

THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF A NEW EU POLICY

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THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in European Union Studies
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2014

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This Master's thesis discusses a recent EU cultural policy, the European Heritage Label (EHL), introduced in 2011 to designate sites located in EU member states that have significance and symbolic value for European history and integration. I examine how the concepts of European cultural identity and common cultural heritage are used and produced in the rhetoric on the designated European heritage sites, and the intentions and expectations related to the EHL. "European dimension", "added value", "unity in diversity" and "engaging with citizens" are notions that appear frequently in the discourse on the EHL in official EU documents, as a discourse analysis shows. Two Austrian candidate sites for the label serve as case studies to examine the ideological and practical aspects of the label by means of ethnographic fieldwork in Austria. I conducted interviews with officials, the managers of the EHL candidate sites and the members of the national evaluation committee, in order to understand the implementation, application and evaluation processes in Austria. This thesis also discusses the visibility and the potential of the label, as well as the key issues it raises, such as exclusion, identity-building capacity and its contribution to the global heritage sector.

This research combines both theory and practice. It is significant in the fields of European Union Studies, and Identity, Culture and Heritage Studies because it looks at how heritage and the branding of heritage is used for identity-building purposes. It is also useful for professionals and institutions in the national cultural heritage sector.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures.....	iv
List of Abbreviations	v
Introduction	1
I. Methodology.....	5
II. Culture and Heritage in the Policy and Thinking of the European Union	8
III. Literature Review: Identity and Heritage	15
IV. The European Heritage Label.....	26
V. Document Analysis: The EU’s Rhetoric in the Discourse on EHL	42
VI. Ethnographic and Institutional Case Studies: The Austrian Candidate Sites	53
VII. Conclusion.....	73
Bibliography	77
References of Figures	85

List of Figures

Figure 1	32
Figure 2	32
Figure 3	33
Figure 4	33
Figure 5	33
Figure 6	33
Figure 7	39

List of Abbreviations

BMUKK	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur (Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture)
DG	Directorate-General
EC	European Commission
EHL	European Heritage Label
EP	European Parliament
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
WH	World Heritage
WHL	World Heritage List

Introduction

The debate on the European Union's (EU) identity is probably as old as the EU itself. Continuously vaguely defined by the EU itself, and fervently discussed by scholars, the notion of a European identity has, since the Eastern enlargements of 2004, 2007 and 2013, become even more problematic. The questions of a European identity and the representation of a common European heritage are also interesting in the light of the integration and inclusion of non-European immigrants, who in most European countries happen to be for the most part Muslim. Another challenge to the notion of European identity is the prospect of Turkey's EU membership, which not only nourishes political and social debates on its feasibility, pros and cons, but also anxiety regarding a potential threat of Islamization. If a least common denominator defining European identity was to be determined, it is Europe's distancing itself from the "Other" throughout centuries, from a culture shaped by a different faith at the very Eastern confines of the European continent. Moreover, the debt crisis of 2010 put the solidarity among Europeans and their sense of belonging to a test because of its uneven distribution and solutions. It has generated the emergence of stereotypization of the different nationalities bound together in the Union. Media reported on lazy Greeks, efficient and dominant Germans, pathologically Euroskeptic Brits. Low turnouts at previous European Parliament elections indicate that European citizens remain indifferent or hostile towards the EU. At the same time, anti-EU parties become increasingly popular at the national as well as European level. Repeatedly, Eurobarometer polls confirm that the EU citizens' opinion of the EU and their sense of belonging are relatively low. The most recent Eurobarometer No. 79.5 of October 2013, touching on the issues of European identity and belong-

ing, suggests that the sense of attachment to the EU among EU citizens is still below their sense of attachment to their home city or town, their region or country. Many scholars often point out the lack of a European demos, a political unit that identifies with the EU and participates in elections, and of a true sense of European citizenship. After decades of economic, monetary and to a lesser extent, social and political integration, the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht finally put cultural integration on the EU's agenda, aiming to achieve Europeanization through cultural policies and culture mainstreaming and by conferring legal competence to the EU in the field of culture.

In 2011, the European Commission (EC) created the European Heritage Label (EHL), which was awarded for the first time in December 2013 to four sites located in Austria, Estonia and the Netherlands. The EHL was conceived to help strengthen Europeans' sense of belonging to the EU, to promote mutual understanding in Europe and to communicate EU values and history. "European identity", "European dimension" and "common cultural heritage" are terms that appear frequently in the EU's rhetoric on the EHL, but are only vaguely defined.

The main research questions that I try to answer in this thesis are : How are the concepts of European cultural identity and common cultural heritage used and produced in the EC rhetoric on the EHL sites? What are the intentions and expectations related to the EHL and how is this rhetoric put into practice and received? Consequently, some sub-questions emerge from that main research question, which I will divide in different segments and discuss accordingly in different chapters. First, how does the EU define identity and common heritage? How does the EU's cultural policy address European identity? I will outline the EU cultural policy and how it addressed and contributed to the creation of a common identity. Then, I will give an overview of the most recent and relevant theories on European identity and heritage, before proceeding to a

discussion of the EHL. In the analytical part of this paper, I will examine the EU's rhetoric on the EHL by doing a discourse analysis of the official documentation on the EHL available from the EU websites (Europa, European Commission, Council publications and declarations). I will also discuss how the EU's rhetoric is put into practice and evaluate the reception and visibility of the label. I will specifically discuss the case study of Austria's participation in the EHL initiative, since one of the designated sites is located there. I examine the ideological, theoretical and practical aspect of the EHL by means of ethnographic fieldwork and institutional ethnography. A section on Austria and the EU will serve as introductory background to the discussion of the ethnographic case studies. Finally, this all leads to a deconstruction of the rationale behind the initiative. Why does the European Union think it needs a common heritage and an identity? Does it need it at all? Why now? I will conclude with some reflections on the potential and limits of the label. Since the concept of the EHL evokes inevitably the idea of the UNESCO World Heritage List, being so far the only supranational compilation of tangible and intangible heritage, it is also worthwhile to discuss the EHL in reference to UNESCO World Heritage.

