

European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018: Cultural development strategy boosts the competitiveness of cities and regions

On 4 May, the historical city of Burgos in Northern Spain gathered together local and regional representatives from EU Member States in the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The seminar was organised jointly by the Government of Castilla y León and the SEDEC Commission of the European Committee of the Regions with the aim to highlight and boost the role of culture as an important resource for the future of Europe. The discussion on the importance of cultural heritage and its financing in the future of Europe comes timely as the new budget proposal for the EU after 2020 was presented by the European Commission last 2 May. From 2007 to 2013, almost EUR 4.5 billion was dedicated to European cultural heritage coming from a range of EU policies, programmes and funding schemes .

In his opening speech, **Juan Vicente Herrera Campo** (ES/EPP), President of the Government of Castilla y León, highlighted the rich cultural heritage of his region which hosts the highest number (11) of UNESCO World Heritage sites in the world, among them the Burgos Cathedral and the city's historical centre. "The region of Castilla y León wants cultural heritage to be part of the future of Europe. It's our duty to work for Europe's cultural heritage preservation, also for our economic and social cohesion", said President Herrera Campo.

The SEDEC Commission is currently chaired by **José Ignacio Cenicerros** (ES/EPP), President of the Government of La Rioja. In his intervention, President Cenicerros highlighted the social and economic importance of cultural heritage as well as its role in building the future of Europe and the resulting effect on local and regional development. "Cultural and creative sectors have proved their value even during the difficult times of the economic and financial crisis. In recent years, they have been one of the key sources of employment and growth in many of our communities", President Cenicerros said.

Delegates pointed out that Europe's rich cultural heritage is an invaluable asset: by contributing to the quality of life it determines attractiveness for business, investors and creative and enterprising individuals. Designing cultural development strategies can therefore boost local and regional competitiveness and increase a community's comparative advantage.

Participants also signalled the fundamental role of local and regional authorities in the management, promotion, protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage. Some best practices were presented from the Castilla y León region such as the excavations at the archaeological site of Atapuerca and the Museum of Human Evolution.

The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 will be a key moment of the [next plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions on 16-17 May](#).

In the presence of **Tibor Navracsics**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, the assembly will adopt two opinions on [Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture \(rapporteur Tanya Hristova, BG/EPP\)](#) and on [Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU \(rapporteur Babette Winter, DE/PES\)](#).

Note to editors:

European cultural heritage benefits from a range of EU policies, programmes and funding. In 2007-13, €3.2 billion was invested in heritage from the European Regional Development Fund; a further €1.2 billion on rural heritage from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and around €100 million worth of heritage research was funded from the 7th Framework Programme. [For more information click here](#).

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