EXPLANATORY NOTE

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

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. Today, century-old European fortifications are still well known; the walled town of Carcassonne, Dubrovnik, Sant’Angelo Castle in Rome, Vauban’s fortresses, the Dutch waterlines, or the Maginot and Atlantic Wall lines of defence. Every European country has fortified heritage.

Regional, national and trans-border co-operation around this heritage has since the 1980’s brought together 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 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. This in order to make a sustainable contribution to Europe’s economic, energy, spatial development and social challenges.

During the 2nd European annual conference on fortified heritage, on November 9/10 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, Programmes funded by ERDF and ESF and Horizon Europe.

In 2018, the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the EFFORTS association proposed 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 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 or local level is welcome to join EFFORTS. The EFFORTS aim 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. This in order to make a sustainable contribution to Europe’s economic, energy, spatial development and social challenges.

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

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. Since 2018 EFFORTS has been an European professional representation of fortified sites. It is member of the Europa Nostra managed European Heritage Alliance 3.3. Today EFFORTS main mission is the structuring of European cooperation and keeping military fortified heritage on the European policy agenda.

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six propositions on the future of european fortified heritage post-2018

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 six 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 and industrial buildings, historic houses and all other built and architectural European heritage.

Recognising 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 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 Figel at the 2005 Europa Nostra Conference (Brussels, Belgium)
- The 2014 AT FORT Interreg IVC Declaration of Intent cooperation, (Suomenlinna Helsinki, Finland)
- The 2016 EFFORTS Memorandum of Understanding (‘s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands)
- The 2017 EFFORTS Partnership Agreement (Spandau Berlin, Germany)
- The 2018 Europa Nostra Berlin Call to Action ‘Cultural Heritage for the Future of Europe’
- The 2018 EFFORTS Conference Forte Marghera, Venice conclusions
1. UNDERSTANDING FORTIFIED HERITAGE INCREASES EUROPEAN UNITY.

Fortifications testify of human ingenuity and an exchange of multi-disciplinary technical and scientific experiences worldwide. Fortifications recount history with an enormous power of persuasion, instructional technical and scientific experiences worldwide. Fortifications also contribute to uniting Europe instead of dividing it, promoting democracy and tolerance. They are therefore places of excellence to teach and educate about our shared history. Fortifications also constitute a platform to find new solutions for low energy performance, with a potential to increase trust, mutual recognition and social cohesion.

2. FORTIFICATIONS OFFER EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.

Fortified heritage improves access to culture and quality of life.

Innovative European fortification projects can take on an active place in the present day cultural development. Fortified heritage offers a new urban cultural stage on which artists or sporting events are spotlighted, creating a positive impact on our societies, contributing to the quality of life.

Most fortifications had enormous influence on the birth and development of towns and landscapes. Historic defensive walls and forts are of interest not only for a large range of professionals but also for non-professionals and volunteers. For these purposes, and due to the similarities of fortifications across Europe, adaptive reuse of European fortifications, fortresses and defence lines need a Europe-wide research agenda.

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 material of great importance because these places can create shared environment conducive to learning. We will have to teach our children about their past in a way that appeals to them.

Cultural and creative industries can use the common heritage that 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. With the organisation of the first EFFORTS European Fortress Day in 2018, EFFORTS wants to build in that direction.

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

3. ADAPTING FORTIFICATION USE IS COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE.

Valuable lessons that can be learned from properties constructed and operated during an era before electrical power and central heating. Combined with today’s technology fortified heritage challenges us to find new solutions for low energy performance, with respect to the place and its environment. Monumental buildings are a well-equipped classroom, where all can experience, discover and learn on European history and values.

Viewed in this way a fortification is 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. With the organisation of the first EFFORTS European Fortress Day in 2018, EFFORTS wants to build in that direction.

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