European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 16/12/2010 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 497 votes to 18, with 41 abstentions, a resolution on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label.

It adopted its position at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure (formerly known as the codecision procedure). The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council. They 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 **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.

The European panel shall issue a report on the state of the labelled sites in the Member State concerned at the latest on 15 December of the year of the monitoring procedure, including if necessary recommendations to be taken into account for the next monitoring period.

Transnational sites: applications for transnational sites shall follow the same procedure as applications for other sites. They shall be pre-selected by all of the Member States concerned within their limit of a maximum of two sites. Transnational sites shall designate one of the sites involved as their coordinator, which will constitute the single contact point for the Commission. The coordinator shall provide information on the transnational candidacy in due time in all the Member States so as to ensure the participation of relevant sites all across the Union. 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: in order to preserve the prestige of the old label and promote the prestige of the new one, **no transitional provisions** should be needed