



Athens Call

To: All National Governments, the European Commission, National and European Parliaments, National and European Political Parties, Political and Social Institutions

**From The New Acropolis Museum
12-13 February 2012**

Europe must maintain an approach to Cultural Heritage Research, Innovation, Science and Education in the next Common Strategic Framework, FP8, and Horizon 2020.

On the occasion of the Athens EU CHIC project meeting, 12-13 February 2012, all the undersigned participating experts take the opportunity to emphasise their belief that Cultural Heritage Research, Innovation, Science and Education must be maintained in the next Common Strategic Framework FP8, and Horizon 2020.

Europe has a unique physical collection and archive of Cultural Heritage assets. This heritage provides the ultimate expression of sustainability in tracing European history, diversity and importance. Since 1986 continuous European Union support for Cultural Heritage Research and Education has enabled Europe to become the world leader in this sector. Only through continuing this approach we will be able to meet the on-going complex challenges which threaten our Cultural Heritage, its sustainability, European values and civilisation.

The undersigned believe that retaining Research, Innovation, Science and Education in the 8th Framework Program is essential for effective and relevant problem solving to promote its longevity.

They also believe that the EU should encourage European citizens who care about their heritage to embrace a European Forum on Cultural Heritage and to recognize that it makes a substantial contribution to the knowledge-oriented, sustainable growth of a resource-lean European Union.



According to Article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty the European Union shall contribute to the “*conservation and safeguarding of Cultural Heritage of European significance ...*” This intention is related to its substantial economic impact across Europe, currently amounting to over 40% of activities in the Construction Sector.

The protection of Cultural Heritage is a dynamic activity because “keeping Heritage alive” attracts a significant number of tourists from all over the world. But, the value of the heritage in economic terms is greatly understated.

Within the current economic situation, the preservation of historic cities and the contemporary rehabilitation of the heritage offer a major input to the quality of life of European citizens, and contribute significantly to a social cohesion that is presently endangered.

At the same time the labour market is enriched by new jobs in the protection and rehabilitation of that heritage, and this requires the reinforcement of Education and Social Awareness at all levels of society.

The political significance of Cultural Heritage also stimulates a mutual understanding between people of different cultures, languages and religious beliefs. Social participation is also a major lever in driving sustainable development. In this regards, Europe needs education in cultural heritage, informed societies, and initiatives for the young.

In signing this letter, the participants, and their organizations request the EU to fully acknowledge its responsibilities to place Cultural Heritage Research, Innovation, Science and Education high on their agenda, and to continue to address its needs in the next Framework Program.