# European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 16/11/2011 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a European Union action entitled 'European Heritage Label'.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label.

CONTENT: by this Decision, a European Union action entitled ‘European Heritage Label’ is hereby established.

**Sites concerned** : the Decision defines ‘sites’ as:

- monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes, **places of remembrance**, cultural goods and objects and intangible heritage associated with a place, including contemporary heritage;
- ‘transnational site’ shall mean: (a) several sites, located in different Member States, which focus on one specific theme in order to submit a joint application; or (b) one site located on the territory of at least two Member States;
- ‘national thematic site’ shall mean several sites, located in the same Member State, which focus on one specific theme in order to submit a joint application.

**Objectives**: the EU action shall contribute to the following general objectives:

- 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, as well as an appreciation of national and regional diversity;
- strengthening intercultural dialogue.

In order to achieve the objectives set out above, the action shall seek to attain the following **intermediate objectives**:

- stressing the symbolic value and raising the profile of sites which have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union;
- increasing European citizens’ understanding of the history of Europe and the building of the Union, and of their common yet diverse cultural heritage, especially in relation to the democratic values and human rights that underpin the process of European integration.

The sites themselves shall seek to attain the following **specific objectives**: (a) highlighting their European significance; (b) raising European citizens’ awareness of their common cultural heritage, especially that of young people; (c) facilitating the sharing of experiences and exchanges of best practices across the Union; (d) increasing and/or improving access for all, especially young people; (e) increasing intercultural dialogue, especially among young people; (f) fostering synergies between cultural heritage and contemporary creation and creativity; (g) contributing to the attractiveness and the economic and sustainable development of regions, in particular through cultural tourism.

**Participation in the action**: the Union action is open to 27 Member States on a **voluntary basis**. During the first evaluation of this action a widening of its geographical scope should be examined.

**Added value and complementarity of the action with other initiatives**: the Commission and the Member States shall ensure the added value and complementarity of the action with regard to other initiatives in the field of cultural heritage such as the Unesco World Heritage List, the Unesco Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and the Council of Europe's European Cultural Routes.

**Selection procedure**: the Decision defines a series of common, clear and transparent criteria and procedures, including during the first two selection years when transitional provisions should apply. Candidate sites for the label must have a symbolic European value and must have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union.

**Two-stage selection procedure**: the procedure for the selection of sites under the action should be carried out in two stages. Sites should initially be pre-selected at national level. Whenever relevant, Member States could involve local and regional authorities. The selection should then take place at Union level.

A panel of **independent experts** shall be established to carry out the selection and monitoring at Union level. It shall ensure that the criteria are properly applied by the sites across the Member States. The European panel shall consist of 13 members, four of whom shall be appointed by the European Parliament, four by the Council, four by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions, in accordance with their respective procedures. The European panel shall designate its chairperson. The members of the panel shall be appointed for three years. However, in 2012 four experts shall be appointed by the European Parliament for two years, four by the Council for three years, four by the Commission for one year and one by the Committee of the Regions for three years.

Technical provisions are laid down as regards the submission of applications, pre-selections (each Member State may pre-select up to two sites every two years), informing the European Parliament, etc. it should be noted that priority shall be given to transnational sites.

**Designation and monitoring of the sites**: the Commission shall designate the sites to be awarded the label, having due regard to the recommendation of the European panel. The Commission shall inform the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions of its designation. The label shall be awarded on a **permanent basis**, subject to certain conditions and to the continuation of the action. Each site awarded the label shall be monitored on a regular basis in order to ensure that it continues to meet the criteria and that it respects the project and work plan submitted in its application. The Member States shall be responsible for the monitoring of all sites located on their respective territory. The monitoring of a transnational site shall be the responsibility of the Member State of the coordinator. The Member States shall collect all the necessary information and prepare a report every four years in accordance with the calendar set out in the Annex. The Member States shall send the report to the Commission by 1 March of the year of the monitoring procedure. The Commission shall submit the report to the European panel for examination.

**Evaluation**: the Commission shall ensure the external and independent evaluation of the action. Such evaluation shall take place every six years in accordance with the calendar set out in the Annex and shall examine all elements, including the efficiency of the processes involved in running the action, the number of sites, the impact of the action, the **widening of its geographical scope**, how it could be improved and whether it should be continued.

**Transitional provisions**: Member States which did not participate in the intergovernmental European Heritage Label initiative of 2006 ('intergovernmental initiative') may pre-select up to four sites in 2013 for the attribution of the label. Those which participated in the intergovernmental initiative may pre-select

up to four sites in 2014 for the attribution of the label. They may propose sites which were already awarded a label within the intergovernmental initiative. All sites shall be assessed by the European panel on the basis of the same criteria and follow the same procedure as those for other sites.

**Financial provisions**: the financial envelope for the implementation of the action during the period from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2013 is set at **EUR 650 000**.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 23 November 2011.