



# NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE IN EUROPE:

Working together within the  
Natura 2000 network

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Print	ISBN 978-92-76-08752-6	doi:10.2779/338498	KH-01-19-558-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-76-08751-9	doi:10.2779/338551	KH-01-19-558-EN-N

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June 2019

This report was written by Kerstin Sundseth, Ecosystems LTD (Member of the N2K Group EEIG) under Contract N° **07.0202/2017/766291/SER/D.3** with substantial contributions from Erik Gerritsen and Matt Rayment, IEEP. Thanks also to Oliviero Spinelli, Concha Olmeda and Viera Stenova from the N2K Group for their contributions.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 EUROPE – A MARRIAGE OF NATURE AND CULTURE

Europe is known the world over for its rich and diverse heritage. It is the one element that distinguishes it most from the other regions of the globe. Thousands of years of history have fashioned an intricate mix of different languages, cultures, traditions, customs, values and land-uses, all of which have been acted out across a highly varied landscape stretching from beyond the Arctic Circle down to the warm Mediterranean Sea, from the wind-swept Atlantic Coast, across the High Alps and Carpathian mountain ranges, into the grasslands of the Pannonian plain.

It is this long-standing marriage of nature and culture that has shaped much of the European landscape we see today, and gives Europeans their sense of belonging and cultural identity. Two hundred years ago, 80% of the population lived off the land and this is reflected everywhere around us. True wilderness areas are, on the other hand, relatively uncommon in the EU.

Instead, centuries of human ingenuity and labour, age-old land use practices and traditions, combined with local knowledge (savoir faire) and skills have helped to create a whole range of wildlife-rich semi-natural habitats, such as lowland meadows, dehesas, wooded pastures etc... These land use practices are also an integral part of our heritage – our natural heritage – in which our cultural heritage is inextricably interlinked.



*La meule de foin: C. Monet – a bucolic landscape shaped by man.*

Our landscape is also very much a living heritage. Despite the immense scale of socio-economic changes that have accompanied the recent wave of industrialisation and urbanisation over the last 50–100 years, much of this living heritage continues to function today, playing a vital social, economic and environmental role across much of Europe, especially in rural areas.

## 1.2 LINKING NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The term 'heritage' tends to evoke first and foremost the traditional concept of built cultural heritage: impressive monuments and stunning works of art (paintings, literature, music etc..) or archaeological sites, museums, forts and palaces, even modern industrial sites. But this is, in fact, just the tip of the iceberg.

Europe is also endowed with a myriad other less tangible forms of cultural heritage, such as local arts and crafts, products (cheese, sausages and other local produce), knowledge, skills, spiritual





*Europe's landscapes are heavily influenced by centuries of diverse land uses.*

beliefs and folklore that are deeply rooted in our sense of identity and that have been passed down for generations. This immensely diverse cultural heritage is interwoven with our rich and equally diverse natural heritage.

Traditionally, natural and cultural heritage have been seen as completely distinct from one another, and sometimes even as antagonists. Some have expressed the view that 'Nature ends where culture begins'. Indeed, the transition from nature to culture is not always easy to define: nature could mean all that exists naturally whereas culture only includes items that have been created by man. In practice though, heritage is a much more complex concept in which the two are closely interlinked and, to a great extent, inseparable.

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the value of both Europe's natural heritage as well as its cultural heritage, not just for their own intrinsic worth, but also for the important role they can play in modern society and in building a more sustainable, equitable and greener economy. It has also become increasingly evident that they face similar challenges and threats.

### **1.3 EUROPE'S HERITAGE — A VALUABLE ASSET**

Several initiatives have already been taken at international, European and national level to forge a stronger partnership between nature and culture and to encourage their better integration into other land use policy areas. UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites, for instance, contains both natural and cultural sites of outstanding value, as well as mixed sites and cultural landscapes.





*Nature provides us with many economically, socially and environmentally important activities.*

At the EU level, strong legislation has been in place for more than 20 years to try to stem the loss of Europe's biodiversity through, amongst others, the establishment of a Europe-wide network of protected sites. The Natura 2000 network currently contains over 27,500 sites across 28 Member States, and covers in total more than 18% of the EU land territory as well as some 9% of the surrounding EU seas.

The Natura 2000 network fully embraces the concept of sustainable development which is enshrined in Article 2 of the Habitats Directive: *'Measures taken pursuant to this Directive shall take account of economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics'*. Thus, not only do the Nature Directives set the standard for nature conservation across all EU countries, enabling Member States to work together to protect our most vulnerable and valuable species and habitats, but they offer great potential for safeguarding our cultural heritage as well.

Moreover, the sheer geographical scale of the Natura 2000 network, as well the high value Europeans place in its existence, makes it a powerful ally in maintaining the economic viability and social fabric of many rural areas across Europe, offering ample new opportunities for economic diversification and inward investment, through for instance product marketing or tourism and recreation.

The same is true of Europe's cultural heritage. Although not an EU policy area in itself, cultural heritage is increasingly being regarded as 'an essential part of Europe's underlying socio-economic, cultural and natural capital. The economic benefits of cultural heritage have most commonly been seen in terms of tourism, but it is now also considered an innovative stimulant for growth and employment in a wide range of sectors and is recognised as a major contributor to social cohesion

and engagement as a way of bringing together communities and stimulating young people to engage with their environment'<sup>1</sup>.

Cultural and natural heritage come together in defining the character and identity of rural areas – this can help to protect and maintain them as places where people want to live, work and visit, and offers new opportunities for branding and marketing local products and services.

### ***The Natura 2000 Network – a network for nature, for people***

The EU Habitats and Birds Directives form the cornerstone of the EU's biodiversity strategy. They protect Europe's most vulnerable and valuable species and habitats, inter alia through the creation of a EU-wide Natura 2000 network of protected sites. After many years of hard work, the Natura 2000 network has become the largest coordinated network of conservation areas anywhere in the world, containing over 27,500 sites spread over all Member States of the EU.

The sites included in Natura 2000 range massively in size from some that are just a few hectares to others that extend over thousands of kilometres. They can be in the very heart of an urban area (a third of the EU capital cities harbour one or more Natura 2000 sites), or in remote faraway places like mountaintops or offshore islands. But the vast majority are in fact close by and generally very accessible. As such, they form an integral part of our living rural landscape in which local communities continue to live and work.



*Sonian forest Natura 2000 site, Brussels.*

In stark contrast to many nature conservation initiatives of the past, the EU Habitats and Birds Directives recognise that man is an integral part of nature and the two work best in partnership with one another. Although the network also includes strictly protected nature reserves, Natura 2000 embraces a much wider concept of conservation and sustainable use which is largely centered on people working with nature, rather than against it. Since every site is unique, the emphasis is very much on finding local solutions to local management issues in close cooperation with landowners, stakeholders, local authorities and other interested parties.

*For more information on Natura 2000: [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/index_en.htm), and <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/7230759d-f136-44ae-9715-1eacc26a11af>*

<sup>1</sup> 'Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe' Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage, 2015.

## ***EU Action on Cultural heritage***

Although cultural heritage is primarily the responsibility of the Member States, the EU plays an important role in helping to ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded by encouraging cooperation between Member States, establishing networks and partnerships, as well as promoting and raising awareness for cultural heritage. It also funds research, education and technological advances, and supports a wide range of projects aimed at protecting, restoring and enhancing cultural heritage across the EU.

In May 2018, it adopted a New European Agenda for Culture to do more, through culture and education, to build cohesive societies and offer a vision of an attractive European Union<sup>2</sup>. The New Agenda proposes to:

- harness the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and wellbeing, by promoting cultural participation, mobility of artists and protection of heritage;
- support jobs and growth in the cultural and creative sectors, by promoting arts and culture in education, boosting relevant skills, and encouraging innovation in culture; and
- strengthen international cultural relations, by making the most of the potential of culture to foster sustainable development and peace.

The New Agenda also specifically recognises the importance of restoring and upgrading cultural and natural heritage in view of their contribution to growth potential and sustainability and calls for a more integrated management of cultural and natural assets in order to encourage people to discover and engage with both.

In December 2018, the Commission also published a European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage which sets out 60 actions to further promote and protect Europe's rich heritage over the longer term. Actions cover five thematic areas where EU action can bring the highest added value and where joint European action is needed to make a difference. One of the actions aims to boost synergies between natural and cultural heritage<sup>3</sup>.

In short, the European Framework promotes and puts into practice an integrated and participatory approach to cultural heritage, and contributes to the mainstreaming of cultural heritage across EU policies. The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Committee of the Regions, and the Economic and Social Committee have all marked their support this approach.

## ***The European Year of Cultural Heritage and the Cultural Gems App***

The European Year of Cultural Heritage was held in 2018 to encourage and support the efforts of the Union, the Member States and regional and local authorities, in cooperation with the cultural heritage sector and broader civil society, to protect, safeguard, reuse, enhance, valorise and promote Europe's cultural heritage. Over 18,000 events were organised, reaching over 10.6 million of participants

At the end of the EYCH, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) officially launched a new Cultural gems app. This web app creates an interactive space for local governments, citizens and tourists to engage with hidden treasures of cultural heritage. The online tool contains a variety of information on 168 cities in 30 countries across Europe, ranging from cultural attractions and facilities to creative economies, and from human capital and education to quality of governance. Its main aims are to encourage mutual exchange and learning, and to spark innovation and resilience in these and other cities.

[https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/news/launch-cultural-gems-app-find-hidden-treasures\\_en](https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/news/launch-cultural-gems-app-find-hidden-treasures_en)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy_en)

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/european-framework-action-cultural-heritage\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/european-framework-action-cultural-heritage_en)



## 1.4 THE AIM OF THIS REPORT

Recognising the tremendous value that cultural and natural heritage brings to society it would make a lot of sense for these natural allies to join forces in order to help protect the EU's exceptionally valuable yet fragile heritage for future generations. A number of high-level EU meetings<sup>45</sup>, have been held to promote this idea and recently DG Environment published a scoping study on the links between Natura 2000 and cultural heritage in 2015<sup>6</sup> and a compendium of case studies on linking Natura 2000 and cultural heritage in 2017<sup>7</sup>.

The present report aims to build on this work as a contribution to both the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage<sup>8</sup> (2018) and the EU's Nature Action Plan for Nature, People and the Economy<sup>9</sup> (2017). It explores the spatial overlaps between natural and cultural heritage in Europe, their perceived values to society and the threats and challenges they both face.

It goes on to investigate the elements that are preventing or inhibiting greater cooperation between the two before outlining the potential role natural and cultural heritage can play in building a more sustainable greener economy for all. The opportunities available under various EU funds to kick start joint nature and culture initiatives as part of a wider sustainable development drive is explored in chapter 5.

The last chapter offer a series of recommendations on how the challenges facing natural and cultural heritage can be overcome, inter alia through better policy integration, innovative governance structures, and how the two sectors can be encouraged to work more closely together through joint initiatives, inter alia, through different EU funding instruments.



4 Declaration of Stymfalia, 2014 Cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites: towards a new policy for the integrated management of cultural and natural heritage.

5 Charter of Rome on Natural and Cultural Capital, Council of the EU, 5 December 2014.

6 Scoping Study on the review of links and complimentary between Natura 200 and cultural sites, the N2K Group, 2016.

7 Linking Natura 2000 and cultural heritage: case studies, N2K Group for DG Environment, 2017.

8 <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/library/documents/staff-working-document-european-agenda-culture-2018.pdf>

9 [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness\\_check/action\\_plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/action_plan/index_en.htm)

## 2. CULTURAL HERITAGE IN NATURA 2000: EXPLORING THE SPATIAL OVERLAPS

### 2.1 SPATIAL OVERLAPS BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND NATURA 2000

Considering the wealth of similarities, there is considerable merit in encouraging a greater cooperation and partnership between natural and cultural heritage initiatives, at both EU and national level, and particularly in connection with the Natura 2000 network. But, in order to be able to forge a stronger partnership between the two, it is important, firstly, to learn more about how they relate to each other. This will help identify where the potential synergies lie and how the two can best work together ‘for the greater common good’.

One of the first steps in this process is to determine the extent to which natural and cultural heritage features in the EU overlap spatially. The more overlaps there are, the more opportunities there will be for joining forces.

As much of Europe’s cultural heritage tends to be focused in historic city centres and urban areas, one might understandably expect the physical overlaps to be relatively few and far between. On the other hand, thanks to our historically close association with the land and sea, there will also undoubtedly be areas where nature and culture are inextricably linked.

As this chapter illustrates, there is indeed a significant spatial overlap between natural and cultural heritage in the EU. The following sub-sections examine different sources of data which can be used to assess the extent of these overlaps.

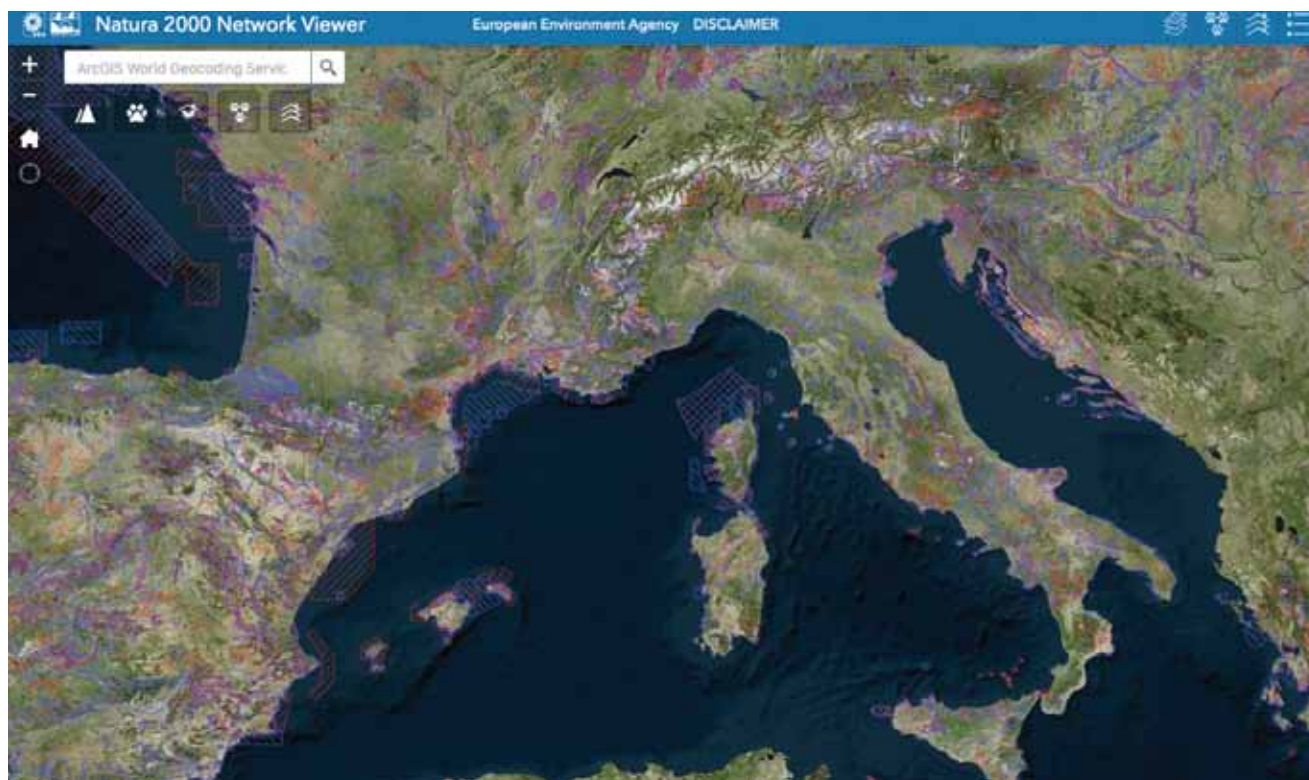
#### 2.1.1 The Natura 2000 Viewer

Created to protect Europe’s natural heritage, the Natura 2000 network has a strong legal framework and covers a significant part of the EU territory (almost a fifth of the total land area). It makes sense therefore to start by investigating the extent to which Natura 2000 also embraces cultural heritage, and to explore the key characteristics of these overlapping areas.

Spatial data on Natura 2000 is available at EU level through the Natura 2000 Viewer<sup>10</sup>. This is a GIS mapping system that enables the user to view any Natura 2000 site at a very detailed scale and against a wide range of different backgrounds and land uses. Various search functions also exist, e.g. according to geography, species, habitats, land cover etc...

