

**BUILDING THE FUTURE FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS**  
**INTRODUCTION**  
**25 JANUARY 2007**



Cultural heritage forms an integral part of our European identity and of our shared values and principles. Today's European culture is based on a History of border-crossing exchange and dialogue, of interaction and transfer of men and values, of ideas, artistic movements and works of art.

The European Heritage Label is designed to promote the transnational European dimension of cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, tangible and intangible, contemporary and traditional heritage and sites that have played a key role in building and uniting Europe. It aims to strengthen the support of European citizens for a shared European identity and to foster a sense of belonging to a common cultural space.

The European Heritage Label is designed to encourage people's understanding of, and respect and support for, their heritage. It represents a means of protecting and promoting our cultural heritage, with the aim of identifying and passing on that heritage to future generations, while strengthening cooperation between European states.

The European Heritage Label should provide the basis for establishing a dynamic network of cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, and sites that have played a key role in European history, which benefit from a strong European profile.

The European Heritage Label, whose ultimate objective is to become a community action, is open to any Member State of the European Union that wishes to take part in the scheme and through a cooperation system (to be established by the rules of procedure) to other European states and in particular to candidate countries and others belonging to the European Economic Space.

The heritage label, which is based on European cultural history, has a different specifically European function to UNESCO's World Heritage list, which aims to promote the protection of monuments and sites based on their universal value.

The listing procedure, which is intended to establish a cultural basis for further European integration, complements the European Council's "Cultural Routes" scheme, which promotes the influence and the sharing of common European values. Cultural property, monuments, natural or urban sites, and sites that have played a key role in European history, may be listed under the European Heritage Label scheme, as part of a network or individually.