

# ENCATC IN CONTACT



*For this edition of ENCATC in Contact, we sat down with Claire Giraud Labalte, ENCATC member, Chair of the previous ENCATC Thematic Area "Understanding Heritage", and ENCATC Ambassador. After her stimulating presentation on the Strategy 21 during the 25th ENCATC Congress in Brussels (26-30 September 2017), we wanted to talk more. She shares with us her first-hand insight on the Council of Europe's "European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century" for this special issue of ENCATC News focusing on cultural heritage.*

**What have been the key events and players who have played an integral role to reach where the "European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century" is today? What role have you played?**

The "European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century" was born from an initiative formulated at the end of 2014 in the Department of Walloon Heritage by Pierre Paquet, General Inspector, and Gislaine Devillers, first Attaché, and actively supported by Maxime Prévot, Vice-President of the Wallonia Government, minister of Public Works, Health, Social Action and Heritage. The project was drawn up under the auspices of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), then presided by Bruno Favel (France) and the Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

The Strategy 21 was inspired by a series of observations directly affecting heritage and to a larger extent by societal changes. This Strategy is the result of a true participative work involving countries and their experts, NGOs, large institutions as well as land stakeholders, under the direction of a small team and with the support of the Secretariat of the CDCPP.

The Namur Declaration, which defines the issues and objectives of the European heritage Strategy, was

adopted on 24 April 2015 by the Committee of Ministers responsible for heritage from the 50 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, in Namur (Belgium) at the conclusion of their 6<sup>th</sup> conference entitled "Cultural heritage of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for living better together. Towards a common strategy for Europe".

The result of the first phase, the Namur Declaration enabled the drafting of the Strategy 21. The text, discussed and amended by a working group established in 2016, was subject of a recommendation from the Committee of Ministers on 22 February 2017. After this, the Strategy 21 launch took place in Limassol (Cyprus) on 6 and 7 April 2017, during the Cypriot EU presidency.

For my part, I actively participated in the preparatory work for the Namur Conference. Then I was asked by the Council of Europe to assist the rapporteur, Pierre Paquet and Gislaine Devillers in drafting the Strategy and the amendments proposed by the working group. It was a very rewarding experience and an honour to rise to the challenge proposed by our Walloon colleagues.

**Why is this strategy important for heritage management and policy education, training, and research? Do you foresee it having an impact and if so, how?**

This Strategy, the translation of a holistic vision, is important for several aspects of heritage management and policy education, training, and research.

Looking at the future, it integrates evolutions in our world and societal changes and places itself to face new issues. In our current times, this document should be widely disseminated, and training and research should take it into account.

At the same time, the Strategy 21 assures a continuity and affirms European values so often threatened. It enters into the history of European heritage and feeds on important texts, like the Faro Convention (2005) that affirms heritage's value for society. To a larger extent, the Strategy is based on the fundamental values of the Council of Europe: democracy, respect of human rights and fundamental liberties, openness and dialogue, equal dignity of all people, mutual respect, and consideration of diversity. At this level, the Strategy 21 concerns all citizens.

The effective implementation of the Strategy 21 engages all stakeholders

interested in heritage, at all levels, for the next decade. Notably, it acts to promote participatory governance (according to the spirit of Faro) and to better integrate cultural heritage in sectorial and territorial policies.

This evolution is based on a transformation of representations and mentalities. It cannot really take place without the support of education, lifelong learning, and research. This component is so important that it constitutes one of the three pillars of the Strategy 21 – “Knowledge and Education”.

This dimension naturally concerns the core of ENCATC’s activities. It seems to me that the emphasis can be placed on several points: developing the critical study of heritage and research, promoting multidisciplinary in connection with the Strategy 21, creative bridges between the heritage sector and other cultural sectors without neglecting the neighbouring sectors (tourism, etc.), and supporting the holistic vision and participatory governance.

**Why should other cultural sectors/ disciplines be interested in the Council of Europe’s new strategy? Does it open doors for more cooperation between heritage and other cultural sectors?**

Cultural heritage is a source of inspiration, a place of creation and diffusion. Numerous examples illustrate many possible resonances and cross fertilisation between tangible and immaterial expressions of heritage, cultural or natural, and artistic creations (theatre, music, cinema, cultural industry, etc.). Some heritage sites are even dedicated to transdisciplinary research projects and creation projects, like the *Centres Culturels de Rencontre*.

Sometimes it proves necessary to open the eyes of students, cultural players (professionals, elected officials) and encourage experimentation that often triggers new perspectives, new practices.

**You presented the Strategy and the work you have done at the 25<sup>th</sup> ENCATC Congress that was held this past September in Brussels. Why was it important to share this with the Congress delegates?**

The year 2018 focuses on cultural heritage, 43 years after the first European Year of Heritage (1975). This is a particularly favourable context for the implementation of Strategy 21 which brings a concrete dimension to the Year, a working guide with recommendations and courses of action.

By devoting a session of its programme to the topic of European cultural heritage at its 25th Congress, ENCATC initiated an important process. I sincerely hope that its members and its followers are more aware of what’s going on in cultural heritage and will now actively participate in the many activities in 2018 – including the ENCATC Congress in Bucharest (26-28 September) – and be part of this momentum and new movement proposed for cultural heritage in Europe in the 21st century.

**What did you hope ENCATC members and our followers came away with after your intervention on “The Council of Europe European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21th century” during the Congress?**

I would like to formulate three wishes:

First, that ENCATC members and followers will have taken note of this Strategy, which holistically redefines the place and role of heritage in Europe as well as common issues confronting culture and cultural heritage.

Second, that everyone becomes more conscious of heritage’s value – material and immaterial – for society as it’s defined in founding texts of the Council of Europe (CoE), the Faro Convention in particular, and shared by the 47 CoE member countries.

Third, for all to understand the need for politics to be integrated with heritage. They should revisit their own practice for creating or developing integration within cultural sectors,

encourage dialogue between heritage and creation, reinforce cooperation bringing together training and research within the cultural sector, and develop links between sectors in charge of heritage, society, and economic and territorial development.

Finally, my wish is for everyone to be convinced that “cultural heritage counts for Europe”!



Art historian and professor emeritus, Dr. Claire Giraud-Labatte continues her activities as a lecturer, researcher, and expert-consultant in Cultural Heritage working closely with the Council of Europe. She is also President of Territoires imaginaires. Member of the Research Center on the Travel Literature, winner of the research program Thesaurus Poloniae (Spring 2016), her works centre around travellers in Europe and their views on cultural heritage and society (19th-20th centuries). Member of ENCATC since 2005, she has represented the network on numerous occasions. She is a guest professor at the University of Plovdiv in Bulgaria. She is also a member of scientific and steering committees: Consultative Conference of Culture (Pays de la Loire Region); Val de Loire – world Heritage, UNESCO; Intangible Cultural Heritage Office; ProKultura Observatory of cultural policies, Split (Croatia). Committed at the European level, she has contributed to the realisation of several works: Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe (2015); European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century (2016).