The tool is intended to help not only raise awareness for Natura 2000 but also provide a useful spatial tool for developers, land use planners, landowners, government authorities, NGOs, researchers and educationalists, and civil society in general. Each site there is accompanied by a data sheet which explain the reasons for the site’s designation and its key characteristics.

<sup>10</sup> <http://natura2000.eea.europa.eu/#>



### 2.1.2 Spatial data on cultural heritage

Regarding European cultural heritage, there does not appear to be an equivalent database at EU level yet which would allow for a robust analysis of the physical overlaps between the two. This is probably linked to the fact that, unlike biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage is primarily the responsibility of the Member States.

There is, of course, a wealth of data available at national level (see below) but, because each country has developed its own system, it is not possible to use these to establish a common framework for comparisons between Natura 2000 and cultural heritage features.

Several EU initiatives could nevertheless become useful in the future. For instance, under the EU's INSPIRE Directive, Member States have committed to publicly share standardised data on 34 spatial data themes, including on protected areas of natural as well as cultural value<sup>11</sup>. Important progress has been made in recent years in both the accessibility and the inter-operability of data. The INSPIRE website also provides links to geo-portals in all 28 EU Member States.

#### ***Examples of overlaps between national cultural designations and Natura 2000 sites***

Many Member States have created web-tools to present basic spatial information on cultural heritage, protected nature areas and other themes. But as the examples below illustrate, they vary substantially from one to another, both in terms of the quality and quantity of information provided and its accessibility. No statistics were found in any of these samples regarding the Natura 2000 and national cultural heritage designation overlaps, but a quick review of the tools presented below suggests that, across the EU as a whole, the physical overlaps are very significant.

<sup>11</sup> <https://inspire.ec.europa.eu/Themes/117/2892>



### ***The Netherlands: Atlas Living Environment (Atlas Leefomgeving)<sup>12</sup>***

The Dutch authorities developed a tool combining spatial information on 13 key thematic areas including nature, cultural heritage and recreation. Layers available in the tool include Natura 2000 sites (light green), the Dutch national network of protected areas, World Heritage Sites (blue), national monuments and archaeological sites, hundreds of which are located in Natura 2000.



### ***France: Géoportail<sup>13</sup>***

The French Géoportail also combines spatial information on five broad domains including 'culture and heritage'. Below the Natura 2000 sites appear in light green.



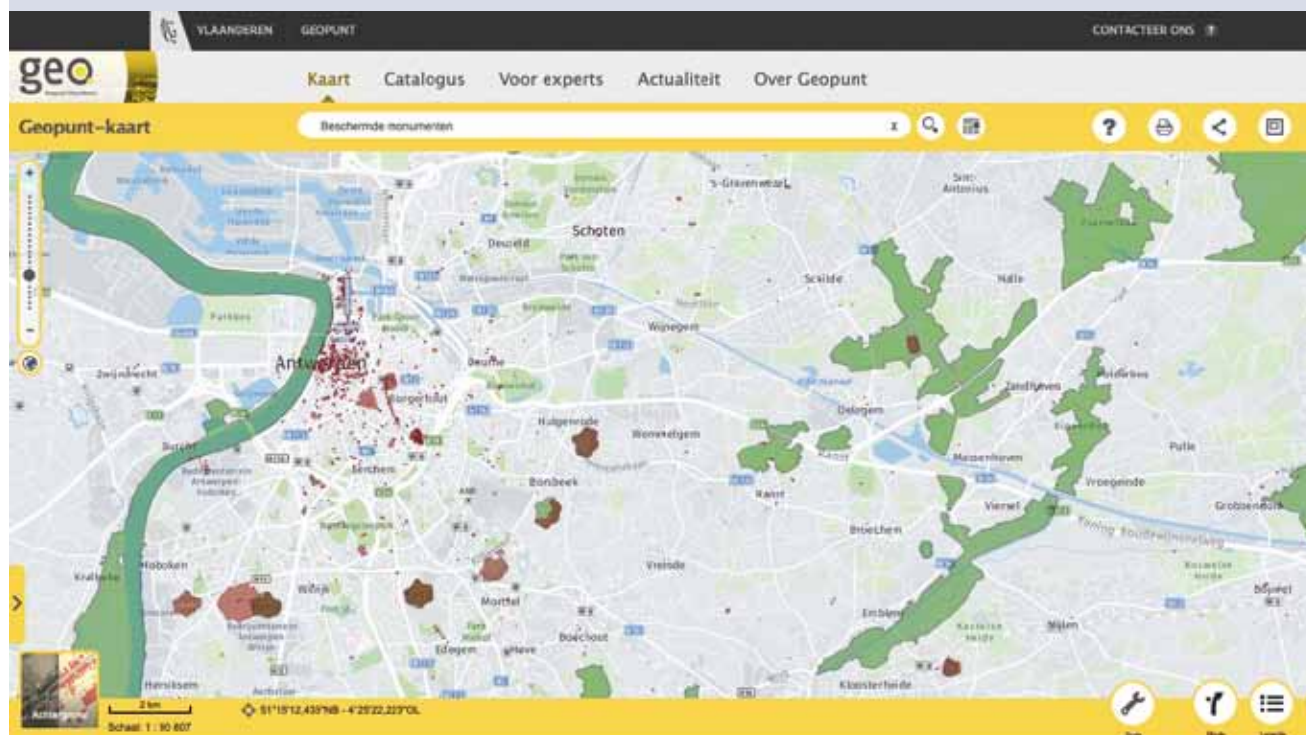
12 <https://www.atlasleefomgeving.nl/en>

13 <https://www.geoportail.gouv.fr/>



### Belgium (Flanders): Geopunt<sup>14</sup>

The Flemish authorities publish a wealth of relevant spatial information including a variety of layers of different places of cultural – and natural heritage interest. The example below shows Natura 2000 sites in light – and dark green and protected monuments (red). Although there is a concentration of monuments in cities, they also include certain cultural landscapes in Natura 2000 sites such as willow coppice and estates with old-growth forest.



## 2.2 WORLD HERITAGE SITES AND NATURA 2000

In the absence of EU level spatial data for cultural heritage, an analysis was made of a number of international Conventions that target natural and cultural heritage. The most obvious of these are the **UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS)** under the World Heritage Convention. The World Heritage Convention represents the single most important global effort to conserve the world's most outstanding heritage sites.

Initially, the focus of the WHS Convention was on conserving historic sites and buildings, but, in the 1960s, a growing environmental movement called for more recognition and protection for important natural heritage sites as well. Both concepts were finally adopted by the Convention in 1972 but there is still, to this day, a strong bias towards built cultural sites. The introduction of the concept of cultural landscape sites in the 1990s aimed to address this to some extent (see box).

To be nominated for the WHS list, a site must be of “outstanding universal value” and meet at least one of ten cultural or natural heritage criteria (see box). Sites can thus be nominated as a ‘Cultural Site’ or as a ‘Natural Site’, or as a ‘Mixed Site’ if they contain elements of both natural and cultural significance.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.geopunt.be/kaart>

## **WORLD HERITAGE LIST CRITERIA**

### **Cultural criteria**

- i “represents a masterpiece of human creative genius and cultural significance”
- ii “exhibits an important interchange of human values, over a span of time, or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning, or landscape design”
- iii “bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilisation which is living or which has disappeared”
- iv “is an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural, or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history”
- v “is an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture, or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change”
- vi “is directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance”

### **Natural criteria**

- vii “contains superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance”
- viii “is an outstanding example representing major stages of Earth’s history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features”
- ix “is an outstanding example representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems, and communities of plants and animals”
- x “contains the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation”

## **What are Cultural Landscapes under the World Heritage Convention?**

Cultural landscapes ‘represent the ‘combined works of nature and man’ and are designed to embrace a diversity of manifestations of the interaction between humankind and its natural environment’.

There are currently 43 cultural landscape sites on the WHS in the EU, all of which overlap with Natura 2000 sites. They include the Puszta in the Hortobagy National Park in Hungary and the Agricultural landscape of Southern Öland, Sweden (pictured).



At the time of writing this report, the World Heritage list contained 1092 sites worldwide, of which 845 are cultural and 209 are natural sites. Of the 1092 WHS sites, a third occur in the EU-28 (365 sites).<sup>15</sup> These include 23 natural WHS, 6 mixed nature-culture WHS and 336 cultural WHS.

For the purposes of this study, a preliminary analysis has been made of the physical overlap between Natura 2000 sites and WHS. The UNESCO WHS database only gives static point source data which makes it almost impossible to do an accurate statistical analysis of the actual extent of the overlaps at EU level (eg in terms of percentage area etc.).

Nevertheless, the following overlap map is already very revealing. From this it can be seen that **all but 2 of the 29 natural and mixed World Heritage Sites in the EU overlap fully or significantly with Natura 2000 sites**. The two that are not covered are both listed for their fossil interest: Messel Pit Fossil Site in Germany, and Monte San Giorgio in Italy.

In a number of cases where the WHS is very large, several Natura 2000 sites are present within its boundaries (for example in the High Coast WHS in Sweden and the Dolomites in Italy). But in most other cases, the opposite is true<sup>16</sup>, with the WHS constituting only part of the larger Natura 2000 sites.

As for the Cultural WHS, at first glance one would not expect there to be that much overlap with Natura 2000. Yet, **of the 336 cultural WHS in the EU, a fifth (68 sites) are located fully (49 sites) or partly/mostly (19 sites) within Natura 2000**. It is also interesting to note that a further 75 cultural WHS cultural sites are within walking distance of a Natura 2000 site.

**This first analysis seems to indicate that, in total, almost half (ca 170 sites) of all World Heritage Sites in the EU are in, or within 2 km of, a Natura 2000.**



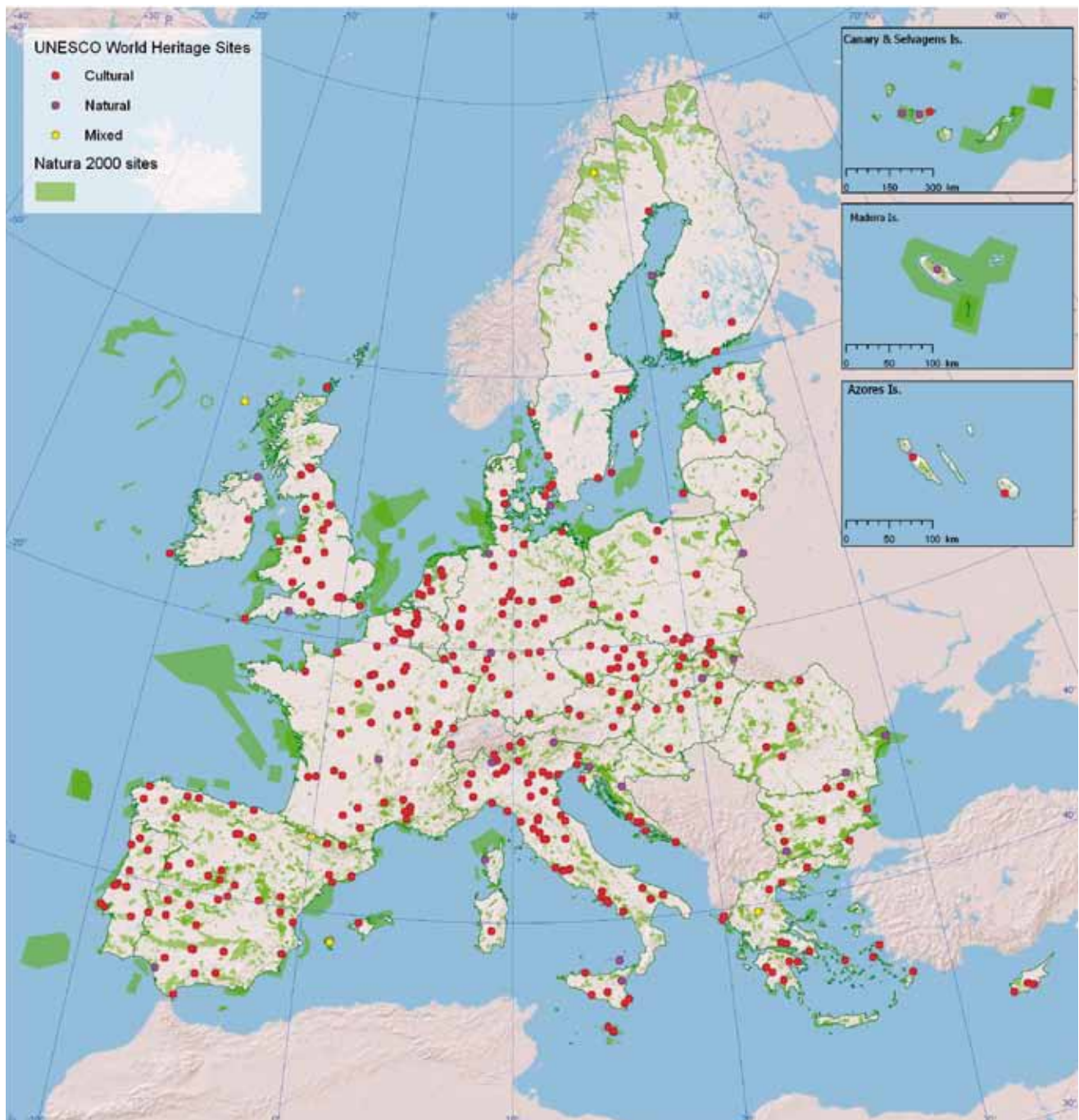
*The Natura 2000 site (yellow) is significantly bigger than the Cultural WHS site at Mont St Michel, France.*

<sup>15</sup> This excludes the 5 sites that are located in the EU's dependant territories and outermost regions.

<sup>16</sup> Transboundary natural and mixed World Heritage properties were counted for each EU Member State in which one of their sites occurs. In some WHS the actual number of sites within the designation may be higher than one. For instance for Romania there are in fact 12 distinct areas that make up the WHS 'Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe' in that country. The figures above do not take this into account and are therefore only approximate.



## MAP of WORLD HERITAGE SITES AND NATURA 2000



*The Natura 2000 site and Cultural WHS for Matera, Italy overlap almost completely. Lesser kestrels, protected under the Birds Directive, nest in the heart of the city.*



## 2.2.1 Examples of WHS sites that overlap with Natura 2000

### ***Meteora, Greece – a mixed WHS***

Meteora is a region of almost inaccessible sandstone peaks. In the 11th Century, monks decided to settle on top of these 'columns of the sky'. By the time of the great revival of the hermitic ideal in the 15th century, 24 monasteries had been built. Their 16th-century frescoes mark a key stage in the development of post-Byzantine painting. The site is also important for a range of threatened habitat types (such as constantly flowing Mediterranean rivers, pseudo-steppe with grasses, turkey oak-sessile forests) as well as rare bats and plant species and large numbers of birds of prey, amongst others.



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### ***City of Graz – Historic Centre and Schloss Eggenberg, Austria – A Cultural WHS***

The Historic Centre Graz and Schloss Eggenberg embody a central European urban complex influenced by the secular presence of the Habsburgs. They are a harmonious blend of the architectural styles and artistic movements that have succeeded each other from the Middle Ages until the 18th century, from the many neighbouring regions of Central and Mediterranean Europe. Schloss Eggenberg and its surrounding gardens are also included in Natura 2000.

They are also, amongst others, the last known wintering site in Austria of the highly threatened Greater Horseshoe Bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* protected under the EU Habitats Directive. The presence of bats is currently being used to attract different audiences to the site, and their protection is being integrated into the cultural site's management plans.



© Schup at German Wikipedia

### ***The Danube Delta, Romania – A Natural WHS***

At the end of its great journey through Europe, the Danube River reaches its final destination on the Black Sea coast in eastern Romania. Here it transforms into a vast labyrinth of water channels, floating islands, reedbeds, lakes, ancient forests, and shifting sandbanks. The only way around this immense water world is by boat but once inside a fantastic wildlife experience awaits. The Danube Delta is without exaggeration, Europe's most spectacular wetland and one of the top 50 wetlands in the world. The wildlife is astounding, especially in summer when hundreds of thousands of birds assemble here, including many threatened species.



