



**European Committee
of the Regions**

The President

Brussels, 8 June 2020

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Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović
Secretary General of Europa Nostra

Harry Verwayen
Executive Director of Europeana Foundation

Dear Mr Quaedvlieg-Mihailović,
Dear Mr Verwayen,

Thank you for your letter and sharing your Europe Day Manifesto on cultural heritage. I would like to congratulate you for the highly attended Europe Day Webinar on 9 May, in which the Chair of our SEDEC Commission, Ms Karjalainen, conveyed our Committee's key messages aside esteemed panellists, including Commissioner Gabriel.

Your dedication to culture and the work of the entire European Heritage Alliance is especially relevant in these difficult moments. Culture and cultural heritage have a special place also on our agenda at the European Committee of the Regions, and I have personally worked on the EU strategy for international cultural relations¹. Our discussion then is now more relevant than ever since our common cultural heritage helps promoting the European values and shoring up the Union's democratic foundations. It contributes and reinforces our multiple and complementary identities (local, regional, national and European), and facilitates tolerance and understanding.

Our cultural heritage needs our protection and cultivation. During the COVID19 pandemic, improvised and novel expressions of culture, including via digital media, have helped people to cope with the lockdown. It demonstrates our creativity and imagination in overcoming obstacles and adapting to new realities.

We share your concerns about the devastating impact the pandemic has had on the cultural and creative sectors, on artists and their audiences alike. At present, it is difficult to quantify the economic and social losses due to the lockdown, but we consider these sectors as being among the hardest hit. For its part, our Committee approved an [Action Plan](#) and created an online [Exchange Platform](#) to foster cooperation and to help regions and cities in the fight against the COVID19.

¹ CoR opinion: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, 2017

Culture is an important component for local and regional economies, and a driver for strengthening the European identity. Therefore we agree that it must have a prominent place in the discussion on the Future of Europe and in all plans to relaunch the European economy post-COVID19. To this end, we need a bold European recovery plan to help those most suffering of this emergency, including the cultural sector, and those working to maintain and promote our cultural heritage, responding to the needs of regions, cities and villages across Europe.

The information that you have provided will be taken into consideration in assessing the impact of the new measures in the light of the pandemic and in discussing future positions of the CoR on this topic.

We look forward to continuing our fruitful discussions, and developing strategies to ensure culture and cultural heritage have the place they merit in the future of Europe. My team member, Ms Pauliina Makarainen, remains at your disposal (Pauliina.makarainen@cor.europa.eu), to agree on an earliest possible opportunity to continue our exchange of views in person.

Yours sincerely,



Apostolos Tzitzikostas