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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change - <i>Final mandate</i>

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Delegations will find attached the mandate for the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change, as finalised further to the discussions at the informal videoconference of the members of the Cultural Affairs Committee on 6 October 2020.

**Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on**

**Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change**

set up under Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022

Priority A. Sustainability in cultural heritage

- mandate -

1. The Council Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, under priority A 'Sustainability in cultural heritage', provides for the creation of an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts focusing on climate action.
2. At the EU level, the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 and the New European Agenda for Culture recognise the importance of protecting and safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage. The European Year of Cultural Heritage in 2018 has considerably raised awareness about cultural heritage in Europe, resulting in follow-up measures and activities, including the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage by the European Commission<sup>1</sup>.
3. The 2030 Agenda<sup>2</sup>, adopted by the international community in September 2015, is structured around 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), providing a framework for policy design and implementation for a more sustainable future. The mandate of the present OMC group is directly linked in particular to SDG 13, 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts'<sup>3</sup> and SDG 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' and especially SDG 11.4 'Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage'.

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<sup>1</sup> SWD(2018) 491 final.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, A/RES/70/1, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', [https://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E](https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E)

<sup>3</sup> Other relevant SDGs include goal 7, 11, 14, 15 and 17.

4. The European Green Deal<sup>4</sup> outlines possibilities for the transformation of the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive climate-neutral economy. It is an integral part of the Commission’s strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. The 2015 Paris Agreement<sup>5</sup> builds upon the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>6</sup>. The Paris Agreement requires all Parties to put forward their best efforts through Nationally Determined Contributions<sup>7</sup> (NDCs) to combat climate change.
6. The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) aims to support policymakers via regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and potential future risks, as well put forward adaptation and mitigation options.
7. The UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 provides the roadmap for making communities safer and more resilient to disaster.
8. The Council conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage of 25 May 2020<sup>8</sup> recall the importance of protecting cultural heritage against the various types of risks threatening it (natural hazards, climate change and man-made disasters) and to seek synergies with relevant international organisations in order to sustainably preserve and protect cultural heritage for present and future generations.

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<sup>4</sup> COM(2019) 640 final.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, ‘Paris Agreement’  
[https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/convention/application/pdf/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> United Nations, ‘United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change’,  
<https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Parties are requested to submit the next round of NDCs (new NDCs or updated NDCs) by 2020 and every five years thereafter regardless of their respective implementation time frames.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 186, 5.6.2020, p. 1.

## Role of the OMC group

9. The objective of the OMC group is to identify and exchange good practices and innovative measures for the protection of cultural heritage (including both tangible and intangible) in relation to climate change. It will study the possibility of upscaling good practices. The OMC group will examine the current and emerging threats and impacts of climate change on cultural heritage, including cultural landscapes, discuss the appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures available, identifying potential risks and focus on building resilience of cultural heritage assets in the face of a changing environment while avoiding maladaptation. The group should also examine the contribution cultural heritage can make to mitigating and combating climate change in line with the Green Deal's goals.
10. The OMC group will prepare a report based on the specific tasks outlined below and incorporated into the individual chapters concerning mapping of public policies; analysis of best practices and case studies including the possibility of multiplying or upscaling; and policy recommendations. Specific tasks should include:
  - a) Exchange national, regional and local policies, good practices, foreseen threats or impacts. New strategies and innovative measures to avoid or reduce the climate impact on cultural heritage should be proposed. Early warning systems as foreseen by the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework 2015-2030<sup>9</sup> should be addressed;
  - b) Exchange on the response of cultural heritage sites and institutions and communities to mitigate impacts of climate change on cultural heritage, in accordance with the European Green Deal, specifically regarding energy efficiency, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, zero waste operations, carrying capacity, sustainability in mobility, and in safeguarding practices and awareness raising;

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations, UNDRR, 'Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030', <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>. Regarding disaster risk reduction for cultural heritage, relevant documents such as the resource manual 'Managing Disaster Risks for World Heritage' of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, should be consulted.