© iStock

### ***Hortobagy, Hungary – A Cultural landscape WHS***

Hortobagy, in eastern Hungary, is in the heartland of the Puszta – a vast steppic grassland that stretches out in all directions as far as the eye can see. The sense of space is remarkable. There is nothing to break the skyline – no hills, no trees, no buildings – just the occasional wooden sweep pole to remind us that people and nature have lived in harmony in this landscape for over two millennia. Nomadic shepherds and herdsman once used the wells to water their traditional herds of grey cattle, long-haired racka sheep and curly mangalica pigs as they grazed the mineral rich grasslands. All around them, in the shallow wetlands and salt steppes, hundreds of thousands of migratory birds turn up every year on their annual migration.



### ***Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe – a transboundary WHS***

This transboundary WHS stretches over 12 countries and incorporates some of the finest areas of ancient primeval beech forests remaining in Europe. Since the end of the last Ice Age, European Beech spread out from a few isolated refuge areas in the Alps, Carpathians, Dinarides, Mediterranean and Pyrenees over a few thousand years to become one of the key habitats in Europe. The successful expansion across a whole continent is related to the tree's adaptability and tolerance to different climatic, geographical and physical conditions.

Seventy-eight sites, covering some 92,000 ha in total with huge buffer areas (ca 253,800 ha) are included in the WHS. They have been selected because they represent an outstanding universal value, and have maximum integrity, and coherent, sufficiently sized forests.



### ***The Laponian area, Finland – a mixed site***

The Arctic Circle region of northern Sweden is the home of the Saami, or Lapp people. It is the largest area in the world (and one of the last) with an ancestral way of life based on the seasonal movement of livestock. Every summer, the Saami lead their herds of reindeer from the lowland taiga towards the mountains. Pristine pine and fir forests cover approximately 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a variety of swamp types cover another 1,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the latter being the largest untouched mire complex in western Europe. More than 150 bird species have been recorded here. Notable species include moose, Arctic fox, brown bear, lynx, wolverine, otter, pine marten, capercaillie, whooping swan, bean goose, jack snipe, golden eagle, gyrfalcon and white-tailed eagle.





## 2.2.2 An analysis of cultural WHS in Natura 2000

A more detailed analysis was made of the 49 cultural WHS that overlap fully with Natura 2000 in order to get an idea of the principal types of cultural heritage and landscapes present in these sites.

In terms of WHS cultural heritage features within Natura 2000, it would appear that half of the sites are listed because they host prime examples of built heritage features (eg historical villages, monasteries, castles or other religious places, or examples of industrial heritage such as bridges, mines, aqueducts). The other half are listed either as archeological sites and caves, or as cultural landscapes.

*Type of WHS cultural features found in sites where N2000 and WHS overlap*

	N° of Natura sites	% of Natura site
Built heritage	27	55%
Archeological	11	22%
Cultural landscape	11	22%
N° sites where WHS and Natura 2000 overlap	49	

*Type of WHS built heritage features found in sites where N2000 and WHS overlap*

	N° of Natura sites
Historic villages, towns	12
Castles, monasteries, churches etc	9
Industrial architecture	4
Other	2

It is interesting to note that so many of the WHS built heritage features are associated with areas of high nature value – either because they are surrounded by semi-natural or natural areas, such as forests or farmland, or because nature forms part of, or runs through, the built up heritage areas. Many villages, for instance, are situated on rivers that are of high nature value.



*Rila Monastery, Bulgaria A WHS located in the heart of a vast Natura 2000 area (ca 78,000 ha).*



*The Trave river flows through the heart of the WHS Hanseatic city of Lübeck in Germany. The river and its banks are in Natura 2000.*



Looking at the WHS cultural landscapes, these are mainly located in rural areas although some can also be found in more urbanised landscapes, such as in parklands, hunting estates or landscaped gardens.

The rural cultural landscapes are mostly made up of large complexes of agrarian habitats and farmland including meadows, olive groves, vineyards and pastures intermixed with wetlands, rivers, coastal areas and forests. Such intricate patchwork habitat mosaics reflect well the diversity of land use patterns influencing the natural environment across the EU.



*The Wachau Cultural Landscape WHS overlaps almost entirely with the Natura 2000 site. It covers a vast area (ca 180 km<sup>2</sup>) in Lower Austria to the east of Vienna.*

### 2.3 OTHER INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATIONS AND THEIR RELATION TO NATURA 2000

There are numerous other international Conventions for the protection of the world's cultural heritage. They include the UNESCO Man and Biosphere reserves<sup>17</sup>, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>18</sup>, the Convention for the protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe<sup>19</sup>, the Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage of Europe<sup>20</sup>, the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage<sup>21</sup>, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society<sup>22</sup> and the Landscape Convention<sup>23</sup> amongst others.

There are also a number of other European actions to support cultural heritage including the European Heritage Days<sup>24</sup>, the European Heritage Label<sup>25</sup>, the European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Heritage Awards<sup>26</sup>, the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes<sup>27</sup> etc...

It is beyond the scope of this report to analyse the spatial overlaps between the cultural sites designated under the above conventions and Natura 2000 but from a first glance at the lists it is clear that several sites designated for cultural heritage are also associated with some form of natural heritage and are likely therefore to be within the Natura 2000 network.

For instance, there are currently 167 Man and Biosphere (MAB) sites in the EU, half of which are found in Spain, Portugal, France and Italy. A sample was taken of 22 MAB in five Member States (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic and Denmark). It showed that all of these MABs overlap completely or significantly with Natura 2000 sites. This is not surprising considering the integration of sustainable development thinking in nature conservation since the 1960s: in several countries biosphere reserves were among the first protected areas based on this philosophy, which also inspired the EU nature directives.

17 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/>

18 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/santiago/culture/intangible-heritage/convention-intangible-cultural-heritage/>

19 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/granada-convention>

20 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/valletta-convention>

21 <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/2001-convention/>

22 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

23 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape>

24 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/european-heritage-days>

25 [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label_en)

26 <http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu>

27 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes>

Regarding the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage there are also many examples of intangible heritage that are linked also to nature. After all, much of the intangible culture is derived from a wealth of knowledge and skills, social practices, traditions, arts, festive events, that have arisen through centuries of different land use practices especially adapted to the surrounding natural environment.

### ***Intangible heritage: the art of dry stone walling, knowledge and techniques***

The art of dry stone walling concerns the knowhow related to making stone constructions by stacking stones upon each other, without using any other materials except dry soil. Dry stone structures are spread across most rural areas – mainly in steep terrains – both inside and outside inhabited spaces.

The stability of the structures is ensured through the careful selection and placement of the stones, and dry-stone structures have shaped numerous, diverse landscapes, forming various modes of dwelling, farming and husbandry. Such structures testify to the methods and practices used by people from prehistory to today to organise their living and working space by optimizing local natural and human resources.



They play a vital role in preventing landslides, floods and avalanches, and in combating erosion and desertification of the land, enhancing biodiversity and creating adequate microclimatic conditions for agriculture. The bearers and practitioners include the rural communities where the element is deeply rooted, as well as professionals in the construction business. Dry stone structures are always made in perfect harmony with the environment and the technique exemplifies a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. The practice is passed down primarily through practical application adapted to the particular conditions of each place.

### ***Intangible heritage: cultural practices associated to the 1st of March***

These are traditions transmitted since ancient times to celebrate the beginning of spring. The main practice consists of making, offering and wearing a red and white thread, which is then untied when the first blossom tree, swallow or stork is seen. The artefact is considered to provide symbolic protection against perils such as capricious weather, with the practice ensuring a safe passage from winter to spring for individuals, groups and communities.

All members of the communities concerned participate, irrespective of their age, and the practice contributes to social cohesion, intergenerational exchange and interaction with nature, fostering diversity and creativity. Informal education is the most frequent means of transmission: in rural areas, young girls are taught how to make the thread by older women, while in urban areas apprentices learn from teachers, craftspeople and through informal education.



The same can be said for the European Cultural heritage routes, many of which include rural walking routes that will most likely pass through numerous Natura 2000 sites along the way, such as the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, the Viking Routes, the Routes of the Olive Tree etc

As regards underwater cultural heritage, it is clear that many marine archeological sites, underwater caves or wrecks also provide an important safe haven for marine life and underwater sites that are important culturally or historically are also very likely to be also important for biodiversity.



*Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route, Spain.*



*The Brioni Shipwreck, off Vis Island, Croatia is a top dive site. located in a marine Natura 2000 site.*





### 3. CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE: COMMON VALUES, COMMON THREATS

The previous chapter illustrated the significant degree of spatial overlap between natural and cultural heritage in the EU. This chapter explores the extent to which they deliver similar types of socio-economic benefits to society and are subject to common threats and pressures.

#### 3.1 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Traditionally, the conservation of both natural and cultural heritage has been seen as imposing costs on society, or is viewed as a luxury that public budgets can ill afford. But, this perception is slowly changing as more and more studies are being done to illustrate the multiple socio-economic benefits that this natural and cultural 'capital' can bring society. In particular, there has been increasing recognition lately of the important role that heritage can play in modern-day society and in building a more sustainable, equitable and greener economy.

Both natural and cultural heritage provide society with a wide range of socio-economic benefits and services – be it through tourism and recreation, education, employment, quality of life factors or protection against environmental disasters (see below).

Socio-economic benefits	Natural heritage (through Natura 2000)	Cultural heritage
Tourism and recreation	✓	✓
Education and knowledge, skills, practices	✓	✓
Aesthetic pleasure, emotional resourcing	✓	✓
Jobs, employment, livelihoods	✓	✓
A sense of place and identity, social cohesion	✓	✓
Spiritual and religious values	✓	✓
Protection against natural disasters, pollution, climate change, floods	✓	✓
Social interaction and communication	✓	✓

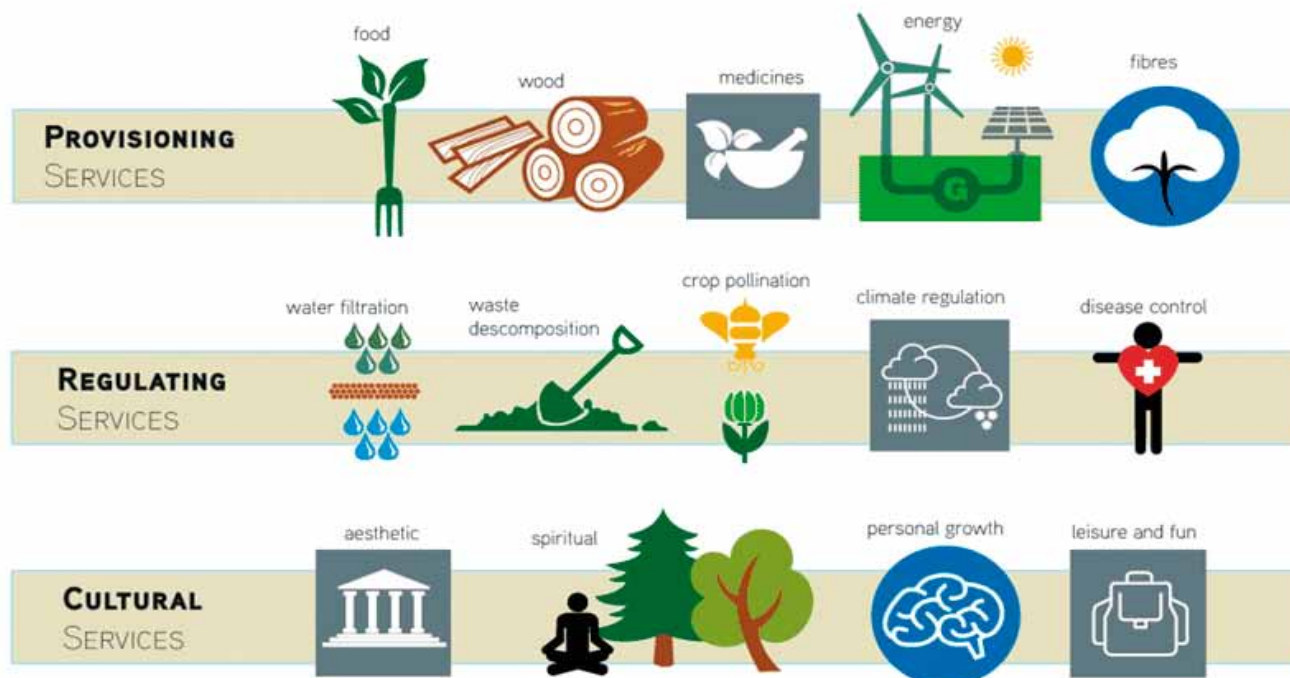
##### 3.1.1 Socio-economic benefits of Natura 2000

In the case of Natura 2000 for instance, several reports<sup>28</sup> have demonstrated that the majority of sites are being managed not merely as strict nature reserves where people are excluded but more often than not as sustainable use areas where activities are done in partnership with local stakeholders and land users, especially farming and forestry.

<sup>28</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm)

As such, they are an important source of employment across many parts of the EU, and provide a vital source of income to those who work the land (through agriculture, forestry, fishing etc..) and harvest or use their natural resources whilst at the same time conserving the species and habitats for which the site has been designated Natura 2000.

## WHAT DO WE GET FROM **ECOSYSTEMS**?



*Schematic view of the socio-economic benefits of Ecosystems (credit University of Basque country)<sup>29</sup>.*

Many Natura 2000 areas are valuable for nature precisely because of the way they have been managed up to now, and it will be important to ensure that such activities are maintained well into the future not just to protect our heritage but also to protect the livelihoods of the hundreds of thousands of people who depend on them for their livelihoods. Natura 2000 is also a major asset for tourism and recreation. By offering attractive recreational and breathing spaces, these sites provide ample opportunities for economic activities that are based on such valuable natural assets.

In addition, they deliver a wide range of ecosystem services to society. Healthy freshwater ecosystems, for instance, provide clean water and help remove pollutants from the surrounding countryside. Intact wetlands act as natural buffers against floods, soaking up excess rainwater. Peat bogs help store carbon dioxide, the number one cause of climate change, whilst forests improve air and soil quality.

**According to recent Commission studies, the benefits that flow from Natura 2000 are estimated to be in the order of €200 to 300 billion/year<sup>30</sup>.** Further, it is estimated that there are between 1.2 to 2.2 billion visitor days to Natura 2000 sites per year, generating **recreational benefits worth €5–€9 billion per annum.**

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.ehu.eus/cdsea/web/index.php/research/ecosystem-services-basque-country/results/definition-of-ecosystem-services-and-typology/?lang=en>

<sup>30</sup> The Economic Benefits of the Natura 2000 network 2013, [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/ENV-12-018\\_LR\\_Final1.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/ENV-12-018_LR_Final1.pdf)

The precise socio-economic value of each Natura 2000 site will of course depend on a range of factors, including the location of the site and its land use. However, all evidence to date points to the fact that a well managed Natura 2000 network will more than repay the costs related to its maintenance.

Investing in Natura 2000 therefore not only makes sound economic sense but also offers real value for money. However, for these benefits to be taken seriously, their economic value must be adequately reflected in society's decision-making processes and accounting systems.

### ***Natura 2000 and jobs***

The Natura 2000 network supports a wide range of jobs directly and indirectly, through conservation measures, sustainable production and other activities on site. However, the current state of knowledge needs to be improved. A scoping report carried out by IEEP for DG Environment in April 2017 revealed the following preliminary findings:<sup>31</sup>

#### ***Jobs for nature conservation***

- Current expenditure on conservation measures in the **Natura 2000 network supports around 52,000 jobs** directly and indirectly. The €5.8 billion needed for the full implementation of the Natura 2000 network has been **estimated to support 104,000 direct jobs** in protected areas management and conservation activities and **174,000 jobs in the EU if indirect and induced jobs are included**.

#### ***Jobs in sustainable production***

- **Fisheries:** There are 149,000 fishers in the EU, representing 110,000 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. There is as yet no information on how many jobs are directly or indirectly dependent on Natura 2000 network and associated protection measures.
- **Agriculture:** It has been estimated that 1.3 million of the 9.6 million farming jobs in the EU are linked directly or indirectly to Natura 2000. This is, however, a first estimate, which does not distinguish between jobs that are contributing towards Natura 2000 conservation objectives and those that are not. There is as yet no estimate of the amount of agricultural activity that would be required to maintain and improve conservation status in Natura 2000.
- **Forestry:** Of the 3.5 million jobs in the sector, a first estimate suggests that Natura 2000 supports 73,000 jobs. Additional assessment is needed.