As of October 2014, hardly any scholarly work has been done on the EHL, and no data on its effects and impact are yet available, which makes this new initiative even more worthwhile addressing, especially in the light of the ongoing debate on European identity and in the aftermath of a severe crisis of finances and trust.

This research is significant in the fields of European Union Studies, and Identity, Culture and Heritage Studies because it looks at how heritage and the branding of heritage is used for identity-building purposes. Furthermore, it is relevant and useful for professionals and institu-

tions in the national cultural heritage sector interested in applying for the label, as well as for the responsible EU Directorate-General, as it combines both theory and practice.

I. Methodology

As literature shows, heritage can be mobilized for various purposes and be discussed from an array of angles. It can be an important factor for job creation, tourism, ideology and identity, can be of tangible and intangible, individual and collective nature. I chose to frame heritage within a political context, from the perspective of cultural policy and identity-building. I believe this to be the main function the EU seeks the EHL to fulfill. Although effects on tourism and the local economy may surely be desired following the implementation of the label, the creation of the initiative, which assumes that there *is* a common heritage, is a political premise that not only puts the supranational above the national, regional and local, but also sends out a message to EU citizens (and, even more so, to cultural institutions and heritage sites) to acknowledge and engage with this common cultural space. It coheres with the ubiquitous EU slogan *Unity in Diversity*, reiterated and upheld in almost every Treaty, Agreement and official address.

Two methodological approaches were chosen to provide and analyze data for this study: discourse analysis and qualitative interviews.

The basic characteristic of discourse analysis is its focus on the text, the spoken or written word, including imagery. Discourse analysis fulfills two main functions: It investigates the meaning of language in a given context and the underlying reason of that meaning (Barker and Galasinski 2003:62-64). Discourse is not only decisive and crucial in the construction of identities and social practice, but also has the power to perpetuate and to transform them (de

Cillia, Reisigl and Wodak 1999:157). It is thus a very important political tool. Critical discourse analysis

assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive events and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: on the one hand, the situational, institutional, and social contexts shape and affect discourses; on the other hand, discourses influence social and political reality. In other words, discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it. (ibid.:157)

The corpus for the document analysis included (a) legislative documents such as Council decisions and declarations as well as Treaties, (b) press releases and communications issued by the Commission, (c) documents and information material found on DG Education and Culture's website about the EHL and (d) documents and forms for the application and implementation of the EHL. All of the documents are available online.

For the case studies, data were gathered by conducting semi-structured and open-ended qualitative interviews on a one-on-one basis in which a range of questions concerning the application and evaluation processes of the Austrian candidate sites for the EHL and more general questions about the individual understanding of heritage, identity and cultural policy were asked and responded to. Five formal interviews were conducted in person by the author with personalities from both the private cultural heritage sector and the Austrian government. Two interviews were conducted on the phone. The interviews conducted in Austria were recorded and transcribed, and then translated from German to English. For the phone interviews, notes were taken during the interview and summarized by the author immediately following the interview

for purposes of accuracy. Case studies offer a particularly suitable design if one is interested in process and agency.

II. Culture and Heritage in the Policy and Thinking of the European Union

One of the founding fathers of the EU and declared Eurofederalist Jean Monnet is often wrongly attributed the authorship of the aphorism “If we were to do it all again, we would start with culture” (cited in Sassatelli 2006:24). In fact, it was not until almost two decades after the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957, establishing the European Economic Community, that culture and identity were explicitly addressed in the agenda of the EU. European integration had been focused primarily on economy and the creation of a common market, and socio-cultural aspects had been largely ignored. In 1973, the ‘Declaration on Europe’s Identity’ was the Council of the EU’s first step towards defining a cultural basis for European integration, and identified a set of common values and principles that have never ceased to figure prominently in the rhetoric of the EU. The then nine states of Europe (the founding members Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and recently joined Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom) declared themselves to be bound together by sharing the same *Weltanschauung*, by virtue of “cherished values of their legal, political and moral orders”, and by the defense of “the principles of representative democracy, of the rule of law, or social justice” and the “respect for human rights” (Council 1973:9) This Declaration coincided with the attempts to create a “People’s Europe” and the first elections of the European Parliament in 1979, which resulted in a low turnout, signaling the necessity to raise European awareness and to engage with the Europeans. The 1980s, the era of Euroskepticism, fueled in particular by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and accentuated by a political and economic crisis, saw the invention of the

EU's motto "Unity in diversity", which was one of the first EU narratives to "address culture without defining it" (Sassatelli 2008:230) and has since then marked the official discourse on culture and identity. Cultural integration was identified as a political and socio-economic necessity for accomplishing the single market, as a more human and citizen-centered face for what was commonly perceived to be an economic project: "The world of culture clearly cannot remain outside the process of completion of the big European internal market: that process demands the formation of a true European culture area" (EC 1988:4). The EU, which is historically geared towards the economy and trade, was enabled by the Maastricht Treaty (1992) to take action for the first time in the field of culture in order to safeguard, disseminate and develop culture in Europe. Article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (formerly Article 151 in the Treaty establishing the European Community) reaffirms that

The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

Beside the EU's formal legal 'competence' to act in cultural policy, the Maastricht Treaty also introduced the notion of a European citizenship, and was unique in creating a "direct political link between the citizens of the Member states and the European Union such as never existed with the Community" (EC 1993:2), responding to the need to communicate with the 'European public' and to reduce the distance between institutions and people. Since the Maastricht Treaty, the EU has put culture on their political agenda and has launched several initiatives to create a common European identity. In the second half of the 1990s, new cultural programs launched: *Kaleidoscope* for cultural co-operation, *Raphael* for cultural heritage, and

