



Network of European  
Museum Organisations

## **Priorities for Museums - NEMO Recommendations for the European Parliament Elections in 2019**

The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) was founded in 1992 as an independent network of national museum organisations representing the museum community of the member states of the Council of Europe. Together, NEMO's members speak for over 30,000 museums across Europe.

### **Our vision**

Museums safeguard tangible and intangible evidence of the manmade and natural world for current and future generations. Their collections tell a rich variety of stories, interpreting past and present history. Museums encourage dialogue, stimulating us to think, learn and reflect; to celebrate differences and discover affinities. Museums contribute to developing cultural factors: they create memory and identity, and they foster creativity, diversity and knowledge. All of these factors are crucial for the building of today's society. We believe that museums deliver these benefits for European society.

### **Our mission**

It is vital that cultural heritage has a strong voice in Europe. Museums need to be seen as institutions serving their communities in a meaningful way.

NEMO's mission is to ensure that museums are an integral part of European society by promoting their work and value to policy-makers, and by providing museums with information, expertise and opportunities for networking, development and cooperation.

### **What culture and museums offer to Europe**

The Eurobarometer Study about Cultural Heritage (December 2017) shows that the vast majority of Europeans (84%) feel that cultural heritage is important to them personally, and 90% believe that it is important to their country. There is also a strong feeling that cultural heritage is a crucial part of European identity, with 80% believing that it is important to the EU as a whole.

Many Europeans are proud of the history and culture within their local communities; 82% take pride in historical monuments or sites, works of art or traditions from their region or country. A large majority of Europeans (88%) believe that Europe's cultural heritage should be taught in schools, as it is highly relevant for our history and culture.

The strategic role of cultural heritage, including museums, for European society is also brought to the fore through the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The importance of culture and cultural heritage as a bearer of common values, a driver of economic sustainable development and social cohesion has recently gained recognition at the highest political level.<sup>1</sup> The values that culture embodies are in line with the objectives of Europe 2020, the EU strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Even more, culture and cultural heritage is seen as a strong unifying element of the entire EU project, as has recently been reaffirmed at the EU Leaders' Summit in Gothenburg (November 2017), the European Council conclusions (December 2017)<sup>2</sup>, and the Davos Conference of European Ministers of Culture (January 2018).

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<sup>1</sup>The [European Agenda for Culture](#) states that the culture sector is increasingly a source of job creation, contributing to growth in Europe and an excellent conduit for promoting social inclusion and supporting cultural diversity.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32179/14-final-conclusions-en.pdf>

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THE VALUE OF MUSEUMS FOR EUROPEAN SOCIETY

Europe's museums must continue to innovate in order to respond to the technological and social changes across the continent. NEMO has identified five key areas where support at the EU level can make a critical contribution to a stronger European museum sector.

### 1. DIGITISATION

Digital technologies affect all aspects of museum work today. When speaking about digitisation in museums, they divide their work into three areas of activity:

- digitisation and documentation of collections
- online presentation of collections
- improved interoperability and interaction with audiences

When these three activities are put into practice, museums are well placed to fully tap into their digital potential.

Industries such as the creative sectors<sup>3</sup> need content and they are increasingly shaped by changes in technology and our growing digital environment. Museums provide that content with open, interoperable digital content promoting innovation and enabling growth. SMEs and startups, software developers and app designers from the creative and technology sectors are working with museums' open information to create and develop interactive tools and products that put cultural heritage in the hands of teachers, schoolchildren, designers and tourists.

This is why NEMO advocates for museums and heritage to become an integral part of the Digital Agenda of the EU. Policies and programmes implementing the agenda should respect the role of museums as learning institutions in the service of society as well as sources of creative innovation.

Inter alia, this should be reflected in adequate fees and a transparent structure for copyright management. It should also be taken into account that the current EU Orphan Works Directive<sup>4</sup> should be re-visited with regard to its feasibility regarding administrative burdens for museums. An obligatory registration of protected work on the right-holders' side would pre-empt the Orphan Works Directive and allow museums to make their collections accessible to the public to the fullest.

In order to best translate and implement the Digital Agenda of the EU, museums across Europe need support to build on their digital capacities at all levels. All aspects of museum work need to adapt to the digital world, and function in a harmonised environment.

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<sup>3</sup> The importance of the creative sector for Europe, representing 6.8 % of European GDP (approximately €860 billion) and 6.5% of European employment (approximately 14 million). See <https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/content/economic-contribution-creative-industries-eu-terms-gdp-and-jobs>.

<sup>4</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012L0028>.

