Rijeka Communiqué

Multiple definitions, interpretations, and conceptions of Europe's cultural heritage have called for an integrated approach to Europe's cultural heritage (2014), a coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries (2016), and innovative strategies in research on cultural heritage (2018). Institutions involved in research, promotion, and preservation of cultural heritage (CH) have brought political attention to these topics at the EU level. As a consequence, 2018 was a year dedicated to CH, and several vital conferences and other events tackling various issues related to CH were organized throughout Europe in 2018 and 2019. This renewed interest has continued in 2020.

The University of Rijeka, with the support of the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia and the European Commission, organized the conference *The Role of Cultural Heritage in Socio-Economic Development and Preservation of Democratic Values – HERItage* during the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The conference aimed at rethinking relevant topics related to CH in the context of European programmes for the oncoming multiannual EU strategic and financial period. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned conference venue was moved online. This shift has substantially, and not only formally, determined the discussion and conclusions present in this Communique.

The Rijeka *HERItage* conference - built on the results of previous initiatives, ongoing research and public policies, and the extraordinary context of a pandemic that has radically refocused existing practices into the virtual domain – contributed to the debate on appropriate strategies in this field, and in particular on the role of CH as an enormous potential for European identity, social cohesion, democratic values, and sustainable socio-economic development.

The Rijeka conference's main objective was to identify and discuss the EU goals, priorities, and challenges related to research on CH as one of Europe's most defining and remarkable features. In this context, the *HERItage* conference aimed to examine and (re)define the role of European universities in the multi- inter- and cross-disciplinary innovative approaches and holistic research agendas that could bring together research institutions, stakeholders, civil society, and citizens, abiding fundamental strategic orientations for Horizon Europe.

The conclusions of the thematic pillars and the discussions of the *HERItage* conference, reflecting the main goals and perspectives of EU policies in CH for the next period, summarized in this Rijeka Communiqué, are the following:

1. **HORIZON SCANNING**. The successful protection and preservation of European CH presuppose a continuous tracking of new challenges and changes in society. We must recognize these shifts on time and adapt to them with the appropriate speed, agility, flexibility, and responsibility.

   In doing so, we must keep in mind that the values of diversity, solidarity, enlightenment, and inclusivity – which lie at the core of the European identity – must be the key determinant of all strategies in preserving European CH. The European identity is not monolithic, nor is it possible to offer a simple

definition of what comprises Europe's shared CH. The European identity is, as well as European CH, continuously formed and, in our time, understood within the framework of society's digital and social transformation, and intense internationalization and mobility. It is also affected by periodic social phenomena, such as migrations, pandemics, and economic, political, and social crises. These are the reasons why, when (re)defining and preserving European CH and the European identity, special care should be devoted to protecting the European values.

Although the role of universities in preserving CH has traditionally been related to researching and teaching CH, universities' transformative roles in the contemporary world have turned them into decisive agents of safeguarding and promoting European values. In this sense, we should bestow extraordinary support upon the European University Initiative, as a crucial institutional step. Through innovative modes of internationalization, mobility, and transnational as well as cross-cultural collaboration, we are more efficient at ensuring the preservation of European CH.

2. **DISTRIBUTED EXCELLENCE**. While excellence in research and innovation related to CH strengthens its impact on society as a whole by generating new knowledge, distributed excellence is a concept that emphasizes both the need to encourage excellence through diversity and the role of excellence as means of reducing innovation gaps in Europe.

Research in humanities and social sciences (SSH) centres on migrations of artists, artisans, and ideas, throughout history. It also focuses on heritage as a mediator in communicating memory and recreating historical, social, and cultural events. The development of suitable platforms for an inter-institutional, transnational, and interdisciplinary approach provides the tools for a holistic heritage experience. In doing so, it allows us to interpret the appropriation of cultural and social legacies. There is an urgent need to incorporate contemporary concepts and methods in our predominantly static and traditional educational curricula. It is equally vital to promote mobility programs, aiming to learn from the best foreign practices and through broad intercultural exchanges of ideas. One must acknowledge innovative methods in research related to CH, which, in the digital age, demand technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), big-data analytics, social media, and block-chain.

Distributed excellence demands a fair circulation of brains, the balanced development of different European local, regional and national communities, and fair EU funding based on the new European agenda of collaborative quadruple-helix partnerships.

3. **CITIZENS CULTURE**. Public accessibility and engagement with cultural heritage must be closely tied to strategies of protecting, conserving, and promoting CH, and to the imperative of sustainability.

These values are especially vital now that we are transitioning from an object-oriented to a value-oriented (or subject-oriented) notion of CH, which comprises an all-inclusive context of heritage. This transition denotes a shift in the discourse on heritage concerning its management and its role in instigating an inclusive society. It is a widespread opinion that CH is vital for EU citizens as an expression of their (shared) values, beliefs, traditions, and history. In that sense, the EU should pay greater heed to its protection, accessibility, and position within creative industries. We must base civic participation on the enhancement of specific research platforms, cultural projects, and activities, and networking

initiatives that promote the idea of CH as a public good (European Capitals of Culture, Europeana, AGORA or the like).

We must encourage the transformational potential of engaging with CH for the development of progressive democratic values. Education and research in CH share the general responsibility to support public policies that enhance and teach openness, the protection of human rights, tolerance, and respect for diversity. The implementation of such research activities should encourage social dialogue, civic engagement, transparency, equal opportunities, gender equality, and, in the long term, it should aid decision making in democratic governance.

4. **CULTURAL HERITAGE DIGITALIZED**. In the digital era, innovative multidisciplinary techniques in the area of cultural and creative industries are likely to undergo rapid changes. Complementary and synergistic to national initiatives, collaborative cultural research will hence be performed in shared international workspaces, with clear common goals, relation to future jobs and working practices.

There is an undisputed need to digitally preserve and transmit CH by managing large sets of data, while relying on common standards grounded on using shared (progressively clustered) digital scientific infrastructures provided by SSH ERIC consortia within the ESFRI roadmap, such as CESSDA, DARIAH, GGP, or E-RIHS. Culture and heritage need to be actively digitized into high-quality data. Open online (increasingly cloud) databases and other research resources can facilitate contextualizing, managing, interlinking, interpreting, disseminating, innovating, and preserving heritage. New technologies will also help recreating historical, social, and cultural events and create new jobs. In line with the Open Science Policy Platform, Plan S, and the FAIR data principles, research infrastructures and platforms are essential means of cultural transformation, and the overall transmutation of R&I.

We must cultivate the awareness of the significance of adopting new technologies and grasp the potential of digitalization. This will help us create and innovate, promote research, and use the advantages of digital tools in promoting and safeguarding CH. In the related educational processes, skills related to creativity, critical thinking and communication must be safeguarded and enhanced, and these necessarily require real human interactions.

5. **INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE.** Industrial heritage includes the tangible and intangible heritage of labour and production and the physical remains of the histories of industry and technology, including transportation infrastructure, warehouses, and worker housing. It is an exclusive area of heritage where the standards based on which it will attain the potential status of cultural heritage are still being determined.

The significance of industrial heritage lies not only in recognizing the possibility of its renewal and sustainable usage as active cultural heritage, but also in a better understanding of the economic and social potential of human work, as well as the understanding of the transformation of the elements of an active socio-economic life into cultural heritage. We must recognize and value the extraordinary potential of education and research related to industrial cultural heritage, which lies not only in its substantial cultural value, but also in its potential to understand the concept of cultural heritage as the optimal framework for discussing our past, present, and future.