on the role of voluntary organisations in the field of Cultural Heritage, adopted on 6-7 April 2001 by the Ministers responsible for the Cultural Heritage of the States party to the European Cultural Convention;
- The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the value of Cultural Heritage for Society, adopted on 27 October 2005 in Faro¹, and entered into force on 1 June 2011 ;
- The European Parliament Resolution of 22 April 2008 on the role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion²;
- The article 3.3 of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union which states that "[The Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced"³;
- The European Union Year of Volunteering 2011⁴;
- Numerous conferences and meetings on volunteering and voluntary organisations active in the field of cultural and natural heritage in Europe;
- Its own experience as a European organisation benefiting from invaluable contributions by volunteers;

WHEREAS IT IS ESTIMATED THAT⁵:

- More than 100 million EU citizens volunteer in various fields;
- Volunteering account for up to 5% of national GDPs of EU Member States;
- For every 1 € organisations invest in volunteering, volunteers give back up to 14 times that figure;

RECOGNISING THAT:

¹ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/199.htm>

² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0131&language=EN>

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0013:0046:EN:PDF>

⁴ <http://europa.eu/volunteering/>

⁵ The European Volunteer Centre (CEV) 2009 European Elections Manifesto « do you engage for those who engage? »: http://www.cev.be/data/File/CEV_2009_EP_Elections_Manifesto_EN.pdf

- Europe's cultural and natural heritage is one of Europe's greatest assets and a most effective means of reconciling the needs of the citizens, the economy, the community, the environment, and society at large;
- European cultural and natural heritage is a distinct feature of the European identity which should be safeguarded and enhanced as an integral element of a European set of values, vital for developing European identity and citizenship;
- One of the ways of participating in society as an active citizen is through voluntary work;
- Intrinsic and extrinsic value of cultural and natural heritage for the citizens is demonstrated by the level of engagement, time, energy and skills of numerous volunteers;
- Citizenship is reinforced and better understood by volunteering in cultural and natural heritage;

EUROPA NOSTRA hereby calls on the European Union Institutions, national, regional and local governments, as well as civil society organisations and citizens engaged in volunteering on cultural and natural heritage to respect, promote, encourage and train volunteer citizens involved in the safeguarding, enhancement and promotion of cultural and natural heritage in Europe.

SPECIFICALLY, delegates attending the Europa Nostra General Assembly in Amsterdam declare that EU institutions, national, regional and local governments should:

- Recognise the central value of volunteers for Europe's cultural and natural heritage, as well as for the society and economy;
- Appreciate, motivate and take care of volunteers and enhance their contribution to cultural and natural heritage;
- Recognise the value of volunteering for developing Active Citizenship;
- Invest in more comprehensive studies on volunteering, including an economic and social study of the impact of volunteering for cultural and natural heritage in Europe;
- Create more funding opportunities for the education, engagement and management of volunteers and professionals working with them in the heritage field;
- Raise public awareness on the importance of volunteers for cultural and natural heritage and generate inspiration and passion amongst the citizens for volunteering.

EUROPA NOSTRA, therefore, hereby pledges itself, through the Amsterdam Declaration, to encourage volunteering for cultural and natural heritage in Europe and to highlight its added-value in its policy and activities.