the perennial Culture framework programs: *Culture 2000* (for the period 2000- 2006), *Culture Programme* (2007- 2013), just to name a few, and with the overall rhetoric of the protection of the ‘common cultural heritage’ and the fostering of a better understanding of Europe’s diversity, as Sassatelli (2008) finds in her study on Europeanization and cultural policy. The Commission initiated an impressive series of concrete measures, aiming at communicating EU citizenship and a European sense of belonging, among them initiatives in educational and audio-visual and information policy such the creation of a Eurochannel, TV without Frontiers, European Union Prizes for Cultural Heritage, Film, Music, Literature (mostly ignored and unpopular compared to other international and even national awards), a Euro lottery, and, more recently, the designation of the year 2013 the European “Year of Citizens”. Gordon (2010) laments the lack of visibility of most of the EU’s cultural actions and initiatives despite the Commission’s claim to promote their popularity and finds it “difficult to believe there is much recognition beyond the professional cultural sector,” (Gordon 2010:113). In May 2007, the Commission proposed an ‘Agenda for Culture’, its first ever independent cultural policy, founded on three common objectives: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity; and culture as a key component in international relations (EC 2007:8). These priorities make very clear that the focus is not only on the promotion and celebration of diversity and heritage, but also on creating new synergies and cooperation between the cultural industries and institutions on all levels. Finally, the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 introduced the principle of ‘culture mainstreaming’ which requires the EU to take culture into account in all relevant policies, both internally (like in the Europe 2020 Growth Strategy) and in external relations. Thus, the cultural sector in the EU plays a key role in terms of its numerous social, economic and political implications, and has finally acquired a

fundamental role in the process of European integration. The EU promotes culture and the creative sectors to create growth and jobs in the EU, but also recognizes culture as an export good. Since the adoption of the Agenda for Culture, culture programs and cooperations have been launched with third countries within the frameworks of the Eastern Partnership, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and with developing countries (Europa.eu 2010). Moreover, the EU is gradually building a meaningful and effective partnership with UNESCO. In 2005, the Commission and the Council Presidency signed with UNESCO the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and in 2012, a “Memorandum of Understanding”, setting out a number of principles and common goals to boost cooperation, dialogue and to share information and best practices (UNESCO 2012).

This new, comprehensive cultural policy approach also entails a mobilization and diversification of agents promoting culture and thus European identity at the local, regional, national and supranational level, reversing a top-down and policy-led agenda to a bottom-up grassroots and inclusive process of Europeanization. Gordon calls the EU’s current concentration on culture “an important economic, social and ‘soft power’ catalyst for Europe” (Gordon 2010:104) and stresses that culture should be promoted on an equal basis with other EU core areas. Culture, in the thinking of the EU, thus fulfills a double goal: It not only reflects economic potential but also identity-building capacity, by incorporating culture and cultural heritage and increasing their presence in all policy areas and thus in the lives and the awareness of its citizens.

The emphasis on culture represents a major shift in the EU’s approach to European integration since the 1980s, including a strong use of abstract rhetoric and symbolism (Shore 2000).

EU officials have appropriated core sociological concepts such as ‘culture’, ‘identity’, ‘social cohesion’s and ‘collective consciousness’ as mobilizing metaphors for building ‘European culture’, ‘European identity’ and ‘European consciousness’. (ibid.:25)

Lähdesmäki (2012) examines the EU’s rhetoric on unity and diversity in the making of cultural identity. She finds the EU discourse in the field of cultural policy to be contributing to the production of a European identity, and claims that EU’s cultural policy is based on ideological goals (Lähdesmäki 2012:60). EU policy produces ‘an imagined cultural community’ of Europe, making heavy use of idealistic and political rhetoric instead of concrete suggestions as to how to effectively create and foster this community. There are, however, exceptions to the EU’s top-down cultural policy approach, such as the European Capital of Culture program, the flagship initiative of EU cultural policy, which seems to generate cultural integration as a bottom-up process, starting from the cities and local and regional stakeholders and often actively including and engaging with citizens themselves (ibid.:67). Cultural integration is certainly enhanced and most credible in initiatives where the local and supranational reinforce each other.

It is certainly worth discussing if the ambition to give the European citizens a sense of belonging as an elite-driven top-down process is capable of bearing fruit on the ground. As many scholars and professionals criticize, identity and culture have only been vaguely defined by the European institutions. Sassatelli (2002) claims that the EU did not invent and appropriate the famous ‘unity in diversity’ narrative in a void, but adopted it as the “discourse most suitable to the type of multiple identity which is the more likely to accept a European ‘layer’ of allegiance“ (Sassatelli 2002:446). Gordon points to the problem of defining “culture”, and that arts and heritage are too often “erroneously treated as instruments of unity in terms of the more

generic sense of ‘culture’” (Gordon 2010:103). He also criticizes the shortcomings in both the conception and the implementation of cultural policies, the persisting incoherence at the European and the national level and the continuing gap between the EU’s rhetoric and the professional reality in the arts and heritage sectors, which are frustrated over the lack of progress (ibid.: 102-107).

Heritage is one of the keys the EU has identified to promote a European identity in its cultural policy, and the EHL is only the most recent, and probably most straightforward and ambitious initiative. Official EU rhetoric defines common heritage in very broad terms, as something that binds European citizens together, beyond national boundaries. This includes abstract concepts such as “European values”, symbols, accomplishments of European integration, EU institutions and Treaties as well as physical sites, monuments and buildings from all epochs. However, the EHL opens a new aspect and may add new items to the list in so far as it might reveal information about what local and national actors consider European heritage vs. what EU institutions identify as European heritage. This is because the request for a EHL designation is generated by local, regional or national actors, not by the EU.

A label might contribute to a more precise definition of the notion of common heritage. Labeling and Euro-branding are not new in the cultural policy of the EU. Member of the European Parliament (MEP) and former European Commissioner Willy De Clerq proposed in his 1993 report that Europe should be treated as a ‘brand product’ and that ‘togetherness’ and its benefits are the products that should be adequately marketed and sold to EU citizens in various ways (De Clerq 1993). Already since 1999, the EC has been organizing the European Heritage Days as a joint action with the Council of Europe, involving all 50 signatory states of the

European Cultural Convention under the motto 'Europe: a common heritage' (Council of Europe 2014). The Commission is also involved with the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Awards (Europa Nostra 2014). However, the EHL is the first solely EU-led and coordinated supranational heritage initiative.