#### ***Jobs enabled and supported by Natura 2000***

- **Tourism:** Tourism employs 12 million people in Europe. 3.1 million of these jobs have links to protected areas and 0.8 million to 2 million explicitly with Natura 2000. In 2006, visitor expenditure was estimated to support between 4.5 and 8 million FTE jobs.
- **Health:** There are 8.8 million jobs in the health sector. Now there are only case examples of jobs in Natura sites focusing on preventative health measures and care, but no systematic assessment or aggregate. There is significant additional potential to develop Natura 2000 sites as health hubs.
- **Climate mitigation and adaptation:** Natura 2000 sites offer major benefits in carbon storage, sequestration as well as adaptation to climate change through, for example, urban cooling. There is, however, no measure of the scale of employment linked to this policy objective. Some of the jobs will be found in protected area management and hence conservation jobs can be seen as offering wider public benefits.
- **Research and innovation:** The number of scientific publications on Natura 2000 and ecosystem services has been rising quickly. Furthermore, there are increasing applications of bio-mimicry and bioprospecting supporting innovation and growth. However, there is yet little data on the number of jobs supported in this area, and to what extent they benefit directly from the biodiversity in the Natura 2000 network.

<sup>31</sup> Natura 2000 and Jobs – Scoping Study, April 2017, IEEP [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/pdf/Natura\\_2000\\_and%20jobs\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/pdf/Natura_2000_and%20jobs_executive_summary.pdf)



### 3.1.2 Socio-economic benefits of cultural heritage

Like natural heritage, cultural heritage has also been shown to offer a wide range of benefits to society. It enriches the quality of life for European citizens and contributes to their wellbeing, sense of history, identity and belonging. Like nature, it offers aesthetic pleasure, knowledge, history, education, discovery, social identity and self expression, as well as contributing to social cohesion and civic participation.

Like natural heritage, relatively little has been done to date to assess the monetary value that cultural heritage brings to society. Some European initiatives have nevertheless started to work in this direction. For instance, in 2005, the Council of Europe adopted a Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society<sup>32</sup>. The so-called Faro Convention aims to promote a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society. It highlights not only the social and economic benefits of preserving cultural heritage as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development but also its pivotal role in promoting the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

In 2015, The European Commission published a report on ‘Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe’<sup>33</sup> which examined the value of cultural heritage to society and sustainable development. It stressed that ‘cultural heritage is a significant force for 21st century Europe. Not only is it at the heart of what it means to be European, it is being discovered by both governments and citizens as a means of improving economic performance, people’s lives and living environments’.

As the report explains, the economic benefits of cultural heritage are most commonly linked to tourism, which owes much of its attractiveness to the rich cultural heritage of Europe, be it in historic towns and cities or in the wider countryside. Europe is the world’s largest tourist destination and tourism is the third largest socio-economic activity in the EU, contributing 415 billion Euros to the EU GDP and employing 15.2m citizens, many of whose jobs are linked to heritage.

**It has been estimated that the number of persons directly employed within Europe in the cultural heritage sector alone is over 300,000 but the potential of cultural heritage lies also in inducing job creation in other sectors — indirectly created jobs amount to 7.8 million person-years<sup>34</sup>.**

Cultural heritage also has a significant impact on Europe’s construction industry with renovation and maintenance representing more than a quarter of its value. As an example it has been estimated that repair and maintenance on historic building stock in England supported 180,000 jobs in 2010. This turns into 500,000 jobs if the indirect effects are included<sup>35</sup>.

The property values of residences in historic districts also generally out-perform comparable properties in modern developments and businesses increasingly tend to locate in these areas, as it is easier to attract specialists to live and work in such places. Yet, as with natural heritage, the socio-economic value of cultural heritage remains poorly recognised by policy makers and the society in general.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

<sup>33</sup> Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage.

<sup>34</sup> CHCFE Consortium (2015) Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe.

<sup>35</sup> Ecorys (2012) The Economic Impact of Maintaining and Repairing Historic Buildings in England – Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage.

### **EU Project ‘Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe’**

The value of cultural heritage was further explored in a two year project funded by the EU Culture Programme (2007–2013) entitled ‘Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe: Towards a European Index for Cultural Heritage’<sup>36</sup>. The CHCFE project provides a comprehensive overview of the evidence available on the wide-ranging benefits of investing in Europe’s cultural heritage.

In particular it highlighted the following 10 key findings:

1. Cultural heritage is a key component and contributor to the attractiveness of Europe’s regions, cities, towns and rural areas in terms of private sector inward investment, developing cultural creative quarters and attracting talents and footloose businesses — thereby enhancing regional competitiveness both within Europe and globally.
2. Cultural heritage provides European countries and regions with a unique identity that creates compelling city narratives providing the basis for effective marketing strategies aimed at developing cultural tourism and attracting investment.
3. Cultural heritage is a significant creator of jobs across Europe, covering a wide range of types of jobs and skill levels: from conservation related construction, repair and maintenance through cultural tourism, to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups, often in the creative industries.
4. Cultural heritage is an important source of creativity and innovation, generating new ideas and solutions to problems, and creating innovative services ranging from digitisation of cultural assets to exploiting the cutting-edge virtual reality technologies with the aim of interpreting historic environments and buildings and making them accessible to citizens and visitors.
5. Cultural heritage has a track record on providing a good return on investment and is a significant generator of tax revenue for public authorities both from the economic activities of heritage-related sectors and indirectly through spillover from heritage-oriented projects leading to further investment.
6. Cultural heritage is a catalyst for sustainable heritage-led regeneration.
7. Cultural heritage is a part of the solution to Europe’s climate change challenges, for example through the protection and revitalisation of the huge embedded energy in the historic building stock.
8. Cultural heritage contributes to the quality of life, providing character and ambience to neighbourhoods, towns and regions across Europe and making them popular places to live, work in and visit — attractive to residents, tourists and the representatives of creative class alike.
9. Cultural heritage provides an essential stimulus to education and lifelong learning, including a better understanding of history as well as feelings of civic pride and belonging, and fosters cooperation and personal development.
10. Cultural heritage combines many of the above-mentioned positive impacts to build social capital and helps deliver social cohesion in communities across Europe, providing a framework for participation and engagement as well as fostering integration.

## **3.2 THREATS AND PRESSURES TO NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

As the previous section illustrated, the societal values and benefits of natural and cultural heritage are similar in many respects, and if the preliminary analysis of overlapping cultural WHS sites and Natura 2000 sites given in the previous chapter is anything to go by, so are many of their threats and pressures. Moreover, both natural and cultural heritage features in Europe tend to suffer from a generally poor ‘state of health’ through neglect, a lack of protection, management, resources as well as outside pressures.

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.ehhf.eu/news/cultural-heritage-counts-europe-final-report-published>

### 3.2.1 Key threats to Natura 2000 sites

According to a recent report on the State of Nature in the EU (2015)<sup>37</sup> more than a third of all wild bird species in the EU are still threatened, declining or depleted. Over half (60%) of the species protected under the Habitats Directive are also still in an unfavourable status. For protected habitat types, the situation is even worse. Across the EU-27, only 16% of habitat assessments are favourable. The overwhelming majority of habitats (77%) have an unfavourable status.

The key threats to the EU's biodiversity in general are well known. They include first and foremost habitat change (including loss, fragmentation and degradation of natural and semi-natural habitats) as well as pollution, over-exploitation (including illegal hunting or fishing), the spread of invasive alien species and climate change.

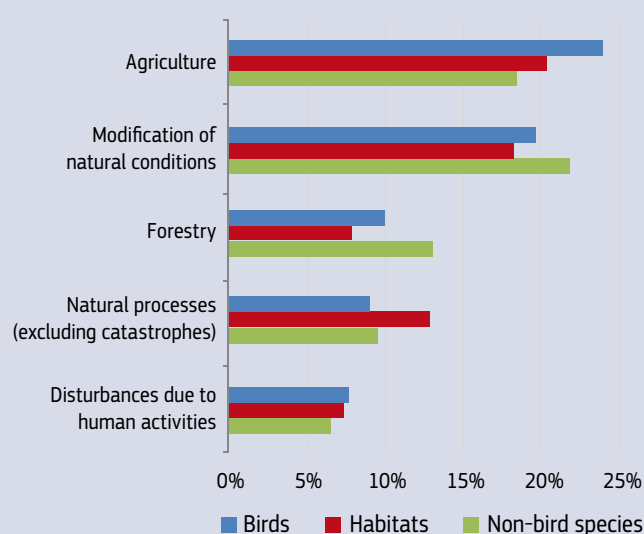
The threats to the species and habitat types protected under the EU nature Directives reflect this general trend. According to the State of Nature report the number one reported threat is agriculture (both intensification and abandonment), which is not surprising considering that 40% of Natura 2000 is made up of farmland.

Almost equally important are human induced modifications of natural conditions (eg changes to hydrological regimes, removal of sediments, dredging etc..) followed by forestry (eg clear-felling, new plantations, incompatible forestry practices) and natural processes (eg vegetation succession). Another important threat comes from disturbances due to human activities (eg outdoor sports, leisure and recreational activities, and other human intrusions and disturbance).

Of course, as the State of Nature report makes clear, the frequency with which these pressures and threats are recorded by the Member States varies according to each individual species and habitat type and their geographical location.



*Frequency of pressures and threats on terrestrial habitat types and species*



<sup>37</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/pdf/state\\_of\\_nature\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/pdf/state_of_nature_en.pdf)

### 3.2.2 Key threats to cultural heritage sites

Many of the same threats have been reported for cultural heritage. According to an analysis undertaken of the threats to World Heritage sites, there are 13 key threats<sup>38</sup>. They include pollution, social/ cultural uses of heritage (tourism /visitor/ recreational activities) and biological resource use/ modification; other human activities, as well as climate change and invasive alien species.

In the Mediterranean and Central, Eastern and South- Eastern Europe, alterations in water availability and humidity, or severe weather elements such as heavy rainfall and flooding associated with climate change are the most-cited negative factor affecting WHS. Transport infrastructure is the highest in the Nordic and Baltic sub-region. In Western Europe, tourism and the impacts of housing development are highest. The deliberate destruction of heritage through vandalism and arson, as well as illegal activities, has also been highlighted as a significant threat to both nature and culture.

For the purposes of this report, an analysis was also made of the **threats** identified in the 49 Cultural WHS that overlap with Natura 2000 sites (see chapter 2). In 15 sites it appears there are no threats in common. However, the information is very scarce for many sites so this may reflect a lack of data rather than the reality on the ground. For the other sites, a clearer picture emerges.

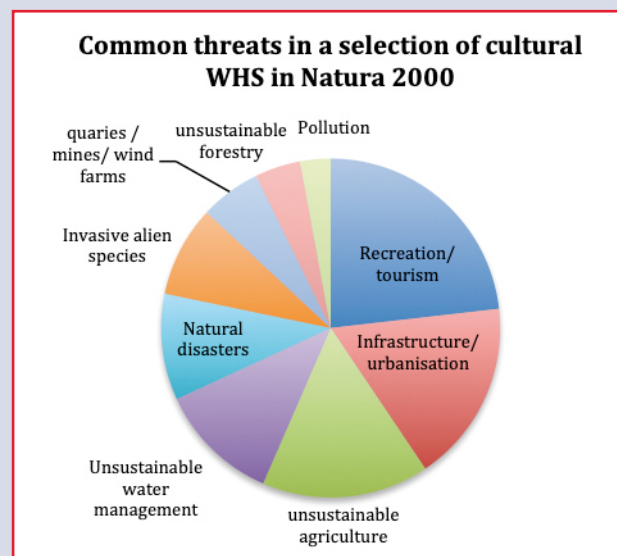
Not surprisingly, unsustainable tourism and recreation comes out as the most frequent threat for both, followed by infrastructure development/ urbanisation and unsustainable agriculture or agricultural abandonment. Interestingly, invasive alien species and natural disasters are also regularly listed as a threat for both the WHS and Natura 2000 sites. In conclusion, natural and cultural heritage features are subject to very similar threats, be it from tourism and recreation or competition from other land uses, pollution or climate change, amongst others.

Obviously when the heritage features are located in the same area, as is often the case, these types of threats affect both natural and cultural heritage in similar ways.

#### **Top 13 threats to World Heritage Sites according to UNESCO:**

- Buildings and development
- Transportation infrastructure
- Services infrastructure
- Pollution
- Biological resource use/modification
- Physical resource extraction
- Local conditions affecting physical fabric
- Social/cultural uses of heritage
- Other human activities
- Climate change and severe weather events
- Sudden ecological or geological events
- Invasive alien species or hyper-abundant species
- Management and institutional factors

*Source: World Heritage in Europe today report, 2016.*



<sup>38</sup> World Heritage in Europe today report, 2016.

### ***Invasive alien species – a problem for both natural and cultural heritage***

In Europe, invasive alien species represent a major threat to native plants, animals and habitats in Europe, causing damage worth billions of euros to the European economy. They have been identified as one of the top ten threats to Natura 2000 sites as well. Their impact on cultural heritage is less well known, but is likely to be equally important.

The Tokaj Wine Region in Hungary is listed as a Historic Cultural Landscape. The entire World Heritage property and its buffer zone (88,124 ha) has been legally protected as a 'historic landscape' since February 2012. The aim is to preserve the historic buildings and the natural environment, sustain traditional land use, as well as ensure the sustainable management of the unique vineyards. 61% of this historic landscape is also included in the Natura 2000 network in view of its exceptional biodiversity.



Invasive alien species or hyper-abundant species (such as the wild boar) represent one of the key threats to the area. The most significant invasive species include bastard indigo-bush (*Amorpha fruticosa*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) as well as species from the knotweed family. The different agencies involved in the management of the area all keep records of variations in the population and spread of invasive and hyper-abundant species, as well as their related impacts on the environment. Such records are continually updated and analysed. There is also a legal requirement to control invasive species within the NATURA 2000 area.

### **3.3. TOURISM – A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD**

It is clear from the above that many natural and cultural heritage areas not only benefit, but may also suffer, from the effects of tourism and recreation. Such activities must therefore be sustainably managed to ensure that the benefits are maintained and the costs minimised at the level of each individual site in order not to 'kill the goose that lays the golden egg'.

Some heritage features are quite robust whilst others are so sensitive to human pressure that they may not be able to cope with any disturbance. Much can be done through identifying carrying capacities for sites, and zoning people away from sensitive areas whilst still ensuring a good visitor experience but this is a very complex issue and one that needs to be carefully developed on a case by case basis.

As heritage-based tourism and recreation is such an important and growing sector, it is worth paying special attention to this issue when considering site management and protection. After almost half a century of sustained growth, Europe continues to be the world's top tourist destination. In the last 20 years alone tourism demand has more than doubled. Its economic impact is equally impressive. It contributes 10% to EU GDP and employs 12 million people, which is equivalent to 9% of EU employment<sup>39</sup>. The EU's tourism industry, in the strict sense of the term (traditional providers of holidays and tourism services), is made up of 1.8 million companies, primarily small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)<sup>40</sup>.

39 UNWTO report : European Union tourism trends, 2018 <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/vto/content/2018-eu-tourism-trends-report>

40 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/126/tourism>



A number of factors seem to have contributed to this continuous growth. The introduction of the Euro, the liberalisation of the transport sectors (airlines in particular) and further European integration all mean that travel within Europe is easier now than ever before. The development of new IT technologies also makes it possible to reach additional tourism markets and to simplify holiday planning, especially amongst those interested in independent tailor-made holidays.

What these macroeconomic figures do not reveal however is that there have been, and continue to be, some quite significant changes within the tourism sector itself, in Europe and elsewhere. Already, the classic 'sun and sand' tourism destinations in Europe are finding it increasingly difficult to hold onto their share of the market as new areas develop elsewhere in the world and become more affordable.

'Alternative' forms of tourism (wildlife tourism, cultural tourism, health tourism, adventure tourism, sport tourism etc...), on the other hand, have grown significantly over the years. Recent market surveys reveal that more and more people are interested not only in trying out new places but also in discovering different forms of tourism.



People in search of natural and cultural heritage are often motivated by other factors than those heading to mass tourism destinations<sup>41</sup>. They may, for instance, be looking for physical well being and health; discovery, intellectual stimulation and education; enjoyment of unspoilt nature and beautiful scenery; contact with people from different backgrounds and cultures in a more personalised setting; or simply adventure and excitement. They also tend to place greater emphasis on quality products and more environmentally conscious forms of tourism.