## **2. EDUCATION**

Europe has the most equal and inclusive societies in the world. However, the EU is facing challenges to guarantee peace, democracy and cohesion for European society. Part of the solution when it comes to contributing to a healthy European society is to get more people into decent jobs and strengthen Europe's resilience in a context of rapid changes brought about by the technological revolution and globalisation. With Europe becoming increasingly diverse and being confronted with an ageing population, non-formal and informal learning structures will continue to grow in importance. This has already been noted in the recent EC communication and proposed initiatives by the EU for a Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, highlighting important updates reflecting the rapid evolution of teaching and learning and aiming to improve the development of key competences of people of all ages throughout their lives.<sup>5</sup>

Museums contribute to all of the above-mentioned EU key competences for Lifelong Learning (Recommendation 2006/962/EC) and they are a source of learning at all ages, relating to diverse backgrounds, especially to vulnerable groups.

NEMO recommends to increase the budget and to introduce funding lines in programmes such as ERASMUS+ to support cooperation projects between Education and Culture, more specifically between schools of all levels, including adult education institutions, and museums to develop joint programmes and activities.

## **3. MOBILITY FOR CAPACITY-BUILDING**

Europe is not just a single market but also, and more importantly, a privileged space for the circulation of ideas, knowledge and people. As cultural heritage is increasingly called upon to unlock its potential as a contributor to a sense of belonging, shared values and solidarity among EU citizens in order to preserve the integrity of the European project, the EU should first and foremost invest in the empowerment of the people who take care of heritage.

Cultural heritage and museum professionals should be adequately equipped with new and emerging skills that are necessary for them to cope with new and unexpected demands, and to work to enhance the value of museums to society. Furthermore, young professionals in the entry and mid-stage of their career should be able to gain first-hand experience of European diversity and multiculturalism, learn to work in a European environment, develop their intercultural skills and benefit from peer-learning. NEMO is convinced that the launch of an EU-wide mobility scheme for museum professionals, in the form of an ERASMUS+ for cultural heritage, will undoubtedly be highly beneficial for participants not only in terms of capacity-building but also by enhancing their EU identity and empowering them as EU citizens.

## **4. MEASURING IMPACT (EVIDENCE-BASED POLICIES)**

The value of museums to today's society is no longer acknowledged only in respect of their role in safeguarding cultural heritage and preserving collective memory, but rather in the light of their multifaceted contribution to wider social agendas (economic growth, regional development, social cohesion, learning, health and well-being, innovation, environmental sustainability, etc.). The positive impact of museums on various sectors has been

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<sup>5</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-18-102\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-102_en.htm)

demonstrated by a number of studies and reports at national and EU levels (e.g. “Heritage counts for Europe”<sup>6</sup>, the Finnish report on the “Economic impact of Museums”<sup>7</sup>, and The Guggenheim Effect).

However, comprehensive and comparable statistical data and other evidence at the EU level are still scarce, while the development of adequate, transparent and reliable evaluation systems that do justice to the multidimensional value of museums for society is still missing. It is agreed that economic value cannot fully capture cultural value as there are specific characteristics of cultural value, particularly the social aspects, which cannot be reduced to a monetary form. Understanding and managing this broader and complex value becomes increasingly important for policy-making in culture and other sectors where museums have an impact. Data collection and sharing is indispensable for the process of formulating, developing and implementing effective, well-grounded, evidence-based policies.

Therefore, NEMO advocates for the development of instruments and methods to support the evaluation of the impact of museums for society in its full spectrum. EUROSTAT’s work on cultural heritage should be continued and reinforced with the aim of making EU-wide museum-related data readily available to policy-makers. It is also very important to continue supporting research projects under “HORIZON 2020”, which generate new evidence in support of the impact of museums.

## **5. RENEWED AND IMPROVED SUPPORT FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE**

In light of the growing demands and expectations placed on culture, including museums, following the recognition of its crossover impact, NEMO strongly recommends allocating appropriate funding to culture across policy fields and funding programmes in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020.

In addition, NEMO calls for a new funding programme dedicated to culture, as a successor to the Creative Europe programme in the period after 2020, which will fully recognise the social function of culture and cultural heritage and will prioritise innovative cultural practices and people-based investments. Such a programme should contain a sub-programme dedicated to cultural heritage initiatives, supporting the contribution of museums to social cohesion, economic development and the upholding of shared European values and identities for present and future generations.

Moreover, NEMO calls for assurance that funding instruments and mechanisms to be employed in such and other funding programmes for culture respect the specific non-profit nature of museums and similar cultural institutions, and be tailored to support their recognised social function, so as to become widely and easily usable by the sector.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europanostra.org/our-work/policy/cultural-heritage-counts-europe/>.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.museoliitto.fi/doc/Economic\\_impact\\_of\\_museums.pdf](http://www.museoliitto.fi/doc/Economic_impact_of_museums.pdf)