



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 30.5.2017
C(2017) 3580 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Bundesrat for its Opinion on the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage {COM(2016) 543 final}.

The Commission welcomes the Bundesrat's broad support for the proposal and notes its concerns expressed in relation to the objectives and the funding of the proposal as well as the timing of its approval. The Commission is pleased to have this opportunity to provide a number of clarifications to the Bundesrat regarding the proposal and trusts that these will allay its concerns.

As far as the objectives of the European Year of Cultural Heritage are concerned, the Commission would like to point out that its proposal has identified several specific objectives that go beyond the sphere of cultural policy, in line with the mainstreaming principle envisaged in the Treaties. These objectives refer to different policy areas, such as education, social cohesion, environment, tourism, regional development, the digital agenda, research and innovation, agriculture and rural development, maritime affairs, and communication.

As concerns the overarching concept of the Year and the emphasis given to the economic and other secondary aspects of cultural heritage, the Commission wishes to highlight that the contribution of European cultural heritage to the economy and the society is only one of three objectives; the proposal also aims to promote the role of European cultural heritage as a pivotal component of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Year will offer opportunities for European citizens to better understand the present through a richer and shared interpretation of the past, and to promote European excellence in the sector. Moreover, the proposal will be an opportunity to further enhance the intrinsic value of cultural heritage, by promoting the conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and its appreciation by a wider and more diversified public, including through audience development and heritage education.

*Ms Malu DREYER
President of the Bundesrat
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Concerning the importance of reaching the broadest number of citizens, the Commission agrees with the Bundesrat and would like to point out that a specific budget will be allocated to communication and awareness raising campaigns.

As to funding, the Commission recalls that its proposal envisages that other EU programmes and policies, within their existing legal and financial provisions, may also support the European Year.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications 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*