The tourism spread is however often uneven. Some natural and cultural destinations, especially World Heritage sites and famous national parks have become a magnet for tourism. They are now struggling to cope with the influx during high season while securing enough visitors during shoulder or off-season. Some destinations have had to take drastic measures to reduce the sheer volume of tourists and the damage they cause (Santorini, Pompei, ...).

But there are also more areas of high nature and cultural value in the EU that are still little frequented by tourists. Tourism, with its steady growth rates, could be seen as a life buoy for them, especially in remote areas. It could provide new employment opportunities, and help to diversify and stabilise the local economy, which could in turn help improve local living standards and encourage a greater understanding and sympathy for the restoration and protection of their local heritage. This can be especially relevant for rural areas and small villages across Europe that are struggling to remain alive and where there is a high depopulation rate. If the villages go, then so does the areas' heritage.

<sup>41</sup> Using natural and cultural heritage for the development of sustainable tourism in non-traditional tourism destinations, European Commission (2002) OECD/ICOM (2018) *Culture and local development: maximising the impact – Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums* discussing balance between the protection of natural and cultural heritage versus tourism development.

However, tourism is not a panacea or the only solution for a struggling rural economy. As several studies have shown it can have both positive and negative social, economic and environmental effects, and these must be taken fully into account at the outset. Tourism development must be carefully planned, to ensure sustainable benefits are shared in an equitable manner. What is more, part of the income generated from tourism should go to those who protect and maintain the heritage features upon which the tourism is based.

Preventive or mitigating measures should be put in place to avoid well-known risks that come with popularity: (1) erosion of heavily used paths; (2) damage to habitats and monuments; (3) site pollution; (4) accidental fires, vandalism, and disturbance to wildlife resulting from irresponsible behavior; and (5) fossilisation and over-commercialisation of local traditions and lifestyles which can destroy their value and authenticity. Developing a tourism activity can be complex. Tourism is a competitive and dynamic business, based on free market principles, and dominated by information and promotional techniques. Beneficiary margins may be relatively low.

Developing tourism activities based on natural and cultural heritage in rural areas presents a number of additional challenges. The DMO (Destination Management Organisation) may have fewer resources to convince local businesses to engage in such a new occupation. Rural areas might suffer from a lack of skills, experience, seed money and/or institutional support to help start up specialised tourism related business. Being far from big urban centers is both an asset and an impediment for heritage features. Pooling resources (e.g. by joining trans-European Routes and engaging in joint marketing) is one answer to heritage features that are too few in a specific area.

### ***Škocjan Caves: Developing Tourism Partnerships For Heritage***

The Škocjan Caves Regional Park in Slovenia is a good example of collaboration with local communities for targeted tourist management. Cooperation with park inhabitants is exemplary and is reflected in the joint protection of natural and cultural heritage. Shared activities include management decision-making, maintenance and reconstruction of Park infrastructure, mowing and bringing in of hay and the organisation of cultural landscape, identification and targeting of threats to local environments and the commemoration of national holidays and local customs. Locals also offer their services, products and produce, and they



are integrated in permanent and periodic employment opportunities. The Regional Park, in agreement with the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, promotes and financially supports the park inhabitants, who renovate their homesteads under the expert supervision of competent services. Some of the renovated homesteads are used for tourist and catering purposes, thus providing the first accommodation facilities within the Park. The visitors have the opportunity of staying longer in the park, and local inhabitants can earn an additional income. The Škocjan Tourist Organisation contributes by jointly implementing the traditional walking expedition along the Reka River sink hole and the festival of local amateur theatre groups. The Park also has an active platform for capacity building and research for effective heritage management, including activities in the framework of the Ramsar, Man and Biosphere, and Natura 2000 conventions; the Alpine Network of Protected Areas and the Europarc Organisation.

*Source: World heritage in Europe today 2016*

*Photo By Lander at Slovenian Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=38742598>*



### ***The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas***

In 1995, EUROPARC<sup>42</sup> set up the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. The Charter is designed to be a practical management tool that enables Protected Areas to develop tourism sustainably.

Its underlying aims are to:

- increase awareness of, and support for, Europe's protected areas as a fundamental part of our heritage, that should be preserved for and enjoyed by current and future generations; and
- improve the sustainable development and management of tourism in protected areas, which takes account of the needs of the environment, local residents, local businesses and visitors.

The Charter recognises that protected-area authorities should not work alone in the management of tourism, but rather that all those affected by tourism in and around a protected area should be involved in its development and management. Therefore, the core element of the "Charter" is to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to develop a common sustainable tourism strategy and an action plan on the basis of a thorough situation analysis.

The aim of all Charter projects and activities is the protection of the natural and cultural heritage and the continuous improvement of tourism in the Protected Area in terms of the environment, local population and businesses as well as visitors.

Now, after over 20 years experience, the "Charter" has been shown to be a useful and important tool that delivers social, environmental and economic benefits and indeed can be described as a model of governance that delivers Protected Areas as sustainable tourism destinations.

More information on: <https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-tourism/>

### ***Sustainable tourism Serra da Estrela, Portugal, Centuries of strong interaction***



Together, man and nature have made the mountain area of Serra da Estrela in Central Portugal one of the richest areas of the Iberian peninsula in terms of biodiversity and cultural heritage. In the last fifteen years many local and regional entrepreneurs have developed successful strategies in sustainable tourism that combine local and regional strategies on biodiversity with the protection of cultural heritage and the production of high quality regional products. Many deserted farms have been restored and re-used for small-scale agro-tourism. So-called Green Tracks (Trilhos Verdes) help tourists to explore the exceptional qualities of the cultural and natural

landscape and the stories behind it. Regional farmers have revived local food production and have developed a chain of food products, sold in the cities of Portugal.

Source: *Getting European culture to work for Europe*, July 2015

<sup>42</sup> The EUROPARC Federation, is an independent, non-governmental organisation which aims to work with national parks across Europe in enhancing protection. It represents some 365 parks in 36 countries. <https://www.europarc.org>

### 3.4 DEALING WITH CONFLICTS BETWEEN NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

As this chapter has illustrated there are many similarities between natural and cultural heritage in terms of their benefits to society and the threats they face. Both types of heritage may be underfunded and all too often are wrongly perceived as an expensive luxury, rather than an essential component of a sustainable society.

But it has to be recognised that natural and cultural heritage can also sometimes be in direct conflict with one another. Cultural heritage features may, for instance, be damaged by certain species, such as bats roosting in churches or old buildings, or plants climbing over protected monuments. Cultural sites may also harbour rare and endangered species that cannot be removed or disturbed, and so hampering any initiatives for restoring or using the heritage features concerned.

By the same token some cultural practices can also be a significant threat to biodiversity. The illegal killing of songbirds in the Mediterranean, for instance, leads to the deaths of millions of birds every year through the use of prohibited methods such as lyme sticks, mist nets, poison etc... The birds are usually killed in the name of cultural traditions be it sport hunting, certain food products (eg thrush pie) or in order to keep them as caged birds.

The age old practice of turf cutting in northern countries has also had a significant impact on biodiversity. In Ireland, for instance, peat bogs were once a main source of fuel for many rural communities. But peatlands are also an important habitat in their own right and home to a high proportion of Ireland's wildlife. Although approximately 16% of the total land area of Ireland was originally covered by peatlands, their use has been so intensive that very little of the original peatland area is today in a natural state.<sup>43</sup>

When harnessing cultural and natural resources for tourism development, it is therefore necessary to follow a responsible and prudent approach to ensure long term sustainability. Reflective and reflexive processes enable one to assess carrying capacities, make necessary compromises, set priorities and agree on fair trade-offs. It is also indispensable to maintain a good dialogue between the different stakeholders and a willingness to cooperate and work together via an integrated management approach.

#### ***Sustainable Cultural Tourism – recommendations***

Every four years, EU Member States agree a Council Work Plan for Culture. The last Work Plan for Culture, 2015-2018, incorporated a mandate for a Sustainable Cultural Tourism Open Method of Coordination working group (SCT OMC). This group, comprising 23 Member States plus Iceland, met over an eighteen month period to draft recommendations for a report on sustainable cultural tourism, using case study examples, for policy makers and practitioners. The full report will be published during the first quarter of 2019.

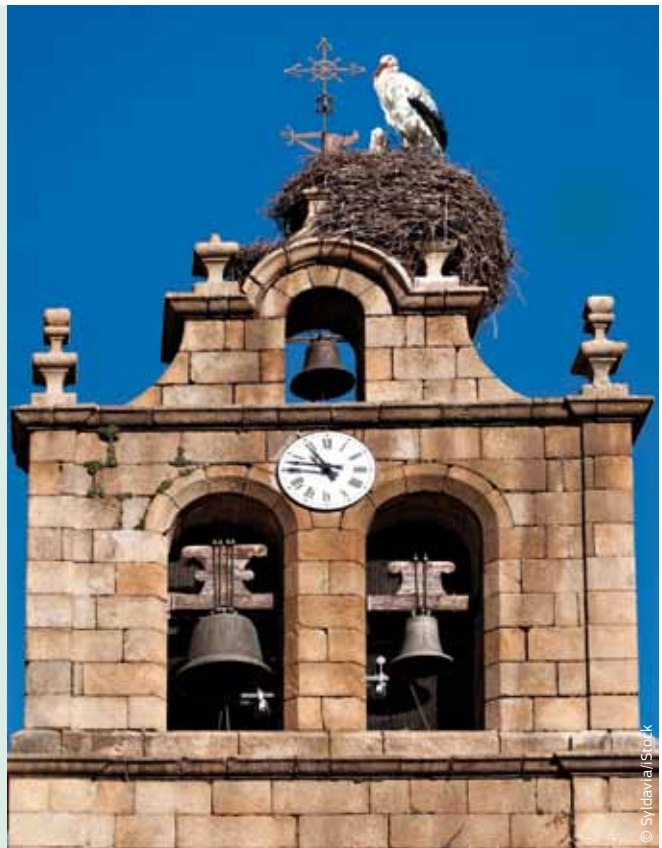
*The recommendations (and full report) are available [https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/toolkits/sustainable-cultural-tourism-recommendations\\_en](https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/toolkits/sustainable-cultural-tourism-recommendations_en)*

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.ipcc.ie/a-to-z-peatlands/peatland-action-plan/halting-the-loss-of-peatland-biodiversity/>

### ***Working together to solve conflicts between nature and culture***

Throughout Spain, it is a common sight to see storks nest on top of churches and other historical monuments. This adds to the character of the town or village and is generally well tolerated by locals for the simple reason that many people like to have storks nesting on their buildings.

However, it also creates a headache for restoration and repair works. Not only is the repair work often more expensive but precautions must also be taken to protect the nests and avoid disturbing the storks during their nesting period. Joint action and dialogues helps understand the needs of each and find solutions for restoration that can satisfy both nature and cultural interests.







## 4. CHALLENGES FACING THE MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Those involved in the protection and management of natural and cultural heritage face a range of, often complex, challenges. Some are unique to the type of heritage concerned. Others affect both, often in similar ways.

Much of this is undoubtedly linked to the fact that they are multifaceted concepts, involving complex interactions between humans and their environment, sometimes extending over significant areas. Moreover, heritage features are usually located in – or are closely associated with – areas that are used for a range of other land use activities, each with their own priorities and objectives, interests and legal requirements.

In order to be able to overcome these challenges and work together towards a shared objective, it is important to first identify what the common challenges are. The following are amongst the most regularly cited challenges facing both natural and cultural heritage in Europe. Subsequent chapters go on to discuss the benefits of more joined up approaches to financing nature and culture, and assess the opportunities to use EU funds to promote this integrated management approach.

### 4.1 LACK OF BASELINE INFORMATION AND UNDERSTANDING

There is a long-standing concern in Europe, as elsewhere, over the lack of available baseline data on heritage features. This problem is common to both nature and culture, and is perhaps even more significant for culture at EU level. Whilst much has been done already to inventory the most important features – for instance those that are protected or have some formal recognition, or are considered iconic – a lot of Europe's heritage lies outside high profile areas and remains largely unstudied.

This lack of baseline information can be a problem even for areas that are protected. And it is especially true of the more intangible forms of cultural heritage such as local folklores, arts and crafts, traditions, or for less familiar aspects of nature such as invertebrates, rare habitats or endemic plants, etc.

As chapter 2 illustrated, even when heritage features have been mapped, the information is not always easily accessible. This makes it virtually impossible for anyone not working directly on the subject to find out about, or even be aware, of what is 'out there' in terms of heritage. Of course, it is unrealistic to record and map *everything* that falls under the term natural or cultural heritage in Europe, and it may not be that useful in the end either, but if the baseline data is not readily available then there is little hope of this heritage being acknowledged, recognised and taken into account by other sectors, policies, funding programmes and stakeholders.

### ***Concerted action to collect information on Natura 2000 and ecosystems***

Collecting data on Europe's biodiversity is a necessarily complex exercise considering the huge number of plants, animals and ecosystems present, yet it is an essential prerequisite for any conservation work. Before the adoption of EU nature legislation, data collected by Member States was neither systematic nor comparable, and focused mainly on a few 'flagship' species, such as mammals or birds.

The Habitats and Birds Directives brought a new strategic focus to biodiversity conservation over the entire EU territory. Thanks to this concerted action, our collective knowledge on the distribution, threats and conservation status of a significant proportion of European species and habitats has increased substantially over the last 20 years. This has in turn led to better, more targeted and coordinated conservation action across the EU.

In order to determine which core areas to protect as part of the Natura 2000 network, many countries conducted nationwide surveys and gathered data on all the species and habitats listed in the Directives present in their territory. This mobilised hundreds of scientists and institutions and led to a vast amount of new data which could then be used not only to select the most appropriate core sites for the Natura 2000 network but also inform future conservation efforts. As a result, data now exists for each Natura 2000 site<sup>44</sup>. This data is now also readily accessible through a range of documents such as the Standard Data Forms accompanying each site, site management plans or species action plans.

Member States are also required under the two Directives to report back to the Commission on the conservation status of protected species and habitats every six years. This too has generated a wealth of new data and information on their status and trends, threats and pressures. It also enables the data to be aggregated at the EU level which is vital for determining the species or habitats overall health and for deciding future orientations and priorities.

On a wider scale the European Commission together with Member States has launched a major initiative – called MAES<sup>45</sup> – to map and assess all of Europe's ecosystems in terms of their state, trends and the multiple services they provide<sup>46</sup>.

### **EUROPEANA**

Europeana<sup>47</sup> is the European Commission's digital platform for cultural heritage. Through Europeana, citizens and the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) can access European culture for the widest possible variety of purposes. Europeana gives access to over 53 million items including image, text, sound, video and 3D material from the collections of over 3700 libraries, archives, museums, galleries and audio-visual collections across Europe. It is there to be used by teachers, artists, professionals in cultural institutions and creative fields, but is also there for everyone looking for information on culture.

Europeana Collections provides access to different books, music, artworks and more – with sophisticated search and filter tools. There are also dedicated thematic collections on art, fashion, music, photography, World War I, each contains galleries, blogs and exhibitions to inform and inspire.

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity/natura-2000>; [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/knowledge/index_en.htm); [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/data/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/data/index_en.htm)

<sup>45</sup> <https://biodiversity.europa.eu/maes>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.eea.europa.eu/themes/biodiversity>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.europeana.eu/portal/en>

## 4.2 LACK OF MANAGEMENT PLANNING OR APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS

Management plans help to identify the specific needs for each site on a case-by-case basis. Although very useful tools, they can however take a lot of time and resources to elaborate and many areas may not have the capacity and resources available to draft them, or the legal obligation to do so.

As a result, not all sites, be they for natural or cultural heritage, have management plans in place, even when they are designated under Natura 2000 or as WHS. According to the second WHS analysis report for Europe 2015<sup>48</sup>, the management systems in place are shown to be fully adequate for only about 60% of the properties, which means that 40% of properties do not have a fully adequate management plan or system in place.

There is sometimes also a lack of information, understanding or expertise for preparing management plans and identifying appropriate management measures. This tends to lead to the production of poorly defined management plans of little practical use.

The lack of a clear policy framework can also be a major handicap to site management. In the case of Natura 2000 and World Heritage sites for instance there is a clear legal mandate to manage and protect these sites because this is required under EU or international legislation, but this is not necessarily the case for many other heritage features that fall outside the scope of these international obligations (or any set at national or local level).

Yet, without a strong legal protection framework, adequate spatial data and well prepared management plans, it is unlikely that heritage attributes will be properly taken into account by policy makers and other land users, for the simple reason that there is neither an obligation, nor the data and information needed to be able to take these heritage features into account.