III. Literature Review: Identity and Heritage

Identity is increasingly discussed in European Union studies. The base line that all of the different approaches and schools of thoughts have in common is the idea that identity matters, a fact the EU has started to acknowledge over the last decades. The most differing models of identity, located at the extreme opposites of the scale, are the models of complementary and conflictive-destructive identities. Like a Russian doll, where the smaller ones fit in the bigger one, the complementary model assumes the coexistence of multiple sociopolitical layers of identity (local, regional, national, transnational), layers visualized as concentric circles which are complementary. At the opposite end of the scale, multiple identities are seen as conflictual, contradictory, incompatible and even destructive identities, in which one is considered a threat (Meinhof 2004:217-218).

Two important questions arise when reflecting on European identity and heritage: First, whose heritage is represented, and second, why does the EU need an identity after all? Many scholars argue that European identity is a construct. Shore (2000) considers the European identity an elite-driven top-down process, the “utopian dream of intellectuals and idealists, an imagination and construct without roots and basis”, “an elite-led, technocratic affair” (Shore 2000:18). Indeed, the European Union lacks unifying elements that are often considered crucial to nation-building or identity building, such as a common language, myths, memory, and history. It has, however, adopted symbols (a currency, a flag, an anthem, a passport, a Europe day) that were designed to foster identification with Europe among the EU citizens and to bring Europe into the popular consciousness as “repositories of meaning and agents of consciousness” (ibid.:

77). Despite these efforts, Shore stresses that the “fundamental dilemma for the EU lies in the fact that the ‘European public’, or demos, barely exists as a recognizable category, and hardly at all as a subjective or *self-recognising* body” (Shore 2000:19). Beside symbolism, institutionalization is a key notion in identity building. Laffan (2004) studied the impact of institutions on identity and the normative and cognitive dimensions of the EU. The institutionalization of the EU, and the specific functional roles and responsibilities of the institutions as European (EC, EP, Council, European Central Bank, European Court of Justice) also foster identity-building as such (Laffan 2004:76). Bee (2008) sees European identity as an institutional construct created by the EU, and which was redefined and modified over time, changed throughout the integration process. He claims that the European Commission developed its own idea of European identity as a response to the lack of legitimacy and of a demos, by using various self-referential instruments in order to develop and diffuse the European dimension: European citizen policy, education, communication, cultural, social, youth, information policies and symbolism, trying to create a “form of European belonging based on political participation” (Bee 2008:435). Bee also stresses that the production of new discourses on European identity coincided with moments of political challenges, crises and transformations (enlargements) within the EU: the 1970s, 1980s, 1990, and 2001-2005.

Along these four phases the Commission has actively acted as an identity builder, re-addressing the issue about the bases of identification within the European territorial space and changing the future directions depending this on the different contexts of crisis characterising the integration process. (Bee 2008:437)

Along this line, the current emphasis on common culture and the launch of the EHL appears to be a response to the economic crisis, enlargement fatigue and general frustration of many EU citizens with the EU, constraining the Commission to find new definitions of the European identity and foster a sense of belonging and solidarity. Johler (2002) calls the EU a “continuous process,” signaling growth, modernity, and future, an “unfinished construction site,” which does not convey a sense of belonging for its citizens, but rather means a constant “moving” (Johler 2002:9-10). Along this line, Delanty and Rumford (2005) consider European identity and society as transformative processes subject to their own dynamics and not tied to European integration (Delanty and Rumford 2005:4-5). They point to an existing gap in the literature on Europeanization and identity putting European society in the focus of interest, and the need for a re-orientation away from the constructivist approach of seeing Europeanization as a policy-led process and a supranational version of nation-building. European identity should be understood from a cosmopolitan perspective, as a model informed by social transformations. Delanty and Rumford argue that European identity exists on different levels, can be cross-cutting, and is distinct from policy and politics; it is a cosmopolitan form of “post-national self-understanding that expresses itself within, as much as beyond, national identities” (Delanty and Rumford 2005:56).

Identity negotiations and Europeanization are also produced in the discursive field, especially within the context of the nation-state. Discourse in the public sphere and the language of social constructivism are capable of leading to socio-cognitive transformations and articulating imaginaries and concepts such as ‘European identity’, ‘EU citizenship’ or ‘Europe’ itself (ibid.:19-20). However, the EU discourse leaves those concepts vague, and is characterized by abstract terms that allow for broad interpretations.

The discourse of Europeanization is dominated by superficial metaphors suggesting a teleological project legitimated by grand EU narratives, such as ‘widening’, ‘and ‘deepening’ or ‘ever closer union’; vague, if not inaccurate, sociological terms, such as ‘integration’ and ‘inclusion’, and morphological metaphors such as ‘multi-leveled’ governance. (Delanty and Rumford 2005:3)

European identity has also been shaped since the 1980s by the discourse on ‘unity in diversity’, which is hard to disagree with and makes it an acceptable discourse for everyone.

Diversity is often seen in the frame of Europe’s multifaceted heritage by referring to history and legacy. Particularly, architecture and the (art) historically canonized architectural sites, monuments and styles are believed to manifest the European cultural heritage. The cultural heritage is not only seen as bearing the legacy of separate European nations or ethnic or regional groups, but manifesting the memory and heritage of all Europeans. (Lähdesmäki 2012:71-72)

Such a common cultural heritage and identity are often argued to be grounded in common values such as democracy, rule of law, freedom and respect for human rights, and the Roman-Greek heritage, Renaissance, Enlightenment, and Christian theology.

Castano (2004) proposes a social psychological approach to European identity. He suggests that “unity”, meaning cultural homogeneity, is not a prerequisite for establishing a sense of belonging to a political community, but this community needs to “establish itself as a possible self-representation at the collective level for its citizens” and to become a *psychological existence* which is present in the citizens’ minds (Castano 2004:43). The extent to which the EU is perceived as having a real existence is crucial for a sense of belonging. This psychological existence and the EU citizens’ identification with the EU’s “entitativity” may be acquired by symbols and media attention, but Castano stresses that the EU’s efforts are weakened or under-

mined by changes within the EU, lacking consensus of policy-makers at the EU-level, and no clear and permanent geographical boundaries (Castano 2004:43-44).