- c) Taking into consideration geographic balance and climate zones, gather and discuss case studies, concerning:
- i) the impact of climate change and climate adaptation on all forms of cultural heritage
    - Focus should be given to cases that are under immediate threat and also take account of the impact of incremental damage;
    - the potential changes in the evolution of cultural landscapes due to climate change as well as the impact it may have on its intangible cultural heritage practices;
  - ii) the historic built environment
    - best practices in improving energy efficiency of heritage buildings while respecting their protected values, and the quality principles in the respective interventions, as well as the potential risks associated with maladaptation;
    - the adaptive reuse of historical buildings and cultural heritage sites with respect to heritage values and sustainable energy efficiency solutions, as well as the need to combine them with seismic retrofitting, fire protection and/or other measures to mitigate potential threats, highlighting the importance of cultural heritage in sustainable development and the circular economy;

- iii) the contribution of cultural heritage to combat climate change
  - the contribution of cultural heritage and traditional methods and practices to combat climate change while sustainably using resources in conservation;
  - the contribution of cultural heritage to raising awareness of society and engaging communities on the impacts of climate change;
  - the use of cultural heritage to guide an area in a transformation process as a result of climate change.
- d) Prepare an inventory of the relevant results from Horizon 2020 scientific projects, foreseen calls under Horizon Europe, as well as how to stay connected with the Marie Skłodowska Curie actions, and EU activities including the ‘Study on safeguarding heritage from disasters’ (2018) as well as relevant reports, such as the ICOMOS report ‘The Future of Our Past: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action’ (2019);
- e) Make proposals for future research to cover potential needs of Member States to build cultural heritage resilience in the face of climate change;
- f) Make recommendations for national heritage authorities, site managers and communities on climate change and heritage, on preparedness, capacity building, and disaster risk reduction, following an integrated approach to cultural heritage management;
- g) Prepare guidance for European and national environmental authorities and policy makers on the contribution of cultural heritage (particularly built heritage and landscapes) to the reduction of CO2 emissions and cultural heritage as a resource in circular economy.

## Working approach and results

11. The OMC group should ensure complementarities and synergies with other relevant initiatives of the Work Plan for Culture, including the OMC groups on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development and on High-quality Architecture and Built Environment. The OMC group should build on the work carried out on the same theme by other European and international institutions, such as the Council of Europe or UNESCO, especially the foreseen policy document on the impacts of climate change on UNESCO World Heritage properties.
12. The OMC group may, for further inspiration and input, decide to involve external experts, such as researchers and representatives from civil society and relevant professional networks such as the recently created Climate Heritage Network (which gathers government organisations, cultural institutions, civil society, universities and professionals).
13. The results of the work should be generic, broadly applicable and ready to be upscaled for the different cultural heritage fields and lead to awareness-raising and capacity-building of national heritage experts on sustainability of cultural heritage and of national environmental experts on cultural heritage as a resource for tackling climate change. The OMC group will also produce recommendations to contribute to discussions and planning of climate change measures at European and national level. As much as possible, the recommendations will build on the European and national climate policies.

**Topic:**

Adaptation to climate change

**Working methods:**

OMC group, including a mapping exercise

**Rationale:**

With regard to ‘The Paris Agreement’ (2015) and UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 on climate action, experts will identify and exchange good practices and innovative measures for the historical environment in relation to climate change. Information from Horizon 2020 scientific projects will be shared and EU activities, including the ‘Study on safeguarding heritage from disasters’ (2018), will be inventoried. Specific focus should be given to the energy efficiency of historical buildings, the design and transformation of the cultural landscape and the safety of heritage under extreme climate circumstances.

**Target outputs:**

The exchange will lead to awareness-raising and capacity-building of national heritage experts on sustainability of cultural heritage. Their recommendations will contribute to discussions and planning of climate change measures at European and national level.