



I. Subject

Article 1

These rules provide the foundation for the “European Heritage Label” initiative, which aims to promote the European identity and a shared European history based on Europe’s heritage. The scheme also aims to strengthen the sense of belonging to, and improve the understanding of, Europe among its citizens and residents.

The “European Heritage Label” scheme is intended as a means of promoting and preserving cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, including any non-physical heritage, tangible and intangible, contemporary and traditional heritage and sites that play a key role in understanding European history and culture in its transnational dimension.

Designed to promote an appreciation of the important role played by heritage in European integration, the European Heritage Label, whose ultimate objective is to become a community action, will strengthen cooperation between the European Union, its member states, national institutions, the European Union and the Council of Europe as well as with public and private cultural sectors.

II. Definition of the “European Heritage Label”

Article 2

For the purposes of the “European Heritage” list, sites that have played a key role in European history, and which are emblematic of the European identity and/or transnational interaction within the European cultural space, are considered as part of “European heritage”. This includes cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, tangible and intangible, contemporary and traditional heritage and sites that play a key role in understanding European history and culture:

- sites of cultural or historical interest that have a particular European significance for Member States in general
- architectural works, buildings and objects with an emblematic value in terms of history, art, science and ideas
- areas (sites and cultural landscapes), land-based, lakeside and maritime archaeological sites.
- intangible elements of European heritage, symbols, values and movements

III. Protection and promotion of the “European Heritage Label”

Article 3

Existing standards referred to in the annex I will serve as a benchmark for use by Member States in order to optimise the protection and conservation of European heritage.

Article 4 – role of Member States

Each Member State recognises that the duty of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, promotion, proper management and transmission to future generations of the heritage referred to in Article 2, and which is situated on its territory, belongs primarily to that Member State. It will work to achieve this, to the utmost of its own resources and, where appropriate, with European assistance and cooperation, in particular financial, artistic, scientific and technical, which it may be able to obtain.

IV. “European Heritage” selection committees

Article 5 – European committee

A European heritage committee, called the “Heritage Committee of Europe”, shall be established. The Committee will implement the selection criteria and seek consensus on the proposals. In case of lack of consensus any country may call a vote in which a two-thirds majority rule will apply, in order to select which cultural properties, monuments, natural or urban sites, and sites that have played a key role in European history, nominated by national committees, will be included on the European Heritage Label list.

1. The committee will meet at least once a year. It consists of ministers for culture and heritage with the participation of the European Commissioner as an observer, or their representatives.
2. The European Committee will create the consultative bodies it deems necessary to perform its task, such as a committee of scientific experts or a supervisory committee. It will adopt the rules to implement the European Heritage Label.
3. The European committee shall adopt its own internal regulations.

Article 6 – National committee

Each Member State will define its own selection mechanism. A proposal for site may be made individually or by a larger group of countries. In order to strengthen the European dimension of this initiative joint proposals, made by grouping of countries, are encouraged. To this end, it may, in particular, hold national committee meetings attended by experts responsible for proposing, according to the criteria and priorities defined by the European Committee, projects that will be submitted to the European committee for inclusion on the European heritage list. Each Member State shall organize its activities according to its own rules of governance.

V – Withdrawal clause

Article 7: Withdrawal clause

If a cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history, and which has previously been awarded the European Heritage Label, does not respect the rules, terms and conditions of the heritage listing, the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history will be excluded from the list, after the situation has been verified by a committee of experts appointed by the European Committee, following a vote as foreseen in the article 5.

VI. Solidarity clause

Article 8 – solidarity and support

In the event of a situation that poses a threat to the cultural property, monument, natural or urban site, or site that has played a key role in European history, the European committee will provide support by coordinating emergency assistance from Member States and European institutions in close collaboration with the international organizations concerned, if and when appropriate within the framework of the international agreements currently in force.

VII. Artistic and educational promotion

Article 9 – education and information

Member States party to this initiative will endeavour, using all appropriate means, and in particular through national education and information programmes, and through training programmes tailored to professionals working within the heritage industry, to foster respect and support for, and the understanding of, European heritage among their citizens. They will take the necessary measures, in particular through the use of appropriate signage, to raise awareness of the European dimension of listed sites and objects, and to promote them.

Article 10 – heritage and creativity

The cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, and sites that have played a key role in European history, and which have been awarded the European Heritage Label, are invited to promote a range of artistic and cultural activities (events, festivals, artist-in-residence schemes) in order to strengthen the movement of artists and collections in Europe and to foster an on-going dialogue between heritage and creativity, to support, in particular, artistic and cultural education activities with respect to cultural heritage.

Article 11 – quality of facilities

The listed cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, and sites that have played a key role in European history shall adhere to commitments made in relation to providing visitors with facilities and information (the quality of the facilities and information provided, signage in at least three languages, out of which at least two are foreign official languages of the European Union, accessibility to all members of the public) as well as the quality of the historical presentation of the European heritage site. These commitments are set out in a European heritage quality charter that will be drawn by the European committee.

Article 12 – networking

The networking of certain sites and properties awarded the European Heritage Label will be encouraged.

VIII. Implementation

Article 13 – application form

Member States (national committees) select candidates from those submitted based on a application form (annex III), according to their own rules of governance.

Article 14 – monitoring the work of the European Committee

The European Committee (European Heritage Label Committee) will produce an annual report of its activities.

Article 15 – secretariat

The Secretariat of the European committee is provided by one of the participating countries.

Article 16 – communication

Member States agree to implement a broad-based communication strategy to promote European heritage.

Article 17 – General selection criteria

The selection criteria will be established in annex II.

Transitional Clause

In order to launch the initiative, the candidacies proposed before the Secretariat by participant countries no later than 2007 March 15th, will receive the European Heritage Label. Each country can only designate a maximum of 4 places.