## 4.3 LACK OF INTEGRATION INTO SPATIAL PLANNING AND DECISION-MAKING

The lack of spatial recognition of existing natural and cultural heritage features can be a major constraint as it prevents such interests from making an active contribution to a more sustainable, equitable and greener economy. Unfortunately, natural and cultural heritage features are all too often overlooked in wider development activities because of a lack of available spatial data.

Sometimes, there is also a lack of political will or tradition within different public authorities to work together across sectors towards a more integrated territorial development objective. Some may only take natural and cultural heritage on board if they are obliged to (eg in the case of the EIA Directive), or if they are a legally binding component of decision-making processes, such as for the Natura 2000 network. Even for World Heritage sites, various analysis reports have highlighted the fact that there is a relative lack of integration of World Heritage policies into larger-scale, comprehensive planning programmes<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Periodic Report for Europe and Action Plan: Second cycle report May 201.

<sup>49</sup> World heritage in Europe report, 2016.

## 4.4 CONFLICTING LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Many sectors, including governmental bodies, across Europe have a tradition of ‘working in silos’. They have a tendency to develop their policies, priorities and legislative structures independently of each other, putting the documents out to consultation only during the last stages of their development cycle. More often than not, this turns into an exercise of damage limitation, focussing on ‘lose-lose’ scenarios rather than a search for synergies, and win-win solutions.

Being a multifaceted and complex issue, natural and cultural heritage management is often confronted by such governance problems and is undermined by a chronic lack of joined up thinking.

This is also often at the basis of why nature and cultural policies are so rarely integrated at either the policy or practical level. One may be the responsibility of the department for environment be it at local, regional or national level (but often a combination of all three), while the other falls under the responsibility of another department with similar vertical hierarchical structures. This can lead to deep rooted intractable problems that cannot be resolved simply by making political statements encouraging a more integrated approach between nature and culture.

The lack of coordination is also reflected in the management plans. Each plan is developed to respond to specific policy priorities and requirements. As a result, across Europe there are many sites for which there is a separate management plan for natural heritage and one for cultural heritage, if they exist at all.

This lack of integrated planning and governance also has serious repercussions for the actual management of the heritage assets. It can lead to a strong competition for resources and conflicts in management priorities. It can also be more expensive in the long run as similar or potentially complementary actions are implemented independently of each other. Had they been implemented jointly or in a more integrated fashion, they are likely to have cost less and reduced the risk of double work and redundancies.

## 4.5 LACK OF RESOURCES (HUMAN AND FINANCIAL)

Ultimately, the greatest challenge of all for both natural and cultural heritage is the chronic lack of resources – both human and financial – to study, plan and implement actions as well as promote their heritage values to a wider audience.

This has been noted time and again at the highest level. In 2015, the Commission carried out a fitness check of the EU Nature legislation<sup>50</sup>. It concluded that, within the framework of the broader EU biodiversity policy, the Nature Directives are indeed fit for purpose. But achieving their objectives and realising their full potential will depend on substantial improvement in their implementation, working in partnership with different stakeholder communities in the Member States and across the EU, to deliver practical results on the ground.

Key factors behind the shortcomings in implementation include first and foremost the lack of resources, both human and financial, but also weak enforcement, poor integration of nature objectives into other policy areas, insufficient knowledge and access to data, and poor communication and stakeholder involvement.

<sup>50</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness\\_check/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/fitness_check/index_en.htm)



As regards WHS, feedback from the 2nd Periodic reporting review for Europe showed that enforcement difficulties are considered a major issue due to financial restrictions or a lack of human resources. Only 25% of properties regard their current budget as sufficient, even if more than half consider it as acceptable. However, a further 15% of properties state that their budget is either inadequate or that they have no budget at all. None of the mixed properties consider their budget to be sufficient.

For all WHS properties, the majority of their funding comes from government (federal and regional), in varying proportions. National or federal governments provide the largest amount (on average 35%), followed by the regional (20%) and then local authorities (15%). Local and municipal funding in cultural properties is almost as high as funding from regional or provincial levels. Commercial operator payments for such things as trading or catering concessions or filming permits make up little more than 1% of the total income'.

## **4.6 LACK OF SKILLS AND CONSERVATION KNOWLEDGE**

Another common problem facing natural and cultural heritage in Europe, and elsewhere, is the lack of skills and conservation knowledge needed to protect and manage them. Managing a complex area such as a World Heritage site or large Natura 2000 site requires a wide range of skills, some of which may be very specific to the site in question.

Such skills may not be available amongst those responsible for the management or protection of the site. Even where there is a site manager or dedicated management body in charge, often not all skills are available in house, especially where human resources are insufficient.

The skills required may also be closely associated with local traditions and customs. The challenge is to find ways to capture and maintain that local knowledge so that it continues to contribute to the maintenance of the heritage. The same can be said for local skills such as stone masonry, thatching, coppicing, the effects of which are reflected everywhere in the cultural heritage but are very difficult to reproduce without local knowledge.

Finally, there can also be a lack of conservation knowledge in knowing how to maintain or restore certain types of heritage under certain conditions. What might have worked in one place may not work in another for various reasons. This requires additional study in order to understand sufficiently how to conserve certain types of heritage.

## **4.7 LACK OF AWARENESS / INTEREST / BUY IN**

Finally, but by no means least, the involvement and awareness of civil society in heritage conservation is of paramount importance. Experience has shown time and again that people rarely show an interest in protecting something that they know little or nothing about. It is essential therefore that stakeholders and interest groups are made aware of the challenges facing Europe's rich heritage as well as their tremendous value, and are encouraged to get involved in decisions regarding their management and protection. It is a shared heritage but also a shared responsibility in which everyone has a role to play and can contribute.



# 5. EU SUPPORT AND FUNDING – LEADING THE WAY THROUGH DEMONSTRATION AND GOOD PRACTICE

## 5.1 FINANCING JOINT NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE INITIATIVES WITH THE HELP OF EU FUNDS

This report has demonstrated that substantial overlaps exist between natural and cultural heritage sites across the EU. It has also highlighted the wide range of challenges that they have in common. It is clear, from this, that the chronic shortage of financial resources is seen as one of the biggest constraints for the conservation and management of both cultural and natural heritage across Europe.

This is further exacerbated by the lack of co-ordination or integration between approaches to managing natural and cultural heritage, resulting in competition for scarce resources, duplication of effort and missed opportunities to achieve synergies and implement actions that yield multiple benefits.

A more joined-up approach to financing natural and cultural heritage, on the other hand, can yield a range of potential benefits, as well as help to meet common objectives. Where the two overlap, there is potential to finance joint actions such as developing and implementing management plans, planning and undertaking restoration work, providing visitor infrastructure, promoting and managing tourism, education and awareness raising, enhancing regional identity and promoting economic development. A joined up approach can also help make the most of available financial resources, while ensuring that potential conflicts (for example relating to tourism and development) are effectively managed.

As the compendium of case studies on linking Natura 2000 and cultural heritage<sup>51</sup> demonstrated, many joint initiatives need a helping hand to get started. Various EU funding streams – be it under LIFE, Creative Europe, INTERREG or the other larger EU funds – can be, and indeed have been, used with success to promote joint natural and cultural heritage initiatives across the EU. Such funds have been especially important for supporting projects that combine both types of heritage as part of a drive for local sustainable development.

Thanks to these initiatives, there is now a wealth of examples of successful joint initiatives for natural and cultural heritage, funded by the EU, that can be used as a valuable source of inspiration, ideas and good practice experiences to encourage further joint initiatives to launch themselves. This chapter summarises the key sources of EU funding available and provides further examples of joint natural and cultural heritage projects that have been funded under each.

<sup>51</sup> Linking Natura 2000 and cultural heritage: case studies , N2K Group for DG Environment, 2017.

## 5.2 EU FINANCING OPPORTUNITIES

A range of EU funds can potentially be used to deliver objectives for nature and cultural heritage. However, the funding landscape varies between them, reflecting the differences in EU policy responsibilities in the two fields.

Biodiversity protection has been an important EU policy objective since the Nature Directives came into force, establishing the Natura 2000 network and committing the EU (through Article 8 of the Habitats Directive) to co-finance the management and protection of Natura 2000 sites. The EU has adopted an integrated approach to financing biodiversity actions, which means that the financial needs for Natura 2000 and biodiversity must be met through a range of EU funds, as well as through Member State, private and voluntary sector sources<sup>52</sup>.

To help in this process, the Commission has published a series of handbooks on Natura 2000 financing<sup>53</sup>, and developed a template for Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) to help Member States identify their Natura 2000 funding needs and priorities and to better target different sources of EU.

As a result, there is a well-developed funding infrastructure for nature and biodiversity at EU level, and funding needs and opportunities are relatively well understood, even though a substantial funding gap remains.

### ***Prioritised Action Frameworks***

Prioritised Action Frameworks (PAFs) are strategic multiannual planning tools, aimed at identifying Natura 2000 conservation priorities and management measures as well as their related costs and potential financing sources, matching the former with the latter. PAFs are therefore useful to identify funding opportunities under all relevant EU funds, and to ensure better use of these opportunities during the preparation of the various operational Programmes under each of the funds.

By comparison, the EU Member States have exclusive competence on cultural policy, while the Union's role is to encourage cooperation and support and supplement Member States' actions. As a result, cultural heritage generally tends to receive less emphasis under EU funds, and less information is available regarding funding needs and opportunities.

Nevertheless, the new European Agenda for Culture in 2018 recognises the importance of Europe's cultural heritage in contributing to a range of economic and social objectives, and calls for efforts to be stepped up to protect, manage and promote the cultural heritage through a range of EU funds<sup>54</sup>. In 2017 the EC also adopted an updated report mapping Cultural Heritage actions in European Union policies, programmes and activities<sup>55</sup> which outlines the range of different EU funds available for cultural heritage.

<sup>52</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm)

<sup>53</sup> Kettunen, M., Torkler, P. and Rayment, M. (2014) Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook. Part I – EU funding opportunities in 2014–2020, a publication commissioned by the European Commission DG Environment (June 2014).

<sup>54</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-1522768\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/initiatives/ares-2018-1522768_en)

<sup>55</sup> European Commission (2017) Mapping of Cultural Heritage actions in European Union policies, programmes and activities. Latest update: August 2017.



### 5.2.1 EU Nature Funding

No previous analysis is available of opportunities for joint financing of nature and cultural heritage. However, detailed guidance on opportunities for financing Natura 2000 is contained in the Financing Natura 2000 Guidance Handbook<sup>56</sup>, and this gives some pointers regarding potential opportunities for joint financing of nature and cultural heritage.

The Handbook identifies the following funds as providing the most significant opportunities for financing Natura 2000, and details the relevant articles in the funds' legislation which enable this:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- Cohesion Fund (CF);
- Programme for Environment and Climate Action (LIFE); and
- Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

The Handbook also identifies EU funds which make specific mention of opportunities to fund both nature and cultural heritage. For example:

- The European Structural and Investment Funds identify 11 thematic objectives for the 2014–20 period. Thematic objective 6: Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (including through investment in Natura 2000) and Thematic objective 9: Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination both provide opportunities for investments in natural and cultural heritage in rural areas.
- In line with these themes, one of the priorities of the ERDF is preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency, including through investment in the natural and cultural heritage, protecting and restoring biodiversity and soil and promoting ecosystem services, including through Natura 2000 and green infrastructure (Article 5 of ERDF Regulation).
- EAFRD, Article 20 (1)(f) allows the opportunity to fund studies and investments associated with maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage, rural landscapes and high nature value sites.

More broadly, the Handbook examines the opportunities that different EU funds offer to finance 25 types of measures for Natura 2000 sites. Most of these measures and the EU funding opportunities associated with them offer potential to meet joint objectives for nature and the cultural heritage, particularly in areas where nature and cultural heritage designations overlap.



<sup>56</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/index_en.htm)

### The EU LIFE Fund

LIFE is a comparatively small EU financing programme. It accounts for less than 1% of the EU budget for 2014–2020. Yet LIFE makes a big contribution to conserving Europe's natural heritage. It has supported more than 1700 nature and biodiversity projects since 1992. The €2 billion invested in these projects has done much to implement EU biodiversity policy, in particular the nature directives (the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive).



The programme has also had a crucial part to play in bringing the Natura 2000 network of protected areas into being. Of the 27500 individual Natura 2000 sites, more than 5300 have at least once been targeted by LIFE project actions. LIFE has implemented many successful conservation measures for the habitats and species listed in the nature directives. It has achieved this by putting different stakeholders together to manage the Natura 2000 sites, improve conservation knowhow, and raise awareness by actively involving citizens, and local and regional authorities. LIFE is also a catalyst for the integration of other larger and longer term EU funding sources.

<https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/life>

### 5.2.2 EU Cultural Heritage Funding

Sources of EU funding for cultural heritage are identified in the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 web pages<sup>57</sup> and an EC report mapping Cultural Heritage actions in European Union policies, programmes and activities<sup>58</sup>. The latter report examines the relevance for the cultural heritage of a range of different EU policies and programmes. However, while the short section on the environment mentions the LIFE programme and Natura 2000 network, no specific analysis is made of joint funding opportunities for nature and the culture heritage.



The EC report mapping Cultural Heritage actions in European Union policies, programmes and activities identifies very similar sources of EU funding for the cultural heritage as for Natura 2000:

- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);
- Cohesion Fund (CF);
- Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

In addition there are the following other funds or initiatives for cultural heritage:

- Creative Europe
- European Research Infrastructures funded by DG RTD which includes a European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science (ERIHS)<sup>59</sup>.
- The Joint Programming Initiative in Cultural Heritage & Global Change (JPI CH)
- Erasmus+
- COSME

<sup>57</sup> <http://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/about>

<sup>58</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/2014-heritage-mapping\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/2014-heritage-mapping_en.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.e-rihs.eu/>

As they do for Natura 2000, the European Structural and Investment Funds represent a potentially substantial source of funding for projects linking nature and cultural heritage:

- The ERDF allocated €3.2 billion for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in the 2007/13 period, €2.2 billion for the development of cultural infrastructure and €553 million for cultural services, which also benefited cultural heritage. The current ERDF regulation mentions specifically the protection, promotion and development of cultural heritage among its investment priorities under the objective "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency", as well as offering funding opportunities under other thematic objectives.
- ESF mentions cultural and creative skills as being relevant to furthering the fund's objectives;
- EAFRD continues to support restoration, maintenance, and upgrading of cultural and natural heritage of villages, rural landscapes and high nature value sites, and is complemented by the EADER programme which funds actions for community-led local development.
- EMFF allocates €5.7 billion for community-led local development projects that promote cultural heritage (including maritime cultural heritage) in fisheries areas. EMFF is also allocating €647 million of directly managed funding in the current programme period. This includes funding for the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet), a European Commission (DG MARE) initiative as part of its Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy. Among other things, this will provide better information on the location and nature of underwater cultural heritage sites. A multi-resolution seabed map of European seas is being produced, with the aim of promoting tourism and raising awareness of site conservation needs. Thematic underwater cultural heritage routes are being developed, as well as Nautical Routes promoting links with tourism and cultural heritage.

### 5.3 EXAMPLES OF EU FINANCING OF NATURA 2000 AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

There is a wealth of examples of EU funded projects that have mutually benefited the conservation of Natura 2000 sites and the cultural heritage. The following sections give a short selection of examples under the different funds. Further examples are given in the 2017 compendium of case studies linking natural and cultural heritage<sup>60</sup>.

#### 5.3.1 LIFE

The EU LIFE programme has funded numerous projects benefiting both Natura 2000 and cultural heritage, including areas with both nature and heritage designations. Projects have included restoration of habitats and landscapes of natural and cultural importance, management plans for Natura 2000 and cultural heritage sites, conservation of culturally important species, and initiatives to manage the impact of tourism on nature and cultural heritage.

<sup>60</sup> Linking Natura 2000 and cultural heritage: case studies , N2K Group for DG Environment, 2017.

### ***Elbauen bei Vockerode – restoring an important riverine landscape***

This LIFE project aims to achieve favourable conservation status of the unique riverine landscape on the middle Elbe and to safeguard the long term future of the site. It will reduce flood risk and improve water quality by restoring the natural floodplain of the area, as well as improving visitor access to the site in the biosphere reserve Mittelbe between Dessau and Vockerode in Saxony-Anhalt.

