



EFFORTS '2019' Declaration Signed in Venice, Italy on 9 November 2018

Six propositions on the future of European fortified heritage post-2018

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The European network for fortified cities, forts and defence lines (EFFORTS) :

Today, sometimes century-old **European fortifications are still well known** : the walled town of Carcassonne, Dubrovnik, Sant'Angelo Castle in Rome, Vauban's forts, the Dutch walled cities and waterlines, or the Maginot and Atlantic Wall lines of defence.

In **2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage**, the EFFORTS association proposes this shared military and defence heritage to be mentioned as one of the priorities of the next European Commission. We are convinced that we can make a positive contribution to the socio-cultural, economic and environmental-technological transformations that lay ahead.

EFFORTS is a European network organisation established in 2017 to share knowledge and practical expertise on military heritage, such as walled towns, forts and defence lines. The basis for EFFORTS was laid during the final conference of the At Fort Interreg IVC project in Suomenlinna, Helsinki (Finland 2014) and international conferences on military heritage in 's-Hertogenbosch (Netherlands 2016) and Berlin-Spandau Zitadelle (Germany 2017). Today EFFORTS unites more than 50 European fortified sites and networks and is growing. EFFORTS is now the European professional representation of fortified sites. It is member of the Europa Nostra managed European Heritage Alliance 3.3.

EFFORTS believes that **European cooperation is the key to achieving its goals.** Any local or regional authority and any person actively engaged in the protection and re-use of military heritage at European, national, regional and/or local level is welcome to join EFFORTS. The EFFORTS mission is to enhance structural European cooperation and coordination, to share expertise, to promote personal cooperation and to put military heritage on the agenda as a permanent link with our common European history. In order to make a sustainable contribution to Europe's economic, energy, spatial development and social challenges, **EFFORTS wishes to present to policymakers and stakeholders its views in a coherent action proposal.**



Introduction :

Fortified heritage is a particular, widespread category of architecture. **As heritage it is both global** – related to the worldwide evolution of weapon technology and architecture – **and local**, anchored in an intentionally chosen place, built with local materials and by local people.

Regional, national and trans-border co-operation around this heritage has brought together since the 1980s partners from all over Europe are, through research, studies, innovative reuse and exchange of experiences, getting the best out of this heritage.

When they were built, military architecture was meant to be functional, modern and as durable as possible, using all technical and architectural know-how available. Today these sites often represent important challenges: spatial, socio-economic and energy-environmental. **These places also offer great opportunities for a large range of local and regional stakeholders.** They offer space for experimental approach in renovation, energy transition and spatial development. They highlight the past but can be transformed into development for the future. They can be transformed into social, economic and ecologic poles and yet remind us, teach us. As much as they demonstrate the intrinsic need to defend borders in the past, today they are **symbols of our common history and challenges, uniting Europe instead of dividing it.**

European cooperation on fortified heritage transforms the enemies of the past to partners in the European project, joining forces for a sustainable, cultural and safe Europe. The EFFORTS mission **'From stronghold to welcoming arms'** is based on European cooperation, putting military fortified heritage on the European cultural heritage policy agenda.

During the 2nd **European annual conference on fortified heritage, on November 8-9 2018 in Venice, Italy**, the challenges and opportunities of our fortresses, walled towns and defence lines were discussed in depth. From these discussions **six propositions for the European Commission** were derived.

These proposals serve as a source of inspiration for, among other EU actions, the 2021-2027 **Culture Programme Creative Europe, the Structural Funds Programme and Horizon Europe**. The EFFORTS Venice declaration is to be presented to the **European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Mr. Tibor Navracsics**.

The Declaration :





EFFORTS '2019' DECLARATION
Venice, 9 November 2018

'Six Proposals on the Future of Fortification Heritage in Europe'

We, members and interested stakeholders of fortified heritage in Europe, believe that, at the end of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, fortified heritage offers an opportunity to make a **positive contribution to several EU priorities and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**. The following seven propositions highlight the **potential of this specific type of heritage in Europe and European programmes**. They demonstrate how to preserve European military architecture through active involvement of all stakeholders. The importance of fortification heritage places it next to religious buildings, industry, historic houses and all other built and architectural European heritage.

