

Archaeological heritage management...

Through the study of our past, archaeology can be a source of inspiration and reflection for the present and the future.

To ensure that archaeological heritage can be of value for today's society and for future generations, archaeological heritage managers are charged with identifying, interpreting, protecting, conserving and presenting archaeological heritage. This responsibility includes shaping heritage management policy and is increasingly focussed on fundamental questions - Why do we want to protect, study or preserve something? For whom are we doing this? Who should be involved in the process? Answering such key questions can only be done in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as local government, developers, academics and researchers, commercial parties and most importantly, with the public.

The Amersfoort Agenda

The '**Amersfoort Agenda**' on the future of archaeological heritage management in Europe was launched in 2015. It provides a strategic vision for archaeological heritage management with a focus on specific themes to give the Valletta Convention renewed impetus and to achieve a stronger connection with the Faro Convention.

The Agenda reflects the need to reshape ideas and practice according to the reality of European archaeology and society in the 21st century as illustrated by several symposia on archaeological heritage in Europe (see **EAC Occasional Papers**) organized by the **European Archaeological Council**

... in Europe

Since its ratification, the **European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage** (Council of Europe 1992) has had a significant impact on the way archaeology is organised in many European countries. Ratified by 46 countries the central aim of the 'Valletta Convention' is to ensure that archaeological heritage is protected as an instrument for scientific study and as a source of our collective memory. It encourages an integrated approach to archaeological heritage management and links archaeology to the spatial planning process with impacts to be funded by the developers. In most countries this has led to an increase in archaeological activity with fewer archaeological resources being lost without being recorded.

Another Convention that inspires and guides archaeological heritage management in Europe is the **Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society** (Council of Europe 2005). Conventionally known as the Faro Convention, it focuses on the relationships between heritage and communities and society as a whole. Addressing themes such as intercultural dialogue, democratic participation and sustainable development, it brings an additional focus to the questions of why and for whom we should protect archaeological heritage.

(EAC), a forum for discussions on these heritage management topics.

The 30 member Council is a network of national bodies responsible under law for the management of archaeological heritage across Europe. The main aim of this network is to support archaeological heritage management in Europe by promoting exchange of information and good practice, providing a forum

for discussion, and by facilitating closer and more structured cooperation with a view to achieving common goals.

The three main themes of the Amersfoort Agenda are:

Theme 1 Embedding archaeology in society

Theme 2 Dare to choose

Theme 3 Managing the sources of European history

As initiator of the Amersfoort Agenda, the EAC developed a number of actions to ensure its implementation. The EAC will seek collaboration with other European and international bodies, in order to align actions and mutually support each other.

Social Component

- Stimulate and facilitate society's involvement in archaeology by linking it to other policy domains (Theme 1 - Strategy 21: S1)
- Explore and use modern methods to involve society (Theme 1 - Strategy 21: S2)
- Analyse the wants, interests and expectations of stakeholders in society regarding their involvement in archaeology (Theme 1 - Strategy 21: S2, S5)
- Adopt a broader perspective when making choices in archaeological heritage management (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: S5, S6)

Economic and Territorial development Component

- Be conscious, explicit and transparent about the choices (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: D4, D6)
- Develop a sound infrastructure to support the making of informed choices (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: D4)
- Negotiate criteria and balance interests and values with other stakeholders (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: D6)
- Use emerging digital technologies to share, connect and provide access to archaeological information (Theme 3 - Strategy 21: D8, D9)
- Aim for the greatest possible access to digital archaeological resources for various user groups (Theme 3 - Strategy 21: D9)

Contribution to Strategy 21's goals

As both the Council of Europe's **European Cultural Heritage Strategy** (Strategy 21) and the Amersfoort Agenda aim to address the challenges of the 21st century, there is significant overlap between the identified challenges and suggested courses of action. In general, both strategic documents pursue an integrated and inclusive approach to cultural heritage and encourage good governance (e.g. transparency, accountability) and participatory heritage management.

Knowledge and Education Component

- Integrate archaeology into education for children and young people (Theme 1 - Strategy 21: K1, K2)
- Identify research frameworks and criteria, and enable access to current archaeological knowledge and data (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: K9)
- Improve collaboration within the discipline and heritage sector by developing networks (Theme 2 - Strategy 21: K10)
- Encourage cooperation with other disciplines and share data in order to create a shared benefit (Theme 3 - Strategy 21: K9, K10)



Trial trenches, motorway
Meißen, Germany
(©Landesamt für Archäologie
Sachsen. Photo: Harald Stäuble)