This biosphere reserve is an integral part of the unique World Heritage “Garden Kingdom Dessau-Wörlitz”. The WHS is recognised as an exceptional example of landscape design and planning of the Age of the Enlightenment, the 18th century, comprising outstanding buildings, English-style landscaped parks and gardens, and subtly modified expanses of agricultural land. The site also forms part of the Mittlere Elbe einschließlich Steckby-Lödderitzer Forst SPA, and the Dessau-Wörlitzer Elbauen SCI.

In August 2002 a major flood incident caused direct damage to the site, as well as indirectly damaging it through a toxic wastewater incident, which polluted the site's lakes and canals and triggered reactive UNESCO State of Conservation reports in 2003 and 2004<sup>61</sup>. After another critical flood incident in 2013, the NGO WWF brought together the regional authority responsible for water management and the management authority of the biosphere reserve to develop the joint project<sup>62</sup>. The total project, running from 2010 to 2018, has a budget of EUR 2.2 million of which EU funding amounts to EUR 1.1 million<sup>63</sup>.



© Patricia Alberti/UNESCO

### ***Restoring Mount Athos special relationship with nature***

The Holy Mount Athos is situated on the Athos peninsula in Northern Greece. It is home not only to spectacular, continuous forests of oak trees but also to 20 Eastern Orthodox monasteries. The monks living here have a very special relationship to their natural surroundings. The spiritual value of nature, which they believe is a direct expression of God, is entrenched in their monastic rules that were established as far back as the year 963 AD.

In 2003 the Holy Community embarked on a LIFE project<sup>64</sup> to manage 500 ha of Hungarian oak (*Quercus frainetto*) and holm oak (*Quercus ilex*) woodland in a more sustainable manner. The project transformed the forest from a coppiced woodland to a high forest through selective thinning activities on 45 pilot plots. Monks and local foresters took part in training so that they could continue this work.

The restoration improved the structure of the forest, enhanced biodiversity, reduced the risk of fire and restored the landscape. It also helped to restore the image of the peninsula's once flourishing virgin forests, creating a landscape worthy of the spiritual and cultural importance of Mount Athos and its monasteries. The project also succeeded in uniting the 20 independent monasteries, who have since agreed to expand the area of forest within the Natura 2000 site and are in the process of setting up a single Natura 2000 management body for the protected area.

61 World Heritage Centre (2013) State of Conservation report Garden Kingdom of Dessau-Wörlitz (Germany), <https://whc.unesco.org/en/soc/2758>

62 WWF Germany press release of 02 July 2017, A natural paradise in the heart of Germany, <https://www.wwf.de/themen-projekte/projektregionen/elbe/elbauen-vockerode/>

63 European Commission LIFE project page Elbauen bei Vockerode – Improvement and Long-Term Safeguarding of the Natura 2000 Site “Dessau-Wörlitz Elbe Floodplain” LIFE08 NAT/D/000013, [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n\\_proj\\_id=3519](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=3519)

64 [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n\\_proj\\_id=2506](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=2506)



### ***Burren Tourism – Burren Tourism for Conservation***

The Burren area of the Republic of Ireland is an internationally renowned karst limestone area that supports a rich and diverse range of flora and fauna, archaeological monuments and traditional cultural practices. The pressures of tourism (congestion and the use of resources) on the area, however, are considerable. Its seasonal nature presents a particular challenge: 90% of tourism occurs in just three summer months. This concentration of tourists has serious implications for the environmental carrying capacity of the Burren.



The 'Burren Tourism for Conservation' project aimed to strengthen the integration of tourism and natural heritage, and to reconcile tourism development with conservation of biodiversity and cultural assets. The project supported actions to strengthen the integration of tourism and conservation, to increase the capabilities of 100 companies in tourism conservation; and to improve the status of four monuments and three natural sites. Running between 2012 and 2017, it had a budget of EUR 2.2 million, of which EUR 1.1 million was funded by the EU<sup>65</sup>.

### **5.3.2 ERDF and INTERREG**

The ERDF has funded a number of projects to restore and enhance natural and cultural assets, particularly in less developed regions of the EU, and to use these to promote tourism and economic development.

#### ***ERDF Funding in Hungary – Increasing Nature and Heritage Tourism***

Priority Axis 6 of the Economic Development and Innovation Operational Programme for Hungary focuses on tourism, aiming to increase tourism-related spending on cultural and natural heritage sites, and involves ERDF funding totalling EUR 508 million over the 2014–2020 period. It aims to increase spending by international and national tourists by 10%, and to increase the number of visitors to cultural and natural heritage sites to 689,000 by 2018 and to 2.35 million by 2023.

Measures to be funded will include development of networks of cultural and natural heritage sites of national or international importance (e.g. thematic routes); support for attractions of international significance (e.g. world heritage sites, castles, religious sites); interpretation of natural values as tourism attractions (national parks, Geoparks, world heritage sites); and promotion of health tourism sites<sup>66</sup>.

Neighbouring countries in the EU often share aspects of their natural and cultural heritage. INTERREG, funded through the ERDF, is one of the key EU instruments supporting cooperation across borders. It has funded a wide range of cross-border projects aimed at the conservation and sustainable promotion of nature and cultural heritage. This includes numerous eco-tourism initiatives.

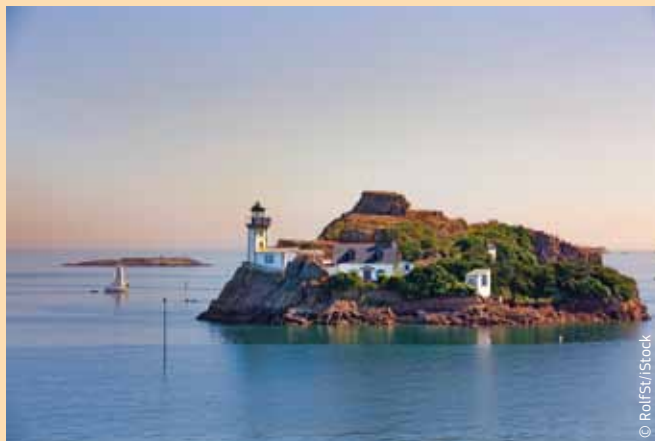
<sup>65</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n\\_proj\\_id=4379](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/life/project/Projects/index.cfm?fuseaction=search.dspPage&n_proj_id=4379)

<sup>66</sup> [https://www.minzp.sk/files/sekcia-ochranyprirodyakrajiny/medzinarodne-dohovory-spolupraca/hu-sk/schmidt\\_hungarian-way-n2k-implementation-sk-hu\\_mo.pdf](https://www.minzp.sk/files/sekcia-ochranyprirodyakrajiny/medzinarodne-dohovory-spolupraca/hu-sk/schmidt_hungarian-way-n2k-implementation-sk-hu_mo.pdf)

### ***Bio-Cultural Heritage Tourism in the UK and France<sup>67</sup>***

Led by Devon County Council, UK, the project named BCHT (Bio-Cultural Heritage Tourism) will develop a new sustainable model of tourism that will aim to reduce the negative impact of high tourist numbers on the local environment and quality of life of people living near tourist hotspots.

The project, which runs between 2018 and 2021, will work with four Unesco Biosphere Reserves in France and the UK including the Marais Audomarois, the Iles et Mer d'Iroise, the Brighton and Lewes Downs and North Devon, which include a number of Natura 2000 sites. These areas are seen as being particularly vulnerable to the pressure of high visitor numbers. BCHT will monitor tourist numbers and visitor flows, and identify opportunities to encourage visitors away from over-visited attractions to areas within the reserve that have capacity for new visitors.



BCHT will also look at how the concept of “bio-cultural heritage” can be applied to biosphere reserves, working with local tourism businesses to create a range of products and activities based on this concept. These activities will be assessed to measure how much they ease pressure on other tourist hotspots. The total project budget is EUR 4.3 million of which EUR 3.0 million is EU-funded through the ERDF.

### ***Project – 3 castles 2 countries 1 story – Development of the cultural tourism in cross-border rural areas<sup>68</sup>***

The project area is a provincial border region of South Burgenland (Austria) and Pomurje (Slovenia), characterised by sustainable tourism. Both regions are part of a cross-border nature reserve area and belong to the Goričko-Raab-Őrség, 3-eu Park. Due to a weak inclusion of cultural heritage in touristic offers in this region as well as poor familiarity of potential partners on both sides of the border, the long common history has not been highlighted for touristic purposes in the past.

The overall objective of the project is to create a sustainable cultural-touristic destination, based on developing the message of cultural heritage and introduce the cultural-touristic products. These products, shaped together by experts from touristic enterprises, will contribute to an improved offer in the weakly visited periods of low-peak seasons. They will attract new target visitor groups and assist in lengthening their stay in the region.



Once connected, it is possible with joint efforts to make the region competitive as a cultural-touristic destination. Main target groups are visitors of all ages, interested in culture, tradition and history, constantly linked with experiencing the unspoiled natural environment.

<sup>67</sup> <https://www.channelmanche.com/en/projects/approved-projects/bio-cultural-heritage-tourism/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.keep.eu/project/18283/3-castles-2-countries-1-story-development-of-the-cultural-tourism-in-cross-border-rural-areas-unofficial-translation-provided-by-interact>

### ***Sustainable management and tourist promotion of natural and archaeological heritage in the Adriatic Caves***

As well as providing habitats for wildlife, caves form an important part of Europe's cultural heritage, through their long history of human interactions. They can also be important destinations for tourists. The Adriatic Caves project aimed to conserve the natural and archaeological heritage in caves of the ADRION area, and to promote it as an all-year tourism product in an area where tourism is highly seasonal.

The project aims to promote ecotourism by establishing and promoting a network of caves in the ADRION, while also funding conservation of karst areas designated under the Habitats Directive, many of which are threatened by climate change and illegal dumping. It provided funding for training, transfer of best practice, development of a cross-border sustainable tourism platform, and marketing of the unique natural and cultural potential that can be visited throughout the year.

The project also aims to manage tourism in order to avoid conflicts with protected habitats and species. This will include creation of Charter of Caves, an international agreement to be signed by cave operators, to ensure sustainable tourism in visitable caves, protect the natural and historical heritage and promote visits of high educational and cultural value. It will also fund an international Action Plan for cave habitats. The project has partners in Italy, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Albania. It runs between 2018 and 2019 with a budget of EUR 1.3 million and EU funding of EUR 1.1 million<sup>69</sup>.



<sup>69</sup> <https://www.keep.eu/keep/project-ext/44657/Adriaticcaves?ss=da26057f05f856aa11c54dbc00fb7021&espon=>

### 5.3.4 EMFF

EMFF-funded projects recognise the important cultural and ecological role of the fisheries sector, the cultural importance of seafood and its dependence on sustainable management of marine ecosystems, the interdependencies between marine cultural heritage and nature sites, and their joint role in supporting eco-tourism and recreation.

#### ***The Wildsea Atlantic Ocean Heritage Route – A dive into adventure***

Diving is a form of ecotourism based on a unique combination of marine nature and the maritime cultural heritage. The “WAOH Route: A Dive into Adventure” project aims to develop the first European, Sustainable Diving Route and network connecting world-class diving sites from Portugal and Spain in the south to Ireland and the UK in the north.

The Route will promote Europe’s 5000 km of Atlantic, nautical coastline as a unique, transnational tourism itinerary and destination for divers and eco-tourists alike. The WAOH Route will consist of world-class “flagship” diving sites and destinations that will raise awareness of Europe’s Atlantic marine landscapes, wildlife habitats and cultural heritage (including archaeology, museums and gastronomy). It also aims to enhance synergies between watersports (diving, snorkelling and kayaking) and marine eco-tourism (including whale watching).



The project does not focus specifically on Natura 2000, but the Route encompasses numerous marine Natura 2000 sites. The funds are being spent on actions to: raise awareness of diving opportunities linked to nature and marine heritage; develop new tourism products; develop a 3-year Strategy & Marketing Plan; build capacity amongst key destination management organisations and tourism SMEs; deliver criteria, guidelines and tools to foster, monitor and manage sustainable tourism; and enhance “Ocean literacy” and skills to apply best environmental practice in diving, snorkelling, kayaking and whale watching activities. The project runs between 2018 and 2019 and has a budget of EUR 375,000, of which EUR 300,000 is funded by the EMFF<sup>70</sup>.

### 5.3.5 EAFRD

EAFRD provides substantial levels of support for both Natura 2000 and the cultural heritage. Most Natura 2000 sites supported by EAFRD have been influenced by human management, and therefore have a cultural dimension. Agri-environment programmes play an important role in managing cultural landscapes, many of which lie within Natura 2000 areas as well as having heritage designations. Rural development plans often harness cultural and natural assets in order to promote tourism and enhance local branding and marketing.

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.wildsea.eu/blog-en/waoh.html> and <https://ec.europa.eu/easme/en/wildsea-atlantic-ocean-heritage-route-dive-adventure>



### ***Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy in the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site, Finland***

As part of the EAFRD co-funded project called the Development of Nature Tourism within the Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site, the Finnish state forestry service (Metsähallitus) developed a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for the archipelago in 2011. On the back of the site's designation as World Heritage Site in 2006, the strategy aims to develop the Kvarken Archipelago as a sustainable tourism destination so that the site's natural and cultural values are retained and the host community's social fabric does not suffer. These natural values include two Natura 2000 sites (SPA and SAC), whose conservation requirements are a central part of the strategy. The strategy also establishes plans to monitor the economic, socio-cultural and ecological effects of tourism in order to ensure its future sustainability<sup>71</sup>.

### ***Agri-environment scheme for High Nature Value Grasslands, Romania***

There are about 3.8 million farm holdings in Romania, of which 68% are under one hectare. Since joining the EU many of these smaller semi-subsistence farms have been struggling to survive, and rural depopulation has become a major problem, taking with it an important part of the country's cultural traditions and practices.

Under the EU Rural Development Programme (RDP), Romania has introduced a specific agri-environment scheme for High Nature Value grasslands. The measures involve obligatory annual mowing after 1 July, or grazing, limited stocking rates, no artificial fertilisers and regular scrub clearance. Of the 2.5 million hectares eligible for HNV grassland payments in Romania, a significant proportion (around half) has been included in this agri-environment scheme to date, involving some 230,000 farmers.

Its success is largely due to the simple design of the scheme, the appropriate payment levels and the good working relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture and the conservation NGOs who are helping to implement the scheme. The latter provide much needed local support and advice to local farmers<sup>72</sup>.

### ***Eco-tourism and environmental education in Thessaloniki, Greece***

This LEADER project, led by the Hellenic Ornithological Society, provided funding for an environmental information programme aimed at raising awareness among local people about the biodiversity and cultural heritage in their areas and facilitating the use of environmental assets as drivers for new eco-tourism opportunities. The LAG territory, in northern Thessaloniki, contains areas of unspoilt countryside and is rich in biodiversity. Costs covered by the project include: new information and viewing points in fields and meadows; organising and running a publicity campaign to waymark and promote the new route; producing a website and series of informative guides for children about the wildlife which can be seen in their local area. The project budget was EUR 32,000, of which EUR 25,000 was funded by EAFRD.

71 Metsähallitus (2011) Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site, <https://julkaisut.metsa.fi/as-sets/pdf/lp/Csarja/c109.pdf>

72 Farming for Natura 2000 <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/FARMING%20FOR%20NATURA%202000-final%20guidance.pdf>

## 5.4 CONCLUSIONS ON EU FINANCE FOR NATURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The analysis in this section highlights the wide range of opportunities available in terms of EU funding to deliver objectives for both Natura 2000 and cultural heritage, and confirms that a range of funds are being used successfully for this purpose.

Many EU-funded projects have also taken advantage of the fact that there are widespread overlaps between Natura 2000 and cultural heritage sites, and that, in combination, they form substantial economic and social assets with the potential to further regional development. Many projects seek to use these assets to promote tourism and local branding and identity. Many projects also recognise – and seek to manage – the risks that tourism, recreation and related development pose to habitats, species, landscapes and cultural assets.

Dedicated EU-funding for the cultural heritage is limited, as it is for nature and biodiversity. It is likely, therefore, that the most promising opportunities will occur through a joined-up approach to addressing Natura 2000 and cultural heritage objectives through the larger EU funds (ERDF, EAFRD and Horizon 2020).

# 6. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MORE INTEGRATED APPROACH TO NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT

## 6.1 JOINING FORCES – A POTENTIAL WIN-WIN

In recent years, there has been increasing recognition of the value of Europe's natural and cultural heritage, not just for their own intrinsic worth, but also for the important role they can play in modern-day society and in building a more sustainable, equitable and greener economy.