Regarding the question of the why, some scholars argue that there is a functional need for a European identity to legitimate EU governance. Kantner (2006) suggests that a sense of collective identity, which she calls “qualitative identity” as opposed to numerical identity (based on language, ethnicity, territory, religion etc.), may best be achieved by shared values and a shared self-understanding among EU citizens and consensus on sensitive policy areas such as welfare, constitutional foreign and defense policy. She uses Eurobarometer polls to determine the sense of belonging and the degree of collective values of EU citizens by examining the responses given to questions touching on these nationally sensitive and “highly value laden” policy areas. Kantner stresses that the single, most relevant common political characteristic of the Europeans is their EU citizenship, which makes them clearly numerically identifiable, but has no essential features. “Like any other numerical identification, it is ascribed regardless of the self-understanding of the individuals” (Kantner 2006:509). Political integration is thus inseparable from cultural integration and shared self-understanding. EU citizenship is indeed an important and rather recent focus in studies and discussions on European identity. Bruter (2005) evaluates from a political science perspective whether a European mass identity, influenced by EU institutions, has emerged since the beginnings of the European project, how this new identity has affected national, regional or local identities and what political actions and messages, symbols and initiatives may have stimulated or impeded identification and the sense of EU citizenship. Bruter’s angle of research is a behavioral bottom-up approach, investigating the feeling of the EU citizens themselves and what ‘being European’ entails for them, on an individual, subjective basis. Further-

more, he suggests a distinction between two components of political identity, a ‘civic’ one, linked to a political or institutionalized structure such as the state, and a ‘cultural’ one, related to the idea of a nation (Bruter 2005:11-12). The EU being neither a state nor a nation, this distinction of civic and cultural identities makes a European identity highly complex:

Indeed, while conceiving Europe as a cultural identity presumably implies a reference to Europe as a continent or civilization that stretches from the Atlantic to the Ural, conceiving Europe as a ‘civic’ identity would imply a reference to the European Union, which covers well under half of it. (ibid.:13)

These circumstances can only result in a mismatch of the European civic identity and the cultural identity.

For Zygmunt Bauman, the “future of *political* Europe hangs on the fate of European *culture*” (Bauman 2013:78, emphasis in the original), which gives European identity also a political role, since culture and identity as a sense of belonging are determinant factors of a community and of multiple groups’ willingness to cooperate and develop political solidarity that goes beyond a common market.

Heritage

Davison (2008) explores the shift in the meaning of heritage from an idea that became popular with the rise of the nation-state and their fight for legitimacy in 19th and 20th centuries, to a new cluster of meanings in today’s mobile, postmodern society. Since the 1970s, heritage has been linked to the concept of and a discourse on ‘value’ for the purpose of conservation, protection and preservation. This new meaning and broader sphere is promoted by UNESCO. UNESCO enlarged the concept of heritage from a national and local level to an international level, by embracing the anthropological understanding of heritage as both values and the objects

and sites they are embodied (Davison 2008:32). Heritage is not only attributed to something ‘old’ or historically significant, it is also generated in the present as intangible performances and intangible qualities of the material heritage are recognized (UNESCO 1972, 2003).

Cultural tourism has been enhanced and encouraged by the growing attention given to the protection and the management of heritage sites, under the new discourse on heritage and its value issued by UNESCO and the inscription of the first sites in the World Heritage List in 1978. In her study on the representation of nation and cultural diversity in discourses on World Heritage, Labadi (2007) finds that particular values were used to project carefully constructed images of the past, the nation and cultural diversity and that governments construct models of national collective identity based on monumentality, grandeur and heroism. Just as identity, heritage and the discourse on it is always linked to power and agency.

Heritage, of course, fulfills many functions and has different uses and purposes. It can be a tool for governance, in defining and legitimizing identity, and has often been used in this sense of identity politics in nationalism, becoming “a material embodiment of the spirit of the nation” (Hall 2008: 219). Indeed, heritage and the purposes it fulfills have often been related to the exercise of power – not only meaning individuals who could state and decorate their power, wealth and social status with collections, but also the “symbolic power to order knowledge, to rank, classify and arrange, and thus to give meaning to objects and things through the imposition of interpretative schemas, scholarship and the authority of connoisseurship” (ibid.220). In the post-colonial context, heritage is crucial for the construction of identity of a newly independent state, often involving the demand for restitution of national art treasures and heritage artifacts, which had been appropriated by imperial powers (Samuel 2008:288). Along that line,

Lähdesmäki states that “In a sense, the heritage is colonized by the EU for its identity political purposes” (Lähdesmäki 2012: 72).

Ashworth, Graham and Tunbridge’s (2007) concept of multicultural heritage also is useful in approaching the EU as a social space of diversity. They discuss the uses of heritage in different contemporary models of pluralistic society to create and manage collective identities. Naturally, this involves the questions of how the heterogeneity of societies should be reflected in the selection of heritage, and how conflicts of interest resulting from the various uses and various producers of heritage and issues of inclusion and exclusion should be resolved.

Laurajane Smith (2006) challenges the Western conception and hegemony in the definition of heritage, that promotes a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable in an “authorized discourse” on heritage. This authorized heritage discourse constitutes and legitimizes what heritage is, and “who has the ability to speak for and about the nature and meaning of heritage” (Smith 2006:29). Smith considers heritage as a social and cultural practice for the management, conservation protocols, techniques and procedures undertaken by heritage managers, archaeologists, architects, museum curators and other experts, as leisure or economic practice, and the social and cultural practice of meaning and identity making. All these practices and the meaning of heritage are constructed by discourses, which in turn reflect these very practices (Smith 2006:13). Discourses on heritage can be generated at all levels, from the local or community to the national and even supranational level such as the EU, and are usually shaped by authorities of any kind. The authorized heritage discourse helps to delegitimize and legitimize a particular identity and constructs both a particular definition of heritage and an authorized mentality (ibid.:50-52). Smith calls for the end of the distinction

between tangible and intangible heritage commonly made in heritage literature, because in her understanding, all heritage is intangible, since it is the immanent value that constitutes heritage:

It is value and meaning that is the real subject of heritage preservation and management processes, and as such all heritage is 'intangible' whether these values or meanings are symbolized by a physical site, place, landscape or other physical representation, or are represented within the performances of languages, dance, oral histories or other forms of 'intangible' heritage'.

