European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 27/10/2010

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the report by Chrysoula PALIADELI (S&D, EL) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the codecision procedure) should be to amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Sites: Members consider that **underwater, archaeological and industrial** sites should also be included on the definition of 'sites'.

Objectives: the actions should have as **general objectives** to contribute to:

- strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to the Union, in particular that of young people, based on shared values and elements of European history and cultural heritage;
- strengthening intercultural and interterritorial dialogue, as well as an appreciation of diversity.

To this end, the action shall, as its **intermediate objectives**, seek to:

- stress the symbolic value and raise the profile of sites which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union;
- increase European citizens' understanding of the history of Europe and the building of the Union, and of their common yet diverse tangible and intangible cultural heritage, especially related to democratic values and human rights that underpin the process of European integration.

The report states that the **specific objectives** relate to those improvements which the sites themselves – individually and collectively - would commit to in the bidding process for the European Heritage Label, i. e.:

- enhance citizens' sense of their European identity;
- interactive online learning;
- support creativity;
- foster interaction between the cultural heritage and the economic activities growing up around it, while fully respecting the integrity thereof and contributing to its sustainability and that of its surroundings;
- contribute to the promotion, attractiveness, cultural influence, tourist development and sustainable development of the regions;
- encourage the creation of European networks to enhance the common European heritage.

Criteria for the award of the label: Members consider that a site's links with religious and environmental movements should also be taken into account.

Candidates for the European Heritage Label shall submit a project, the implementation of which is to begin **by the end of designation year at the latest**, which includes all the following elements: i) promoting multilingualism and regional diversity by using several languages of the Union as a key to intercultural dialogue; ii) raising the profile and attractiveness of the site on a European scale, inter alia through new information and communication technology; iii) ensuring that the site is made accessible to

the European citizens while fully respecting its integrity; iv) ensuring access for the widest possible public, including for elderly persons and people with disabilities; v) promoting sites as tourist destinations whilst limiting potential negative impacts affecting the sites or their environment.

Panel: the European panel shall consist of **13 members**, one of whom shall be nominated by the Committee of the Regions. The European panel should be composed by cultural experts covering all fields related to the objectives of the EUHL, whilst also preserving an equitable representation of all Member States.

Pre-selection at national level: although the Commission proposes to award the label each year, Members consider that **selection of the sites every two years** will ensure better quality of selection process as well as of the selected sites.

The criteria, as well as the application forms used for the pre-selection procedure within each Member State, should be the same. The Commission shall publish the full list of pre-selected sites and shall inform the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions thereof.

Transnational sites: given that transnational sites by their very nature promote the main objectives of the European Heritage Label and create networks, Members consider that all participating Member States should give their quota for their sites participating in the transnational site. It is also important to inform all member States in due time about an intention to bid for the label for a transnational site so as everyone interested can be included. For practical reasons, there is a need to appoint one coordinator for each transnational site, who then would be the contact for the European panel and the Commission.

Particular consideration shall be given to transnational sites which foster the essence of cross-border European heritage, through their representation of tangible and intangible symbolism (e.g. peace).

Award: the attribution of the European Heritage Label shall not entail any obligation of an urban planning, judicial, landscaping, mobility or architectural nature. The sole law applicable shall be the local law.

Withdrawal from the label: Members consider that the jury should be involved in the procedure of withdrawal for reasons of transparency. Sites may at any time choose to renounce the European Heritage Label.

New logo: Members are of the opinion that a new logo would contribute to the visibility of the EUHL and in an awareness raising process of this initiative. The work of the European Panel has to be as transparent as possible.

Evaluation: the evaluation report presented by the Commission should be accompanied, if appropriate, by relevant proposals.

Transitional arrangements: Members consider that the new label not merely as a transformation of the old one, but as a chance for creating an action based on the experience accumulated during its existence as an intergovernmental initiative. The new well-defined criteria, the networking, the panel and the monitoring of the new action imply a different concept, which should not be seen as identical with the previous one. In order to preserve the prestige of the old label and promote the prestige of the new one, **no transitional provisions** should be needed.