Basic information

2010/0044(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Decision	Procedure completed
European Heritage Label **Subject** 1 European citizenship 4.45.06 Heritage and culture protection, movement of works of art	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	PALIADELI Chrysoula (S&D)	23/03/2010

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	PALIADELI Chrysoula (S&D)	23/03/2010

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	3108	2011-07-19
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	3090	2011-05-19
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	3013	2010-05-10
Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	3046	2010-11-18

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	VASSILIOU Androulla

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary

09/03/2010	Legislative proposal published	COM(2010)0076	Summary
24/03/2010	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
10/05/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
27/10/2010	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
09/11/2010	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A7-0311/2010	
18/11/2010	Debate in Council		Summary
16/12/2010	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T7-0486/2010	Summary
16/12/2010	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/12/2010	Debate in Parliament		
29/07/2011	Council position published	10303/1/2011	Summary
15/09/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
05/10/2011	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
06/10/2011	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A7-0331/2011	
15/11/2011	Debate in Parliament		
16/11/2011	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T7-0502/2011	Summary
16/11/2011	Final act signed		
16/11/2011	End of procedure in Parliament		
22/11/2011	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2010/0044(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union TFEU 167-p5
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/06070

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE442.830	19/07/2010	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE448.952	04/10/2010	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single				

reading		A7-0311/2010	09/11/2010	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T7-0486/2010	16/12/2010	Summary
Committee draft report		PE472.038	15/09/2011	
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A7-0331/2011	06/10/2011	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T7-0502/2011	16/11/2011	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Council position	10303/1/2011	29/07/2011	Summary
Draft final act	00062/2011/LEX	16/11/2011	

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2010)0076	09/03/2010	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2010)0197	09/03/2010	
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2010)0198	09/03/2010	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2011)1477	23/02/2011	
Commission communication on Council's position	COM(2011)0406	20/07/2011	Summary
Follow-up document	COM(2020)0372	14/08/2020	
Follow-up document	SWD(2020)0161	14/08/2020	
Follow-up document	COM(2025)0366	09/07/2025	
Follow-up document	SWD(2025)0176	09/07/2025	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2010)0076	06/05/2010	
Contribution	IT_SENATE	COM(2010)0076	17/05/2010	
Contribution	AT_BUNDESRAT	COM(2010)0076	09/07/2010	
Contribution	RO_SENATE	COM(2010)0076	05/11/2010	

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0105/2010	09/06/2010	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
National parliaments	IPEX	
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act

Decision 2011/1194
OJ L 303 22.11.2011, p. 0001 Summary

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 20/07/2011 - Commission communication on Council's position

In its Communication to the European Parliament concerning the position of the Council on the adoption of a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage, the Commission indicates that it can fully accept the Council position which is the outcome of constructive negotiations between the three institutions. The first reading position is in line with the essential objectives and the underlying approach of the Commission's initial proposal.

To recall, the Council's position is the result of intensive inter-institutional negotiations which followed the adoption by the European Parliament of its position at first reading on 16 December 2010. Informal and technical meetings have resulted in compromise on a number of outstanding issues.

Following the negotiations, Coreper reached agreement on the text on 15 April 2011. On 9 May 2011, the Chairwoman of the CULT Committee of the European Parliament, Ms Doris Pack, sent a letter to the Hungarian Presidency confirming that should the Council adopt as its position at first reading the text, she would recommend to the CULT Committee and then to the Parliament as a whole in plenary session, that the **Council's position be accepted without amendment at Parliament's second reading**.

The Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Council reached a political agreement on this basis on 19 May 2011.

The main points which were negotiated and agreed upon by the three institutions are the following:

- in a first stage, the European Heritage Label will be open to the participation of Member States only. In the course of the first evaluation of the action, the appropriateness of enlarging its geographical scope will be examined;
- the selection of sites will take place every two years in order to prevent the number of labelled sites increasing too quickly, which could harm the overall quality and prestige of the new label;
- several sites located in the same Member State will have the possibility to focus on a specific theme to put forward a single application ("National thematic sites");
- "Transnational sites" will be counted in the quota of the Member State which initiated the application only in order to avoid introducing additional management complexity and in order not to discourage Member States from actually taking part in these sites;
- the transitional provisions which will apply to the sites which were already awarded a label within the previous intergovernmental initiative were maintained in the text. They were however simplified and it was stated more clearly that during this period, the sites would be assessed on the base of the criteria of the new initiative and would follow the same procedure as that for the other sites.

In conclusion, the Commission fully supports the results of the inter-institutional negotiations and can therefore accept the Council's position at first reading.

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

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 18/11/2010

The presidency reported to the Council on **progress** with the establishment of a European heritage label.

