

2005/EU/01

EUROPA NOSTRA DECLARATION ON SAFEGUARDING COASTAL CULTURE

Europa Nostra, pan-European Federation for Heritage, meeting in Bergen on 2 June 2005, ahead of the Public Forum “Safeguarding Coastal Culture”, recalled the Europa Nostra Declaration on Safeguarding Europe’s Coastlines adopted by the General Assembly in Istanbul in 1992, and recognised that many of its recommendations had in the meantime, been realised. Europa Nostra then debated the cultural heritage implications for the changing coastlines of Europe brought about by changing environmental, social and economic conditions. It also recognised that its concern about cultural heritage should be seen in the context of a wider environmental debate and reached the following conclusions¹:

A. CONSIDERATIONS

EUROPA NOSTRA:

1. Acknowledged the intimate relationship between the cultures of Europe and the sea. The coastlines of Europe are a significant part of our cultural heritage, bearing complex historic meaning and value and revealing evidence for the social, political and economic activities of past millennia.
2. Recognised that the cultural heritage of the coastal zone, including the underwater coastal heritage, is at risk from human activity on land and sea and the pressure of natural coastal processes. In particular, Europa Nostra expressed concern about the impacts of major commercial development related particularly to tourism along many of Europe’s coasts.
3. Also recognised and shared international concern about the vulnerability of the coastal zone and the implications of climate change, rising sea levels and flooding with subsequent erosion of coastal heritage.
4. Acknowledged important European and National Governmental initiatives related to the careful, long-term, strategic management of the coast, in particular the development and

implementation of the principles of Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) by the European Union and its Member States², and by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe³.

5. Also acknowledged the role of NGOs in the protection of the coast.

6. Welcomed the entry into force on 1 March 2004 of the European Landscape Convention⁴ and recognised that its provisions also applied to the protection, conservation and enhancement of coastal and marine landscapes.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

EUROPA NOSTRA:

1. Calls on the Council of Europe, the European Union and all European Governments to promote and implement the principles of ICZM, and to use this to develop a greater understanding of the cultural and historic significance of the coast, and to improve understanding of and working with natural processes in coastal management.

2. Stresses that options for sustainable management of the coastal zone need also to include an understanding of the values that local communities and other stakeholders place on the cultural heritage of the coast and involve those communities in the decision making process.

3. Emphasises the importance of the provision of adequate resources for the understanding, conservation and sustainable management of the coast and the need to communicate and record decisions taken in the light of ICZM.

4. Recognises the importance of taking a long-term view in the management of the coast, and as a consequence working with natural processes of coastal erosion and accretion, the predicted rise in sea level and the realignment of the coast that will inevitably ensue. Europa Nostra agrees that mitigation to arrest or alter natural coastal processes should only be considered where there is an overriding value to society.

5. Advocates greater recognition of the serious threats to some of Europe's coasts as a result of the large-scale, inappropriate development including off-shore development and pollution, often in places of great beauty or sensitivity.

THEREFORE, EUROPA NOSTRA URGES:

6. That Environmental Impact Assessments are required as a matter of urgency in advance of new developments. In this context it drew particular attention to European Parliament and Council Directives 97/11/EC⁵ and 2001/42/EC⁶ and called for their use in the assessment of the effects of all plans and projects in the coastal zone;

7. That European States consider signing and ratifying the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage⁷;

8. That Member States of the Council of Europe sign and ratify the European Landscape Convention as an additional tool for promoting the protection and enhancement of coastal landscapes.

NOTES:

1 The Council acknowledged the input from the National Trust's Coastal policy 2005 in the drafting of this document

2 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2002 concerning the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in Europe. These recommendations set out guidelines for the sustainable development in coastal areas, but do not give particular weight to cultural heritage.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/iczm/>

3 CLRAE Resolution 192 (2005) on "Coastal Management and Local and Regional Policy in Europe"

4 <http://www.coe.int/europeanlandscapeconvention/>

5 Council Directive 97/11/EC of 3 March 1997 amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment

6 Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

7 http://www.unesco.org/culture/laws/underwater/html_eng/convention.shtml