Realising that the conceptual attitudes towards cultural heritage at European level is undergoing a fundamental transformation, from an approach focused on conservation to **a focus on value and utilisation of heritage**.

Recognizing the all-inclusive nature of this historical and shared European environment :

- 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.

Basing themselves on :

- article 3.3 of the Lisbon Treaty of the European Union *"The European Union shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced"*,
- the Memorandum of European Walled Towns - presented to European Commissioner Jan Figél at the 2005 Europa Nostra Conference,
- the 2015 AT FORT Interreg IVC cooperation,
- the 2016 EFFORTS Memorandum of Understanding,
- the 2017 EFFORTS founding Declaration,
- the 2018 Europa Nostra Berlin Call to Action 'Cultural Heritage for the Future of Europe' and
- the 2018 EFFORTS Congress conclusions,

EFFORTS members and European fortification stakeholders, signatories of the Venice Declaration state that :



1. Understanding fortified heritage increases European unity.

Fortifications testify of human ingenuity and an exchange of multidisciplinary technical and scientific experiences worldwide. Fortifications recount history with an enormous power of persuasion, having been transformed into compelling cultural tourist attractions. Through fortifications and the borders they defined, we can read our territory and the strategic map that has evolved over time. Fortifications bear historic witness to events of great European drama, in a mixture of heroism and tragedy that should not be forgotten. They are therefore places of excellence to teach and educate and to motivate reflection towards European and world peace, contributing to **uniting Europe instead of dividing it**, promoting democracy and tolerance.

As part of cultural heritage, fortified heritage plays an important role for community cohesion at a time when cultural diversity is increasing in European societies. A shared comprehension of the past will help to better understand the present and shape our common future. New participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage policies and educational initiatives that attribute equal dignity to this form of **cultural heritage that has the potential to increase trust, mutual recognition and social cohesion**.

➔ *EFFORTS therefore proposes actions in the Creative Europe and Europe for Citizens programmes, valuing the need of fortifications to teach about our shared heritage and its relevance today and through support for defence lines' cross-border cooperation.*

2. Fortifications offer educational and economic opportunities.

Cultural and creative industries can ensure the much needed **innovation and high-quality services** Europe aspires. Fortified heritage being an integral part of European cohesion, it has the potential to build bridges between tradition, innovation and education. Its repair, maintenance and development offer working opportunities not only for a large range of professionals but also for non-professionals and volunteers.

Fortified heritage triggers a spill-over effect into other industrial sectors, such as tourism, retail, and digital technologies. With innovative initiatives, fortified heritage presents an opportunity for job creation.

Fortified heritage definitely speaks to the imagination of youth and provides the perfect stage for tales, imagination and links to our common heritage and future. It is clear that these sites of former war between our cities and countries offer interesting **spaces to teach all citizens about our shared history**. Fortifications also constitute teaching material of great importance because these places create shared environment conducive to learning. We will have to teach our children about their past in a way that appeals to them. Viewed in this way a fortification is a well-equipped classroom, where all can experience, discover and learn on European history and values.

➔ *EFFORTS therefore proposes specific Fortification project proposals in the Enterprise and Tourism programmes, promoting economic development in fortification cities and regions.*

3. Adapting fortification use is combating climate change.

Valuable lessons that can be learned from properties constructed and operating during an era before electrical power and central heating. **Combined with today's technology these places challenge us to find new solutions for low energy performance, with respect to the place and its environment.**



Monumental buildings are challenged in energy performance. They are not easily adaptable to today's energy performance standards.

The revival of fortified heritage makes a positive contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 'Climate Action'. This is not only by improving their energy performance, but also because the thick walls and roof constructions are ideal to retain heat and cold. The original living quarters and barracks are easily reusable for housing with high occupancy rate. Gunpowder magazines, arsenals, strongholds are transformable for new public or private purposes. The sites can be used for different climate-related functions, such as water storage, flood protection, generation and storage of sustainable energy.