The European heritage label has existed as a voluntary inter-governmental initiative, in which 17 EU member states and Switzerland participate. The designation has been awarded to 64 sites since 2006. In November 2008, the Council requested that this initiative be transformed into an EU action so as to improve its functioning.

Most of the main points of discussion raised in the Committee on Cultural Affairs have been resolved during the Belgian Presidency. **Two points, however, remain at issue**:

- where the funds allocated to the action for 2013 are to come from;
- which institution is to be competent to award, and if necessary withdraw, the label.

The questions resolved during the Belgian Presidency are the following:

(1) Third-country participation in the action (Article 4): the Commission proposed that the action be open to participation by Member States, on a voluntary basis. It said nothing about participation by third countries.

The Committee on Cultural Affairs takes the view that the action should not in principle be open to third countries. However, it is in favour of sites in third countries participating in the Cultural Programme being allowed, under certain conditions, to be part of transnational sites from the outset.

The Committee also considers that the geographical scope of the action could be one of the points considered in the first evaluation.

(2) How many sites and how often? (Article 10): the Commission proposes that each Member State be able to pre-select up to two sites each year, except for years when the monitoring procedure is taking place

(every four years). At EU level, not more than one site per Member State would be selected.

However, the Committee on Cultural Affairs wants selection (of national and transnational sites) to take place every two years, not once a year as proposed by the Commission. The Committee also thinks that one year in four could be solely for selection of transnational sites. Each Member State would be able to pre-select one transnational site, which might or might not be selected at EU level.

(3) Transnational sites and national thematic sites (Articles 12 and 12a): the Committee on Cultural Affairs agreed to tighten the eligibility criteria for transnational sites.

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 10/05/2010

The presidency reported to the Council on progress with the establishment of a European heritage label (9146/10).

The European Heritage Label has existed as a voluntary inter-governmental initiative, in which 17 EU Member States and Switzerland participate. The designation has been awarded to 64 sites since 2006. In November 2008, the Council requested that this initiative be transformed into a **Community action** in order to extend it and improve its functioning.

The Commission proposed a draft decision in March which is currently being examined in both the European Parliament and the Council.

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 16/11/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament approved the Council position at first reading with a view to the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label.

It should be noted that the proposal rejecting the Council position tabled by the EFD Group was rejected by 517 votes to 59, with 63 abstentions.

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 19/05/2011

In public deliberation, the Council reached political agreement, with the United Kingdom delegation abstaining, on the decision establishing a EU action for the European Heritage Label. This label is granted to sites which have a strong symbolic - and not only aesthetic - value in terms of European history and heritage (such as monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes and objects) and which at the same time promote the democratic values and human rights underpinning European integration. The decision also aims at strengthening European citizens', and particularly young people's sense of belonging to Europe.

The European Heritage Label is also meant to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of regions, in particular through cultural tourism. It builds upon an intergovernmental initiative launched in 2006, under which 68 sites from 18 Member States have already been labelled.

In order to improve its quality and efficiency and ensure its long-term success, the initiative is being transformed into a formal action of the European Union. Under this new action, each Member State will have the possibility of pre-selecting up to two sites every two years and a panel of independent experts will choose a maximum of one site per country to receive the label.

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 09/03/2010 - Legislative proposal

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

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: the original concept of the European Heritage Label emerged in 2005 as one of the responses to the gap between the EU and its citizens. The scheme was initially launched by several European states in April 2006 on an intergovernmental basis. Its aim was to promote a sense of European identity by improving knowledge of Europe's shared history and heritage, especially among young people. To date, a total of 64 sites located in 17 EU Member States as well as in Switzerland have been awarded the label.

However, the practical arrangements for the initiative have shown some weaknesses and it has not therefore managed to fulfil its potential. This is why, following the example of the European Capitals of Culture, Member States asked the European Commission in the Council conclusions of November 2008 to transform the current intergovernmental European Heritage label into a **formal action of the EU** in order to improve its functioning and ensure its long-term success.

The European Parliament supported the development of the European Heritage Label, first in its resolution in 2007 on a Renewed European Union Tourism Policy: Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism (2006/2129(INI)) and subsequently in its resolution of 2008 on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world (2007/2211(INI)). The current proposal responds to these various needs.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: the impact assessment examined three scenarios :

- **Option 1**: to continue the label as an intergovernmental initiative without any European Union action;
- **Option 2:** to continue the label as an intergovernmental initiative, but with financial support from the European Union budget;
- **Option 3**: to transform the label into a European Union initiative through a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council following the example of the European Capitals of Culture in 1999.

