



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 18.2.2015  
C(2015) 724 final*

*Dear President,*

*The new Commission, which entered office on 1 November 2014, is fully committed to strengthening its partnership with national Parliaments. An active and constructive political dialogue on the Commission's proposals is a crucial part of this relationship, complementing the essential direct contacts between our institutions. The Commission looks forward to working with the Bundesrat over the coming years.*

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*The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe" {COM(2014) 477 final}. The Commission is pleased to note that the approach proposed in the Communication is welcomed by the Bundesrat.*

*The Commission agrees that an examination is now required into how public measures can be better geared to exploiting the long-term and sustainable value of Europe's cultural heritage. This work is now beginning, in collaboration with competent authorities, including national governments, regions and cities. Libraries and archives will be fully taken into account; the Commission recognises and values their vital role in preserving, promoting and providing access to physical and digital heritage.*

*The Commission is pleased that the Bundesrat shares its view regarding the significant potential contribution of cultural heritage to economic growth and social cohesion, and the need for the Member States and heritage stakeholders to make best possible use of support mechanisms available under EU instruments.*

*In relation to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), under Regulation 1301/2013, conserving, promoting and developing natural and cultural heritage is identified as an investment priority for the ERDF, under thematic objective 6 on preserving and promoting the environment and promoting resource efficiency. The scope of the ERDF also allows support for "investment in the development of endogenous potential through fixed investment in equipment and small-scale infrastructure, including small-scale cultural and sustainable tourism infrastructure".*

*Mr Volker BOUFFIER  
President of the Bundesrat  
Leipziger Straße 3 - 4  
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*The Commission can assure the Bundesrat that it has taken a constructive approach in the negotiations on ERDF programming documents with regard to planned support to cultural heritage in order to achieve the greatest added value from operational programmes.*

*In this respect, the Commission has reiterated the principle that such investments should have a proper economic rationale and be fully integrated in relevant territorial strategies. In addition to falling under the scope of the ERDF, these investments must also contribute to the investment priorities and specific objectives prioritised by the Member States/regions in their draft operational programmes.*

*There is therefore a clearly defined legal and policy framework governing ERDF expenditure, approved by the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament. Within this framework, and without prejudice to ongoing negotiations, it is clear that investments in cultural heritage and cultural and creative industries in general will be a significant part of many operational programmes, including in Germany.*

*The Commission would like to assure the Bundesrat that the suggestions expressed in the Opinion will be fully taken into account in future policy development on heritage. The Commission looks forward to continued collaboration with the Bundesrat and national and regional stakeholders across Europe to promote our cultural heritage as a catalyst for creativity.*

*The Commission hopes that these comments address the issues raised by the Bundesrat and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Frans Timmermans  
First Vice-President*

*Tibor Navracsics  
Member of the Commission*