

EFFORTS

European Federation of Fortified Sites
“from stronghold to welcoming arms”

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

BETWEEN

- Association Ad Astra – Poland
- Bergen op Zoom municipality – the Netherlands
- Bunnik municipality – the Netherlands
- Fort Monostor Non-profit Ltd. – Hungary
- Geertruidenberg municipality – the Netherlands
- Gmünd municipality – Austria
- Grave municipality – the Netherlands
- ‘s-Hertogenbosch municipality – the Netherlands
- Heusden municipality – the Netherlands
- Houten municipality – the Netherlands
- Kaunas Fortress Regional Park – Lithuania
- Kłodzko municipality - Poland
- Maastricht municipality – the Netherlands
- Menno van Coehoorn Association – the Netherlands
- Noord-Brabant governing body – the Netherlands
- Paola Heritage Foundation – Malta
- Paola Local Council – Malta
- Ponti sul Mincio municipality - Italy
- Spandau Citadel – Germany
- Suomenlinna Governing body - Finland
- Utrecht municipality – the Netherlands
- Zaltbommel municipality – the Netherlands

SINCE

Military structures, whether walled town, citadel, castle and/or defence system, often have an isolated position within spatial context, because of their former strategic purposes. These fortified sites, being precious testimony to the collective memory, represent an unique expression of Europe’s cultural heritage. They represent the congealed distrust of European countries through the ages that we have put aside after World War II.

There are many reasons why their conservation and re-use is important:

- Their historical importance in shaping European history;
- Their architectural assets and engineering courage;
- The opportunities they present to strengthen intercultural and international dialogue;
- The recognition of major challenges for local restructuring due to the socio-economic impact that the departure of the military had on a site or city.

ACKNOWLEDGING

The conceptual attitudes towards cultural heritage at European level is undergoing a fundamental transformation: from an approach focussed on conservation to a focus on value and utilisation of heritage. Recently there has been a growing recognition of the all-inclusive nature of the historic environment, where tangible and intangible assets are no longer perceived as separate from one another.

- During the 1990s the principle of *sustainability* was included more and more prominently in policy documents on cultural heritage, and more often combined with the objective of *development*.
- In 2005 the Faro convention was adopted. This convention positions people and human values in the centre of a renewed understanding of cultural heritage.
- In 2014 the Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a Strategic Resource for a Sustainable Europe were adopted by the EU Council of Ministers, as well as by the paper “Towards an Integrated Approach to Cultural Heritage for Europe”.
- In 2015 the EU report entitled “Getting Cultural Heritage to Work for Europe” set out recommendations for an innovative policy framework and agenda for cultural heritage-related research and innovation up to 2020.
- The European Committee is aware of the meaning of cultural heritage and 2018 is declared the European year of cultural heritage. It will present an opportunity to promote knowledge and understanding about cultural heritage, including military heritage. Through several EU programmes it is possible to acquire funding for cultural/military heritage.

Fortified heritage should be better recognisable as a European asset. By joining forces and intensifying cooperation now, a network can be operational in 2018.

NOTING

A group of organisations from a number of European countries concerned with the future of military heritage met in the city of Helsinki in 2014 to discuss the urgent need for and possibility of greater collaboration with similar organisations across Europe on key policy issues. A declaration of intent on future cooperation was signed.

In 2016 a broad consultation of over 25 contacts across Europe showed that there is a strong need to collaborate and share knowledge, as there is a complete absence of communication on policy level between bodies struggling to protect military heritage, facing a very wide range of threats and opportunities and having areas of common interest and a strong support for developing a network.

AGREEING

A new European network will be established: EFFORTS, a European Federation of Fortified Sites.

Between November 2016 and May 2017 the following actions will be taken in preparation of launching the EFFORTS network in 2017:

- i. Organise set-up research, investigating different forms by end February 2017
- ii. Finalise decision by end of April 2017
- iii. Recruit worker(s) by end of May 2017

- EFFORTS will work with and build on existing and past initiatives on military heritage. The knowledge centres in Venice (Italy), Paola (Malta), the Vauban network (France) and Fort Vechten (the Netherlands) will play a key role in knowledge gathering and dissemination.
- During the October 2016 event in 's-Hertogenbosch outlines were drawn for future EU funded projects. These will be detailed and finalised for the upcoming calls.
- Existing heritage alliances will be approached to establish and enlarge policy involvement, both on national and European level.

In order to elaborate these preparatory actions a start-up committee will be formed representing members who have contacts across Europe.

NOTING

Membership of the EFFORTS network is open to all interested parties, whether from government organisations, NGOs or other organisations working within the field of fortified sites. We aim to interest representatives from all over Europe.

The Town Council of 's-Hertogenbosch is willing to co-host the preparatory actions until May 2017 and also financially support the start-up. Financial contribution of potential members is a pre-condition for an efficient start.

This Memorandum of Understanding is a declaration of intent and does not contain legally binding provisions.