(Smith 2006:56)

Representational and symbolic value, especially in national contexts, has been the object of study and discussion of many scholars. Not all authors agree with the understanding of value as something given, already existing and inherent to heritage. Schofield (2008) considers value as "culturally constituted", as something learned about or related to memory, remembrance, the character of the place, local customs, thus again not limited to material heritage (Schofield 2008:25).

Heritage and the selection of heritage sites are experiencing a shift away from mere protection and conservation to become more and more political, with more motivations for nation and identity building, and expectations of economic benefits from increased tourism at sites (Leask and Fyall 2006: 285). Heritage is now often seen as an impetus, being still one of the few forms of labor-intensive sectors which are growing and do not run the risk of relocation, outsourcing or digitalization (Samuel 2008:278). Also the EU sees heritage as a labor-intensive industry and a generator of economic growth, not only in the regions and locally, but also in terms of national and supranational bureaucracy that is tied to it. This approach, however, competes with the neo-liberal ideology the EU pursues in its trade and economic agenda. In fact,

Europe is incredibly rich in heritage and the leader in “labeled” heritage, dominating UNESCO’s World Heritage List. However, Europe is beginning to recognize that there is a problem with what Robinson (2014) calls the “overproduction of heritage”. Europe is trying to find new, creative ways of using and engaging with heritage besides protecting, conserving, managing and passively consuming it. In the past few years, there has been a change of emphasis in the approach to heritage, towards a more developmental, catalytic role in the economic and social development, aimed at closing the gap between the costs and the benefits of heritage apart from appreciating and consuming it, underpinned by EU funding measures (Robinson 2014).

Barthel-Bouchier (2013) points out new tendencies of promoting heritage, a new discourse of sustainability in terms of heritage and heritage tourism. Sustainability in one sense means to make heritage and historic structures profitable in the long run by increasing tourism and creating infrastructures to benefit the whole region. This also impacts on the organizational field of heritage. Barthel-Bouchier provides a list of examples of this worldwide process, where private and public agencies, local and national stakeholders alike cooperate and coalesce in order to promote heritage tourism and/or sustainable tourism (Barthel-Bouchier 2013:164-5). The other aspect of sustainability is to control and reduce the social and ecological costs of heritage tourism. Sustainability, a key word which has been recognized as priority and incorporated in many realms of life and policy fields, may be the common denominator and link between contradictory purposes, opposition of not-for profit heritage organizations and the for-profit tourism industry. Many international organizations, also in the field of tourism and heritage, as well as in climate change (such as the UN and sub-organizations), have adopted conventions and agreements committing themselves to sustainable development and actions in their respective

fields of competence, such as the 2005 Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, known as FARO Convention.

A growing body of literature expresses the desire for greater social and cultural inclusion of the public, local communities, stakeholders and minorities at all levels in the identification, protection, management and interpretation of heritage properties (Davison 2008; Labadi 2007; Smith 2006). This agitation originated around indigenous communities whose heritage and identity have always tended to be defined and constructed by others – their critique has to do with power and intellectual authority in post-colonial contexts and thus engages European post-imperial nations.

IV. The European Heritage Label

The 2006 intergovernmental EHL

The EHL is not a completely new program. It is based on an intergovernmental Council initiative of the same name, launched in 2006. Several EU member states had expressed the desire to create a European Heritage Label, recognizing monuments and other built heritage that represent Europe. The selection, award and coordination of the sites and the label were administered by the participating states, not by any EU office or institution. At present, 64 sites located in 17 Member States and in Switzerland have been awarded the label. Other EU members (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK) did not participate in the scheme.

The intergovernmental initiative was then transformed into a formal EU action, coordinated and supervised by the Commission's Directorate-General (DG) IX Education and Culture. As a senior official in DG Culture stated in an interview, this re-conceptualization of the EHL was a response to the call from member states for a more transparent, efficient and visible initiative (Interview, April 24, 2014). More concretely, the selection process was supposed to become more transparent and guided by established and concrete criteria, a centralized management thought to facilitate the designation process and coordination.

In March 2009, the Commission had already conducted an online survey among EU citizens, organizations and authorities in order to determine if the transformation of the label into a formal supranational initiative is desirable and justified and the cost-benefit-ratio of such an initiative (Brandt 2011:23). The results of the survey were rather ambiguous: 58% of the participants were unfamiliar with the intergovernmental heritage label, but 90% considered it to be an opportunity

to strengthen European identity and the sense of belonging among Europeans. They also said they were in favor of the transnational and educational character of the label, and of clear selection criteria and a permanent office to ensure continuity (Brandt 2011:23).

The EU's EHL

In 2011, the new EHL was proposed by Commissioner for Culture Androulla Vassiliou and launched in a joint decision of the Council and the European Parliament (EP). It was awarded for the first time to four sites in late 2013 (one in Austria, two in the Netherlands, one in Estonia). The EHL is conceived to help strengthen Europeans' sense of belonging to the EU and promote mutual understanding in Europe. It is awarded to "sites which have played a significant role in the history of Europe and *the building of the EU*" (EC 2013a, emphasis added). As stated in the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the EHL (2011), the EHL aims at "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore" (Council 2011:1). The focus will not be on preservation, but on promoting and communicating the European dimension of sites, and making them more accessible and more inclusive for the European citizens. (EC 2013a). Its objectives are:

- to bridge gap between EU and citizens
- to strengthen sense of belonging
- to improve knowledge of European history , our shared cultural heritage, the role and values of the EU
- to increase cultural tourism
- encourage networking between the sites and heritage professionals

As these excerpts from EU documents show, the EU makes heavy use of abstract rhetoric and key words such as “shared cultural heritage”, “European dimension”. Elsewhere in the EU discourse on the EHL, it is stated that the candidate sites must demonstrate “European added value” (EC 2010a); they are chosen on the basis of their European *symbolic value*, rather than beauty or architectural quality (EC 2013a).

