



## PRESS RELEASE

### Fortification heritage and water – EFFORTS European partners join forces in Antwerp

In order to make a contribution to European cooperation for answers for Europe's water, energy, and climate challenges, the European Federation of Fortified Sites (EFFORTS) Annual Congress of 28-29 November 2018 at *Felix Archive* site in Antwerp, Belgium, will prepare the 'Fortified heritage contribution to a 2020 EU cultural heritage policy', in its so-called 'EFFORTS Statement of Antwerp'.

This will be done together with the City of Antwerp and its mayor Bart DE WEVER, Belgian Member of the European Parliament Kathleen VAN BREMPT and the European Commission's Culture administration, and representatives of Europe's fortified sites and specialists. Contributing to this are subject as the SIGMA flood project, contributions on sea-level rise and the Antwerp water and drought plan.

The EFFORTS association represents the European cities and regions with important military built heritage. EFFORTS President Frank PETTER, mayor of the Dutch city Bergen op Zoom strongly believes that local and regional authorities should work together to establish European quality projects in fortified heritage in order to preserve and re-use common European heritage through sustainable development, among which are water related projects. Frank Petter : "By this, they will contribute to the post-2018 European Framework for Culture and the 2020+ EU policies and an innovative and climate-friendly Europe."

In order to widen public recognition for Europe's fortified sites, the European network organisation EFFORTS has set up in the **Year of Cultural Heritage 2018** the first annual Europe-wide fortress festival: the annual **European Fortress Days (EFD)**. In its second edition in September 2019, EFD rallied more than 100 fortress sites in 12 European countries, among which Antwerp. **Equally in Antwerp, on 29 November, the annual Efforts Award ceremony** will complete this annual congress. The price will be given to the Antwerp Province, newly organised fortress belt (*fortengordels*) community volunteers.



Together with representatives of the community, **provincial heritage deputy Luk LEMMENS** will be present at the ceremony.

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 congress 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 a 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. 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 fortified 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.

Annual Congress programme: [www.efforts-europe.eu/annual-congress/](http://www.efforts-europe.eu/annual-congress/)

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