For these purposes, and due to the similarities of fortifications across Europe, adaptive re-use of European fortifications, fortresses and defence lines need a Europe-wide research agenda.

➔ *EFFORTS therefore proposes a specific research project, possibly via an EU preparatory action or pilot project : the start of a permanent center for Fortifications research on adaptive reuse.*

4. Fortified sites provide sites for employment and social development.

Even though hospitality was never the hallmark of fortresses, nowadays fortified sites provide a low incentive sheltered workplace. Fortifications can offer a new work place to people who are distanced from the traditional labour market. In a protected regenerative environment they can hone their skills. When working on monumental military heritage, quality takes precedence over speed. In restoration, working pace is less important. It is about craftsmanship and skills. **The restoration, cultural and catering sectors for instance are ideally suited for the influx of experienced professionals who can transfer their years of experience in construction to younger generations.** Repair work can often be carried out without great time pressure, which makes it suitable for the employment of all sorts of people, e.g. people with a mental disability, the long-term unemployed, ex-convicts.

By linking their skills, dreams and ambitions to activities that are of value to their environment and society, all involved parties benefit.

➔ *EFFORTS therefore proposes to include more social inclusion programmes in sites in and connected to fortified cities and places.*

5. Fortified heritage improves access to culture and quality of life.

Innovative European fortified heritage concepts can take on an active place in the present day cultural development. Fortified heritage can offer a new urban cultural stage on which artists or sporting events are spotlighted. Investing in fortified heritage has a positive yet undervalued impact on our societies, contributing to the quality of life, social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. By engaging the citizens and increasing the occupancy rate, justification of big public investments in heritage buildings and local public cultural events will be encouraged.

In order to realise the full potential of cultural heritage for European societies and economies, the safeguarding, enhancement and management of built military heritage require effective participatory governance and enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation.

The increased recognition at international level of the need to put people and human values at the centre of an enlarged and cross-disciplinary concept of cultural heritage reinforces the need to foster wider access to cultural heritage, inter alia, in light of its positive effects on the quality of life. 'Rampart could turn into Ramp Art.'



- ➔ *EFFORTS therefore propose European and national support for events highlighting today's use of fortified sites and cities, an example being the EFFORTS European Fortress Day, the annual event connecting Europe's fortified sites, launched in 2018.*

6. Fortifications are smart actors of urban development.

Most fortifications had enormous influence on the birth and development of towns. Historic defensive walls and forts need to be interpreted as intrinsic components of the historic urban landscapes they were meant to defend and protect. In many cases the fortifications, in addition to defining an urban area, became more extended to involve a whole territory, constituting a 'fortified system'. The open, deserted, fortified areas of cities need to be turned into opportunities for today's development needs. Remediating the empty fortification sites of today, offers the connection that is most important for the revival and transformation of cities.

Fortified sites can be transformed into cultural hubs, parks or event spaces, in a way that respects its nature and values. They can also host activities that are less welcomed in urban areas, e.g. concerts, festivals and outdoor activities. High and long continuous walls, deep canals make fortified heritage an excellent location for outdoor adventure, as well as for artistic purposes and all other public cultural, economic and sports events. They offer the green spaces that connect different parts of cities and regions and built bridges for economic and social development. Creativity and history enter into an exciting alliance.

- ➔ *EFFORTS therefore proposes to continue to support European sites, cities and regions in their spatial cultural development around fortification sites. EFFORTS therefore proposes a European EFFORTS Prize on Smart and Connected Fortifications.*

Conclusion

The six EFFORTS propositions emphasize the awareness of the great cultural educational, research, social, environmental and economic-tourism assets of European fortified heritage. They are the conclusions of the annual EFFORTS congress 'From stronghold to welcoming arms' in Venice, November 8-9 2018. With Europa Nostra in its Berlin Call to Action, that has been co-signed by EFFORTS, we state that a European "Action Plan, mentioned in the New European Agenda for Culture recently adopted by the European Commission, must be prepared and implemented with full involvement and engagement of all public and private stakeholders, including civil society. This future Action Plan must be interconnected with other key EU policy agendas and priorities".

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