Candidate sites for the label must demonstrate that they fulfill at least one of the following conditions:

- their transnational or pan-European nature, by showing how their influence and attractiveness for visitors extend beyond national borders;
- their place and role in European history and integration and their relationship with key European events, personalities or movements;
- their place and role in developing and promoting the common values upon which the EU is built (Europa.eu 2012).

The sites may be monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes, places of remembrance, cultural goods and objects, and intangible heritage associated with a place, including contemporary heritage. Sites having been awarded the label under the previous intergovernmental scheme can participate, but have to submit a new application and are not necessarily chosen. The Council Decision on establishing the EHL says that “the widening of its geographical scope should be examined” (Council 2011:2), but the interviewed DG Education and Culture official clarified that the participation will for the moment be limited to the 28 member states (Interview, April 24, 2014). Applicant sites are also required to submit a work plan outlining provisions for management or transformation of the site, promotional

measures and a communication strategy to highlight the European significance of the site (EC 2014a). Finland, Ireland, the UK, and Sweden, all having been entitled to submit sites in the first selection round of 2013, opted out of participation in the EHL program. Croatia was not eligible to submit candidates because it only joined the EU in July 2013, after the end of the submission deadline for the 2014 selection round.

The EHL is aimed explicitly at Europe's youth, by requiring the applicants to implement educational activities communicating European values and history. According to the most recent Eurobarometer of August 2013, "Younger people have the most pronounced pro-European sentiments and are most likely to believe that their voice counts in the EU" (Eurobarometer 2013:3). Asked whether the preferred or targeted audiences of the EHL sites are EU citizens or tourists from outside, the DG Education and Culture official responded that "any tourist is welcome, but the purpose is to communicate EU history" (Interview, April 24, 2014).

Similarities to UNESCO's World Heritage List (WHL) are obvious, but the EC ensures that the EHL scheme does not overlap with the UNESCO World Heritage List or other existing cultural heritage initiatives, such as the "cultural routes" program of the Council of Europe. Rather, the EHL complements them. A striking parallel between UNESCO World Heritage (WH) and the EHL is the use of the notion "value" in the EU's rhetoric on EHL, a term that also is found in UNESCO's criteria. However, while the EHL is perceived to be an identity-building instrument and includes explicitly European sites demonstrating European value, which makes the sites not just places to visit, but to learn and strengthen a sense of belonging, the WH sites represent universal values. As stated by UNESCO, "what makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. While UNESCO's concept of world heritage is oriented

towards the universal value of sites, claiming that “World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located” (UNESCO 2014), the EHL’s premise is to include exclusively sites which “highlight heritage sites that celebrate and symbolize European integration, ideals and history” (EC 2013a). So it is precisely what is called the “added value of the European Heritage Label” which distinguishes it from other initiatives in the field of cultural heritage. The EHL sites will be monitored in order to ensure continued compliance with the criteria as laid down for the label, since the management remains with the member states. Brandt suggests that the EHL could become an alternative to other World Heritage initiatives and reduce the dominance of European monument and heritage sites in the World Heritage List and in Tentative Lists (Brandt 2011:25).

The designation and evaluation process and the organizational-administrative set-up of the EHL is modeled after UNESCO’s, but there are differences in the two lists. The initial and main focus of UNESCO is preservation and protection of sites, while sites eligible for the EHL are already expected to have a sound management and excellent maintenance. And, as indicated above, the UNESCO WHL purports to reflect universal value whereas the EHL emphasizes European value. Nevertheless, as currently operating, both the WHL and the EHL have tangible effects, such as tourism.

The UNESCO WHL has since its establishment in 1972 been the only supranational compilation of sites of great value, selecting the sites against a set of established formal criteria. Given the prestige and popularity of UNESCO’s WHL, the creation of a proper and per definition exclusive European equivalent may (or may not) result in a competition for the inscription of sites located in the European Union. While the EHL is unlikely to become in the

near future a serious competitor to UNESCO's WH, in terms of prestige, the number of sites and maybe even their quality, it does, however, add to the landscape of global heritage branding, it even challenges it. The EHL introduces a new hierarchy in global heritage marketing and presentation. On the one hand, its selective character is a contrast to other heritage labels' global and universal orientation and accessibility; on the other hand, it supersedes regional or national heritage initiatives by integrating the designated sites in a supranational network.

Only the Member States that had not participated in the intergovernmental label were invited to participate in the first selection process for the EHL as a European Union initiative in 2013. Of the states entitled to submit candidates in the first round, Austria, Estonia, Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands decided to participate and were allowed to pre-select a maximum of 4 sites which could potentially all be selected, if they meet the criteria. The first pre-selection of 2013 included nine sites.

The procedure for awarding sites is carried out in two stages: sites are pre-selected at the national level and the final selection is done at European level by the Commission, based on the recommendations of a European Panel of twelve independent experts. Four of the panel members were selected by means of a draw in the Cultural Affairs Committee within the Council of the European Union. Each of the four experts was a candidate in one of the following categories, which they represent in the final committee: European history and cultures, education and youth, cultural management (including the heritage dimension), and communication and tourism (Council 2012). Five of the twelve panel members are affiliated with UNESCO, ICOMOS, the Council of Europe, or other international or national cultural NGOs, the others are scholars in the

fields of Art History, Cultural Heritage and Heritage Management, or affiliated with national Ministries of Culture.

In late 2013, four sites were designated EHL sites: The Archeological Site of Carnuntum, displaying remains and excavations of a Roman army camp and hosting a Museum, in Austria; the medieval Great Guild Hall in Tallinn (Estonia); the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands, housing the International Court of Justice (the principal judicial body of the United Nations), the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the Hague Academy of International Law, and the extensive Peace Palace Library; and Camp Westerbork, a transit camp during WW II, also located in the Netherlands. At the first glance, these four sites do not seem to have a lot in common (see also Figures 1 – 5, following pages). In the following I examine them and show how they fit in the EU’s discourse on heritage and identity.