A comparison of the scenarios showed that **Option 3** would bring clear added value and produce benefits that could not be achieved by Member States acting alone, even with financial support from the European Union. It also demonstrated that the preferable selection procedure for awarding the label was the combined national and European level selection.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This proposal is in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity. The participation of Member States will be on a voluntary basis and EU involvement in the European Heritage Label will aim to strengthen coordination between Member States and to support their action by contributing to the development and correct application of common and transparent selection criteria, as well as new selection and monitoring procedures.

CONTENT: the proposal aims to establish a EU action entitled 'European Heritage Label'.

Objectives: the Commission proposes three levels of objectives for the renewed European Heritage Label.

The **general objectives** of the action are to contribute to:

- strengthen European citizens' sense of belonging to the EU, based on shared elements of history and cultural heritage, as well as an appreciation of diversity;
- strengthen intercultural dialogue.

The **intermediate objectives** of the action are to:

- enhance the value and profile of sites which have played a key role in the history and the building of the EU;

- increase European citizens' understanding of the building of Europe, and of their common yet diverse cultural heritage, especially related to democratic values and human rights that underpin the process of European integration.

The **specific objectives** of the action are as follows:

- develop sites' European significance;
- raise young people's awareness of their common cultural heritage;
- facilitate sharing of experiences and exchanges of best practices across Europe;
- increase access to heritage sites for all members of the public, especially young people;
- increase intercultural dialogue, especially among young people, through artistic, cultural and historical education;
- foster synergies between cultural heritage and contemporary creation and creativity;
- contribute to the attractiveness and the sustainable development of the regions.

Participation: Member States' participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Selection procedure: the impact assessment for the European Heritage Label showed that one of the main weaknesses of the current intergovernmental initiative is that the sites are selected independently by participating countries with no overseeing body at European level. This procedure leaves too much room for diverging interpretations and, as a result, the criteria have not been applied evenly by the countries, thereby hindering the overall coherence and quality of the label so far. A new selection procedure is therefore needed which combines the national and European levels. The Commission proposes that in the first stage, **pre-selection** of the sites should take place at Member State level, and then in the second stage, the **final selection** should take place at EU level with the help of a panel of independent experts. This would ensure both a robust application of criteria and appropriate prominence for the European dimension, whilst also preserving an equitable distribution of sites across the EU. The panel of **independent experts** should be composed of 12 members nominated by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission following the example of the selection panel for the European Capitals of Culture. These experts should have substantial experience and expertise in the field of culture, heritage, European history, or other fields relevant to the objectives of the European Heritage Label. The Commission proposes to give each Member State the possibility of pre-selecting up to a maximum of two sites in every year in which a selection is made. This should help to keep the number of sites reasonable and, at the same time, retains some flexibility for Member States given that some have a greater pool of potential sites than others.

The panel of independent experts should in turn have the possibility of choosing between the pre-selected sites, selecting a maximum of one site per Member State in every year in which a selection is made. It is proposed to give special priority to sites with a strong **transnational dimension**. This should keep a certain element of competition between the sites at EU level, helping to ensure the general quality of the sites and thereby also the credibility and prestige of the initiative.

Lastly, the Commission proposes that after three successive years dedicated to the selection of new sites, each fourth year should be reserved for the monitoring procedure. This should help to keep the administrative burden reasonable both for Member States and Commission. The calendar in the Annex illustrates the proposed procedure.

Monitoring and withdrawal of the Label: the Label should be attributed in principle on a permanent basis because the symbolic value of the selected sites will not diminish over time and in order to encourage sites to take a long-term approach and invest in their development. However, in order to maintain quality and credibility in the long term, a strong monitoring system is needed to ensure that labelled sites have met the obligations undertaken at the application stage. The Commission proposes that this monitoring should be under the responsibility of Member States, who should report to the European panel every 4 years. In the event that specific sites no longer meet their obligations, it will be possible to withdraw the Label.

Practical arrangements: the Commission should support the action in order to ensure greater stability than is possible under current arrangements and to enable expertise to be built up. This would make it possible to draw on existing experience such as that of the European Capitals for Culture or the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It would, however, demand additional resources which need to be made available (one administrator and one assistant). In order to keep the practical arrangements as light and flexible as possible, certain administrative tasks could be outsourced through tendering procedures.

Evaluation: regular evaluation of the European Heritage Label action is crucial to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the initiative. This evaluation would need to examine both the processes involved in running the action and the actual cumulative impact of the European Heritage Label as a whole. The aim should be to identify in which respects the action is working well, whether it should be continued, where there is room for improvement and, crucially, how this improvement might best be achieved in the future. The monitoring of the labelled sites mentioned above would feed into this evaluation. The evaluation would be the responsibility of the Commission and would take the form of an external evaluation every 6 years.

