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Deputy Director-General of UNESCO attends high-level conference ‘Cultural Heritage in Europe: linking past and future’ on 26 June at the European parliament, Brussels



Mr Xing Qu, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO participated in the high-level conference hosted by the European Parliament on 26 June, in the framework of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

The conference entitled “Cultural heritage in Europe: linking past and future” aimed to highlight the importance and diversity of European culture. Organised by the European Parliament and in close cooperation with the Culture and Education Committee, the conference gathered together political leaders, policy makers, representatives of European and international organisations.

Well-known figures working in the field of culture, particularly in music, gastronomy and photography, were invited to share their testimonies, namely Jean-Michel Jarré, Daniel Barenboim, Ezio Bosso, Thierry Marx, Mathilde de L’Ecotais. In addition, participants in the conference were treated to live music performances by the European Union Youth Orchestra and by children singing in the choir Europa in Canto.

The conference took place in the context of the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#). Opening the event, the President of the European Parliament Mr Antonio Tajani stressed on the great opportunity that the thematic Year offers in order to rediscover the cultural diversity on which Europe was founded and to take full advantage of the social and economic benefits of cultural heritage and the creative industries.

In his introductory remarks, the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker highlighted the pivotal role of youth engagement in the preservation and transmission of heritage, as well as the importance of balancing both the opportunities and challenges that the digital revolution raises for the cultural heritage sector.

The debate was then divided into three panels: Cultural Heritage and ‘Europeanness’; Preserving and Promoting Cultural Heritage; Innovation and Economic Potential of Cultural Heritage. Among the panellists were a wide range of cultural stakeholders, as well as artists working in various fields.

The conference was closed by the awarding of the Gold Medal of the University of Salamanca to the European Parliament. Closing remarks were given by Petra Kammerevert, Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, Luca Jahier, President of

the European Economic and Social Committee, Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament and Xing Qu, Deputy Director-General of UNESCO. During his intervention, Mr Qu highlighted the close cooperation between UNESCO and the European Union in the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage. He shared several UNESCO initiatives that have been planned to mark the Year, including the organisation of a Young Heritage Experts Forum in Croatia in November and the launching of a website dedicated to World Heritage Sites in Europe, in collaboration with National Geographic. This forms part of an ongoing [partnerships between UNESCO and the EU in the field of culture](#), highlighting their shared visions and commitments in this area.

The conference was one of the key events of the European Year of Cultural Heritage which has seen thousands of activities organised across Europe to involve citizens more closely with cultural heritage at local, regional, national and European levels. As highlighted in the European Commission's [spotlight publication](#) on the Year, approximately 300,000 people work directly in the EU's cultural sector and it is indirectly responsible for the creation of around 7.8 million jobs. In addition, with 453 inscribed sites, Europe as a region accounts for almost half of UNESCO's World Heritage List.

A further 89 elements originating from the EU are inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, representing nearly a quarter of the List. The full programme and related documents to the Conference can be consulted on the [dedicated webpage](#) of the European parliament.

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