As chapter 2 of this report has shown natural and cultural heritage features in Europe overlap to a significant degree – almost half (ca 170 sites) of all World Heritage Sites in the EU are located in, or are situated less than 2 km from, a Natura 2000 site. They also face similar challenges and threats yet, together, bring a wealth of important but as yet largely unrecognised socio-economic benefits to society.

Considering the wealth of similarities and common challenges, there is considerable merit in encouraging a greater cooperation and partnership between natural and cultural heritage practitioners and policy makers, at both EU and local level, and particularly in connection with the Natura 2000 network. This has been recognised at the highest political level but has yet to be translated into common practice on the ground.

In order to succeed, it is clear that this joining of forces has to be initiated at all levels: from the very practical level – through, for instance, the launch of joint initiatives and projects, as well as awareness raising and information sharing; to the policy level – through the adoption of a more integrated and holistic approach to heritage management, the breaking down of silo mentalities and reduced competition for limited resources.

Such a joint approach will not only help better secure the future existence of Europe's rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage but will also help to anchor both objectives more firmly into a wider sustainable development agenda.

As chapter 4 illustrated, natural and cultural heritage managers are confronted with a number of common, and often complex, challenges. Many of these challenges are linked to the fact that heritage is multifaceted, involving complicated interactions between humans and their environment, sometimes over large geographical areas. Moreover, heritage features are usually located in – or are closely associated with – areas that are used for a range of other land use activities, each with their own priorities and objectives, interests and legal requirements.

There is however no 'one-size-fits-all' recipe for forging joint approaches to managing and conserving Europe's natural and cultural heritage. Much will depend on the local conditions and dynamics of the area in question and of the type of actors present.

Nevertheless, a number of recommendations are listed below based on the analysis undertaken for this report to encourage new joint ventures between natural and cultural heritage. The potential is there, now the time has come to capitalise on these opportunities for the sake of Europe's rich heritage and of Europeans everywhere:

### **a) Fostering greater dialogue, stakeholder involvement and awareness-raising**

One of the key findings of this report is that very often those in charge of cultural heritage in an area, be they site managers, NGOs or government bodies, are simply unaware that there are also a number of natural heritage attributes in the area. The same is true for those in charge of nature. And even when they are aware, they do not necessarily consider it relevant for their day-to-day operations or see the potential benefits of joining forces.

The same can be said for local inhabitants and users, many of whom may not even know that there are important natural or cultural heritage features present in their region. Even with high profile designations such as World Heritage status or Natura 2000, the local level of awareness can be surprisingly poor. And, once again, even when it is known, it is often considered irrelevant to their lives and livelihoods, and something for heritage specialists or nature conservationists only.

Therefore an important starting point for encouraging greater cooperation and partnerships between natural and cultural heritage is the provision of easily accessible information on the heritage features present. This needs to be further supported by awareness raising events and activities that help better understand the challenges Europe's heritage is facing and how its conservation can be relevant, and possibly also beneficial, to different sectors.

Face to face meetings and correspondence between those involved in nature and culture respectively are also especially important and useful for creating a better understanding of each other's activities and developing a common language.

Numerous examples in both the nature and cultural heritage fields testify to the significant benefits of adopting a participatory approach to management and protection. It is often the only way to ensure that these valuable assets are fully recognised and made to contribute actively to a more sustainable, holistic and equitable economy.

### **b) Improving the baseline data**

As Chapter 2 illustrated, there is a shortfall in readily available information on natural and especially on cultural heritage features, both in terms of spatial data and as regards their interest, threats, state of conservation etc. Whilst an EU database exists for all Natura 2000 sites, there does not appear to be a similar repository of information for cultural heritage features at the EU level, even if at the local or even national level the data is more forthcoming.

Yet, in order to be able to manage and protect an individual site, or indeed a range of sites within a particular geographical region, it is important to have a good knowledge and understanding of the heritage feature(s) itself and of its values. What state is it in? What are its key pressures and threats? What other land uses are present and in how much are they compatible/ incompatible with the heritage feature? Who are the main stakeholders involved? What needs to be done to conserve or restore it, or to manage and use it in a sustainable way?



Gathering such information is an essential prerequisite to deciding the most appropriate measures that should be taken to manage heritage attributes in close consultation with local stakeholders, even if it does require a significant investment in time and resources. The need for such investments should not be overlooked when planning new initiatives or when putting together applications for funding. Information gathering is however not an end result in itself, it must be able to inform the subsequent management processes.

### **c) Developing integrated management plans and bodies**

For those natural or cultural heritage features that are linked to a specific site, especially one that is large, complex and/or protected, it has become good practice to develop a management plan in order to set out the management objectives and identify the measures that need to be implemented to protect, maintain and, if necessary and appropriate, restore and promote the heritage features of the site.

But, often these management plans are drawn up for a specific purpose in mind be it to conserve certain endangered species and habitats or to help design a visitor management strategy for a popular tourism destination. It is much rarer to find a truly 'integrated' management plan that addresses both nature and cultural heritage objectives within a particular site or region.

Yet such integrated plans have a number of major advantages: they help to analyse and assess the common pressures and challenges that both types of heritage are facing. After all, as chapter 3 illustrated, the two face many similar pressures. This in turn can lead to the identification of areas of management where joint up action or common measures would be appropriate and mutually beneficial.

It can also help resolve any potential conflicts that can arise as regards their differing management needs and priorities, thereby paving the way for finding equitable jointly agreed solutions and acceptable compromises in close consultation with all parties involved. All of this will help to ensure a more efficient and effective use of limited resources and create potentially significant cost savings.

The advantages of developing integrated management plans and management systems do not end there. They are also vital for finding new opportunities for promoting and enhancing the value of heritage in a wider sustainable development framework. Individually the two may have little chance of breaking into new markets or drawing important inward investments to the region, but, together, their chances are significantly greater.

Joining forces can also substantially increase their chances of obtaining funding for the management of the features, for instance through the various EU funding sources identified in chapter 5. In this respect, it is useful to recall that Natura 2000 sites have the 'advantage' of being framed by a strong EU wide legal protection regime. This can be put to good use in developing a more integrated management planning approach for a particular site or region, and for obtaining funding for its protection, management and promotion.

A few examples exist where there has been a deliberate attempt, often supported by EU funding, to create an integrated strategy covering different land uses in the area concerned as well as other key societal and environmental issues. This integrated approach is especially important where there is a complex land ownership pattern (eg where the land is not publically owned and/or where it is used for other economic activities, such as agriculture or forestry or water management.)

In such cases, it is not only the different government authorities that are forced into dialogue with each other and work together, but all other land users and owners also need to be involved in deciding on future management priorities and options for the area.

### ***Management requirements for Natura 2000 sites***

In all Natura 2000 sites:

- damaging activities must be avoided that could significantly disturb the species or deteriorate the habitats for which the site is designated; in addition:
- positive conservation measures must be taken, where necessary, to maintain and restore the habitats and species present, taking account of the economic, social and cultural requirements and regional and local characteristics of the area concerned.

Further conservation objectives and measures must be set for each Natura 2000 site in accordance with the ecological requirements of the species and habitats of EU importance present. This will determine the type of management that is required to maintain and restore the site to a good state of conservation.

Although not obligatory, the Habitats Directive strongly recommends the use of Natura 2000 management plans as a means of setting objectives and measures in an open and transparent manner. Such plans are an excellent way to:

- Record the species and habitats for which the site has been designated, as well as their state of conservation and their threats and pressures;
- Identify the conservation objectives of the site so that it is clear what is being conserved and why;
- Analyse the socio-economic and cultural context of the area and the interactions between different land-uses and the EU protected species and habitats present;
- Provide an open forum for debate amongst all interest groups on how best to manage the site in light of the local socio- economic context and regional characteristics;
- Develop a consensus view on how best to manage a Natura 2000 site in light of the differing land-use and socio-economic interests.
- Help find practical management solutions that are well integrated into other land-use practices and
- Identify specific measures to be taken to secure the conservation objectives of the site, and who will be responsible for implementing and financing these.

### ***Integral landscape management National Landscape Drentsche Aa, The Netherlands***

A very successful example of integrated natural and cultural heritage management is the Dutch National Landscape Drentsche Aa. This cultural landscape has an extremely rich biodiversity as well as extensive archaeological and historical landscape values. Since 2004 government institutions, citizens, nature and organisations, planners and scientists have cooperated intensively, in order to provide new integrated strategies for interdisciplinary research, participatory planning and integral landscape management. Expert knowledge of scientists and the knowledge of a large number of local volunteers has been integrated into a landscape biography and digital landscape atlas that acts as a starting point for planning, management and tourism.

Government organisations and stakeholders have agreed on a common landscape strategy that acts as a platform for sustainable economic growth, with an important role for tourism, which covers about 40% of the regional economy.

The integration of cultural and natural heritage is a key factor in this. Citizens play a very important role in local planning and local landscape management, supported by both nature and cultural heritage institutions. This has raised awareness and local involvement, and has also reduced management costs considerably.

*Source: Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe*



### **d) Integrating natural and cultural heritage features into spatial plans**

Public authorities use spatial planning as a means for examining and influencing the different demands on the land within a broad geographical area. As such, it can be a very useful tool for promoting a more integrated and rational distribution of different land uses while at the same time searching for synergies, and minimizing potential conflicts, wherever possible.

Spatial plans also provide for a more balanced development framework because they enable wider societal and environmental concerns to be taken into account early on in the planning process (for instance through Environmental impact assessments of projects and Strategic Environmental assessments of plans). In the case of Natura 2000, a specific permitting procedure is required under the Habitats Directive to assess the implications of any plans or projects in or potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site. Only plans and projects that do not adversely affect the integrity of the site can be approved. There is however a derogation procedure available for plans or projects considered to be necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest.

These assessments should help reduce the risk of conflicts later on, for instance with protected archeological sites or nature reserves. Spatial planning can therefore be an important lever for promoting sustainable development. It also stimulates an early dialogue between different economic sectors and policy drivers, and between land users and other interest groups.

### **e) Breaking down silos and overcoming top-down policies**

The tradition or ‘working in silos’ is deeply engrained in both public and private institutions throughout the EU. Being a multifaceted and complex issue, natural and cultural heritage management is regularly confronted by such governance issues, and their integrated management aspirations are often undermined by a chronic lack of joined up thinking at the policy level.

In addition to forging greater dialogue and developing a more integrated management planning system, there is also considerable merit in trying to overcome these deeply rooted governance issues. Many of the examples showcased in this report and in the previous case studies compendium have achieved precisely this.

They have, for instance, set up joint management bodies or management systems that enable them to explore common objectives and carry out joint actions, such as awareness raising, restoration or maintenance regimes etc... They create an opportunity to explore further potential synergies that can yield multiple benefits for all concerned through a better integration of natural and cultural heritage management into the wider sustainable development agenda.

### **f) Exploring new opportunities to combine and enhance resources**

Ultimately, the greatest challenge of all for both natural and cultural heritage is the chronic lack of resources – both human and financial – to study, plan and implement actions as well as promote and capitalise on such heritage values.

Joined-up approaches to natural and cultural heritage management, which recognise and address common needs, challenges and opportunities, offer the potential to maximise the effectiveness of the use of scarce resources. Evidence has shown that, although they are difficult to get off the ground, such joint approaches to management planning, stakeholder engagement, site and visitor management are often more cost effective in the long run, helping to free up resources that can be used for other purposes.

Moreover, joint funding bids for projects that enhance both nature and culture may have a greater chance of success *inter alia* under EU funds as they address several policy interests at the same time and create a like to the wider sustainable development agenda. As noted in Chapter 5, many EU and national funds offer opportunities for joint funding of nature and culture projects, and there are numerous examples of them being used successfully.

EU funding has the potential to be an important driver in achieving synergies between nature and the cultural heritage, by supporting projects that involve a joined up approach to the conservation, sustainable management and promotion of natural and cultural heritage assets. Recognising these synergies and joint opportunities offers potential both to improve the management of natural and cultural heritage, and to make the most of limited funding in the face of competing priorities.



## g) Capacity building, and sharing experiences

Finally, another common problem facing natural and cultural heritage in Europe, and elsewhere, is the lack of skills and knowledge needed to protect and manage these features. The EU can play an important role here for instance by helping to share good practice experiences and supporting demonstration projects that can help ‘show the way’ and inspire others to launch similar joint nature and culture initiatives elsewhere.

Various EU programme can also be used to help strengthen cultural heritage and nature conservation skills, for instance through EU exchange programmes, or through the development of good practice standards and guides.

They can also help to raise awareness for joint initiatives amongst different interest groups and the wider public – for instance through high profile awards that recognise particularly good practices or initiatives. Several such awards exist at EU level precisely for this purpose – the Natura 2000 Award, the Europa Nostra Awards, European Heritage Days... One idea could be to create a joint award which could be integrated into these existing awards.

### ***EC report on fostering cooperation in the EU on skills, training and knowledge transfer in cultural heritage professions (2019)***

In the space of just a few years, the European policy framework on cultural heritage has been completely overhauled, moving towards a people-centred and holistic approach, and eliminating the divisions between the tangible, intangible and digital dimensions. It sees cultural heritage as a shared resource, highlighting that all stakeholders share responsibility for its transmission to future generations. It stresses the need for a more integrated approach to conservation and management, across different policy areas, in order to maximise the benefits to economy, culture, environment and society as a whole. This new framework changes the way in which cultural institutions manage, protect and provide access to their heritage. It changes the way in which citizens and communities engage with their cultural heritage and also influences the way that professionals deal with it.

With this in mind, the Council of the European Union invited a group of national experts to investigate skills, training and knowledge transfer in the heritage professions in Europe. Together they produced a detailed report<sup>73</sup> in 2019 which examines capacity building for heritage professionals, focusing on the transmission of traditional skills and know-how and on emerging professions in the tangible, intangible and digital heritage field, including in the context of the digital shift. The report also provides a manual of good practices for cultural and education institutions’.

The recommendations in this report draw on practical examples, good-practice case studies and lessons learned. They aim to maximise the benefits and value that Europe could gain from improving the transfer of skills, training and knowledge in cultural heritage professions. They are summarised under the four pillars of the European Year of Cultural Heritage: engagement, sustainability, protection and innovation, as well as the transversal dimension of international relations.



<sup>73</sup> <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e38e8bb3-867b-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

### **The Natura 2000 Award**

In 2014, the Commission launched the Natura 2000 Award to recognise excellence in the management of Natura 2000 sites and conservation achievements, showcasing the added value of the network for local economies, and increasing public awareness about Europe's valuable natural heritage.

The aim is to show people what the network is, how it works, and what it does to preserve Europe's biodiversity. The award recognises good practices at Natura 2000 sites in five different categories: Communication, Socio-Economic Benefits, Conservation, Reconciling Interests / Perceptions, and Cross-border Cooperation and Networking. Each year the winners are assessed by a series of independent experts and selected by a jury of prominent figures before being announced on or around Natura 2000 day (21 May) at a high profile event in Brussels.



[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/awards/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/awards/index_en.htm)

### **Europa Nostra Heritage Awards**

The EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards was launched in 2002. The Awards promote best practices related to heritage conservation, management, research, education and communication. In this way, the Awards scheme contributes to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe's society and economy.

Like the Natura 2000 Award the laureates are selected under four categories: conservation, research; dedicated service by individuals or organisations; education, training and awareness-raising

<http://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/>



### **The European Heritage Days**

The European Heritage Days (EHD) is the most widely celebrated participatory cultural event in Europe taking place every year in September. Launched in 1985, it is delivered jointly by the Council of Europe and the Creative Europe programme. Each year the EHD events are organised around a special common theme.

In 2017, the common theme was "Heritage and Nature: A Landscape of Possibilities"<sup>74</sup>. Emphasis was given to heritage values embodied in nature and to the extent to which the environment shapes people's lives and lifestyles and its contribution to their well-being and socio-economic prosperity. The events took place in urban nature sites, historic gardens, national reserves, home yards, national parks, heritage biotopes, protected areas, aiming to connect to nature and explore its diversity and cultural values.

<https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/Home.aspx>



<sup>74</sup> [http://www.europeanheritagedays.com/European-Year-of-Cultural-Heritage/Heritage-and-Nature-\(2017\)](http://www.europeanheritagedays.com/European-Year-of-Cultural-Heritage/Heritage-and-Nature-(2017))

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