Transitional provisions: transitional measures need to be taken to define the status of the sites already awarded the European Heritage Label under the intergovernmental initiative. To ensure the overall coherence of the initiative, these sites would need to be re-assessed against the new criteria. For reasons of equal treatment between all Member States, the Commission proposes to give those which did not participate in the intergovernmental initiative the opportunity to propose a first set of sites before the regular selection procedure begins.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: The proposal will have an impact on the EU budget from 01.01.2011 to 31.12. 2013. The funding will cover the following expenditure: the costs of a European panel of independent experts, visibility of the initiative at European level, certain activities relating to the networking of labelled sites and human resources necessary for the Commission to provide support to this action. The financial envelope for the implementation of the action during that period is set at EUR 1 350 000. The annual appropriations will be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the multiannual financial framework.

European Heritage Label

2010/0044(COD) - 29/07/2011 - Council position

The Council’s first reading position is the result of informal contacts between the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council. Although the first reading position contains some changes to the Commission’s initial proposal, both in structure and substance, the basic approach proposed by the Commission as well as all the main elements contained in its proposal such as:

- the two stage selection process (a pre-selection at national level followed by a selection at Union level);
- assessment by a European panel of independent experts;
- designation of sites by the Commission;
- introduction of measures to ensure transition from the intergovernmental initiative to a European Union action.

Changes made by Council relating to the European Parliament’s amendments :

- **Definitions:** the first reading position extends the definition of sites contained in the Commission's initial proposal to cover three new types of sites: underwater, archaeological and industrial.
- **Geographical scope**: the position follows the basic approach of the Commission’s proposal that during the evaluation process the widening of the geographical scope of the action should be examined together with other elements. The widening of the geographical scope should be examined during the first evaluation, i.e. 6 years after the entry into force of the decision, which would allow testing the functioning of the action first among Member States before opening it up, if appropriate, to the participation of non-EU countries.
- **European panel of independent experts**: the participation of the Committee of the Regions in the selection and monitoring procedures is important since cultural heritage sites are often managed by local or regional authorities. The first reading position reflects this by adding an expert appointed by the Committee of the Regions to the members of the European panel appointed by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The text underlines the need to ensure among the European institutions concerned that appointed experts have complementary expertise and that their geographical representation is balanced.
- **Frequency of selection**: the first reading position has changed the annual selection of sites, initially proposed by the Commission, to a selection organised every two years, the main reason being to avoid an uncontrolled rise in the number of sites which could undermine the label’s prestige and quality. At the same time the biennial frequency will ensure that a critical mass of sites is reached in a reasonable time so the label becomes known to the public.
- **Strengthening information provision by the Commission**: the text has introduced an obligation for the Commission to inform the Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions at each stage of the selection process of the following: pre-selection of sites by Member States, selection by the European panel, designation of the selected sites by the Commission, withdrawal of the label from a site and renunciation of the label by a site. By virtue of such a transparent procedure, all stakeholders will have the opportunity to bring to the attention of the Commission any observation that they might have regarding the candidate sites.
- **Transnational sites**: the first reading position supports this type of site as contained in the Commission’s original proposal. However, it defines more specifically conditions that such a site will have to comply with, in particular the need for a coordinator and an obligation for sites participating in a transnational site to consult their national authorities.
- **National thematic sites**: the first reading position establishes 'national thematic sites' as a new type of site which allows the sites located in a given Member State that are linked by a common theme to put forward a joint application.
- **Renunciation:** the first reading position establishes a new procedure which allows a site that does not wish to participate in the action any longer to renounce the label. This provision is in line with the voluntary nature of the action.
- **Transitional provisions** : the first reading position follows the basic approach of the Commission’s initial proposal of ensuring transition from the intergovernmental initiative to an action managed by the European Union by allowing Member States also to propose the sites, if any, that had previously been labelled under the intergovernmental initiative. All the sites proposed for the award of the label during the two selection years when transitional provisions apply will have to be assessed against the same criteria and follow the same procedures as sites nominated during the ordinary years. In order to ensure equal treatment of Member States whose sites have been awarded the intergovernmental label and those which do not have such sites, the first reading position text sets a maximum of four sites that any Member State can nominate in accordance with the transitional provisions.

Financial provisions: the amount of the financial envelope originally proposed by the Commission was based on the assumption that the first selection procedure will be organised in 2012. Given the fact that the new text adds one year for preparatory work, the budget of the European action was reduced to EUR 650 000 EUR for the 2012 - 2013 period.

Conclusions: the first reading position which is the result of informal negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission maintains the approach and the legal architecture proposed by the Commission. It establishes common, clear and transparent criteria and procedures for the European Heritage Label as well as a stronger coordination among the Member States. Important changes have been made to the frequency of selection, the European panel’s composition, types of sites and information provision. A number of important clarifications, including on definitions, criteria, conditions for transnational and national thematic sites, renunciation and transitional provisions, have also been made.

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.