

## Goodwill Message

*Dear Distinguished Guests,  
Dear Colleagues and Friends of Europe's Cultural Heritage,*

A very good morning to you all from the National Park of Tara in my native country, Serbia. It is my great pleasure to join you today on the occasion of this very special conference, which takes place in hybrid form, both onsite in Kazanlak (Bulgaria) and online.

Let me first convey Europa Nostra's special thanks to the organizers of this extraordinary conference on an extraordinary subject: the ICOMOS National Committees of Bulgaria and Germany, with the vital support of the German Federal Government, as well as all other involved partners and hosts.

Those of you who know me know how passionate I feel about my native region of the Balkans and South East Europe, with its distinctive turbulent history, which is the reason we have gathered this week. There is a special boldness that characterizes the spirit of place here, an expression through architecture and sculpture and the arts, which is of its time.

When it comes to the heritage of the post-war period, today this heritage is often ignored or even rejected with shame, especially when it is associated with troubled or unpleasant historical events, developments and personalities of our recent history. For this reason, they are often endangered: they become victims of vacancy, decay, theft, demolition, or get disfigured by reconstructions or modernisation attempts. Let me add that the recent history and heritage of post-communist countries is largely unfamiliar to a broader public in Europe. Yet, the significance of this dissonant heritage as *lieu de mémoire* is meaningful and evident at a European level and we need to protect it.

The most vulnerable period of any cultural expression comes with the generation following its creation: because neither is it still the domain of the creator, nor has it yet been accepted into the canon of national or international heritage; it is "work in progress". That is what is so challenging yet energizing about this subject in this place at this time.

Cultural heritage is a vast canvas on which Europeans define their multiple identities and nurture their shared values. Sometimes this is by continuing and preserving traditions, perhaps especially those at risk of dying out. Sometimes Europe is the crucible of ideas which grows into a real cultural or political movement. Sometimes creativity and innovation – and heritage as its legacy – can only be achieved by challenging conventions. And so it is with dissonant heritage.

As the European voice of civil society committed to cultural heritage, Europa Nostra's canvas is as broad as the horizons of the civilisations and cultures which have shaped our continent. Indeed, we – just as the cultural heritage in our

care – constantly face new challenges. And climate change is definitely the predominant challenge of our time. So, it was a pleasure to collaborate with ICOMOS on our European Cultural Heritage Green Paper with its ambitious aim to put cultural heritage at the heart of the European Green Deal. We are always stronger together! We therefore know that this will be a fruitful partnership with future collaboration and successes!

*Dear Colleagues and Friends,*

The Buzludzha Monument is a breath-taking inspiration for discussion and collaboration. As you know, it was included in the 2018 List of our *7 Most Endangered* programme, run in partnership with the European Investment Bank Institute.

In a sense, endangered heritage is always about dissonance because the endangered sites are exceptionally significant, and there is the discord of exceptional risk, often because that significance is being questioned. And it challenges us: what should we save, how, and why?

After the inclusion of the Buzludzha Monument on our *7 Most Endangered* List, we organised a mission there, combining Europa Nostra's expertise with that of our partner, the European Investment Bank Institute, striving to help define a vision of hope and viable future for this endangered site. It is testimony to the great team behind this project, led by the indefatigable Dora Ivanova, that we, today, not only have such vision of hope and viable future for the Buzludzha Monument. In fact, the site itself has become a symbol of hope and viable future for others around Europe and beyond, seeking recognition of their values as dissonant heritage.

We are grateful for the support and commitment of so many different partners: from the European Investment Bank Institute and ICOMOS to the Getty Foundation. Together, we seem to be bringing this dream within reach. Therefore, I am so pleased that two members of the 2018 *7 Most Endangered* programme's mission team, Graham Bell, Europa Nostra Board Member, and Mario Aymerich of the European Investment Bank Institute, are with you today on this challenging journey to share their expertise and insights.

Let me leave you with this closing exhortation: sometimes cultural heritage goes through times of trial, especially when its significance is challenged, doubted, or even despised. But please, let us keep the faith, and let us demonstrate to Europe, as a whole, that where the Buzludzha Monument leads, others can follow.

Thank you very much.

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