Figures 1 and 2: Archaeological Site of Carnuntum.



Figure 3: Great Guild Hall, Estonia



Figures 4 and 5: Camp Westerbork, Netherlands



Figure 6: Peace Palace, Netherlands

It is also worth considering the sites that were rejected. Those are the three Danish sites: Carlsberg, symbol of the Brewery Industry; Dybbøl Banke (Dybbøl Hill) as a place of remembrance of the two Schleswig wars in the second half of the 19th century, involving several European states took place, and introducing a Danish minority to Germany; and the transnational site (together with Poland) “The First Europeans: The living heritage of the Cistercians” in Løgumkloster, Denmark and Pelplin, Poland; “Schengen” presented by Luxembourg; and the Austrian national thematic site “Silent Night! Holy Night!”, the sites and museums linked to the Song of continental European culture with worldwide significance. In their panel report, the evaluation committee states that the most frequent reason of rejection was the lack of pan-European significance in the application, regardless of the national or regional value of the sites due to misunderstandings on the objective of the EHL. Other sites did not fulfill the formal criteria, and often did not present a work plan (EC 2013b:3). In fact, the criterion of the European dimension represents a challenge to most sites, because it requires sites to add and adopt a new dimension or layer that they did not necessarily promote before. Also, the European dimension leaves much room for interpretation. The emphasis is on the *European* and not the *EU* symbolic value of a site, which increases the options. If the applicants for the EHL were to reflect strictly EU values and heritage created during the lifetime of the EU, which spans only 60 years, then “Schengen” would probably be the only site eligible on the list because it is the place where in 1995 the agreement establishing the creation of Europe's borderless Schengen Area had been signed. This brings up a paradox of abstractedness and concreteness in terms of space and time: The EU, an abstract concept itself, wants heritage to be situated and concrete, capable of receiving visitors (which a tangible site is more capable of than an intangible site) and represen-

tative of a constructed conglomerate of states that has been existing - in relative terms - only for a very brief time in Europe's history and is continuously evolving in size and scope.

The reception of the EHL

Most online articles repeat or paraphrase the EU's official rhetoric. Spanish journalist and EU scholar Encarna Hernández proposes on her blog "Más Europa" (More Europe) a "route of the Treaties" for the EHL, encompassing the cities such as Rome, Maastricht, Paris, Nice and Lisbon, where EU Treaties had been signed (Hernández 2010). More specifically, she suggests the locations, where the Treaties were concluded, like the *Palazzo dei Conservatori* in Rome, the *Salon de l'Horloge* in Paris, and the convent *Monasterio de los Jerónimos de Belén* in Lisboa as "perfect candidates" for the label. Cynically speaking, Eurobonds¹ would make a most appropriate first selection for a potential intangible European heritage, because the Eurocrisis has without a doubt acquired a European dimension in scope and impact, and its legacies will be felt over years to come.

Negative opinions on the EHL resound from the EP, questioning the necessity and credibility of such a label. A BBC article claims that the initiative, although welcomed by the majority of MEPs, had only been approved in the EP after "a heated debate" and after fierce criticism by Euroskeptic MEPs, attacking the controversial meaning and different understandings of a common European heritage (BBC 2011). Great resistance came from representatives of the British anti-EU UKIP party, most notably from MEP Gerard Batten, calling the project a

¹ Eurobonds are suggested joint government bonds of all 18 Eurozone members as a way to tackle the European sovereign debt crisis of 2009. Eurobonds would allow indebted states to borrow new funds at better conditions, namely the same conditions as non-crisis states.

“crackpot idea”, “desperate propaganda”, a vain attempt of the Commission to hold the EU’s decline in popularity and to increase its relevance to member states. Batten, speaking on behalf of UKIP, disagrees strongly with the idea of imposing a European dimension to sites, suggesting that there are no such sites and that it would be conflictive with national and local identities.

What an insult! Are you really suggesting that war memorials, which honor the brave and fallen in two World Wars should have an EU plaque placed on them? There is only one memorial in England where I can think of that it would be appropriate to stick an EU plaque. And that’s the grave stone of Ted Heath, the man who betrayed Britain into the European Union. I don’t think anyone would object to that, least of all him. [...] Let’s stick the European Heritage Label on the dustbin of history. (Batten 2011)

His fellow British MEP Nikki Sinclair pointed out that heritage has different meanings for different nations, and that also not all of the European history is a shared one: "I come from a country that has been free for a thousand years; a country that stood up against fascism and communism. That is something we cannot all share because we had different versions of that" (cited in BBC 2011). Sinclair proposed Auschwitz as the center of European heritage, “because that's a symbol of what happened to the last country that tried to unify the European countries by force" (ibid.). This very abrasive rejection of the proposal is certainly not only motivated by patriotic reasons and the lacking identification with Europe – a chronic feature of the UK’s reluctant attitude towards the EU – but also doubts the credibility and appropriateness of claiming a European heritage, a heritage that includes and speaks to everyone and does not erase other senses of belonging. Another example of negative reception is Margarida Vasconcelos, EP-insider and Head of Research at the European Foundation. She simply calls the

initiative unnecessary, “another disguise to brainwash people about EU integration” (Vasconcelos 2010) and “a waste of taxpayers’ money” (Vasconcelos 2011). She claims that “most of the sites have nothing to do with EU history but European history whilst others just have a national dimension. Consequently, awarding an EU label to such sites may well give misleading information, particularly to the target young people” (ibid.). An article in *The Independent* also raises the question if there is at all a “‘European’ history – only lots of overlapping national histories?”, but supports the initiative, stating that “We cannot both complain that the EU is faceless and also complain when it tries to give itself a face (and a history)” (*The Independent* 2010). The objection, that pointing to a common heritage, symbolizing the values that bind Europeans together beyond national boundaries at this juncture in European history might miss the point, may certainly be legitimate.

The visibility of the EHL

In order to evaluate the visibility of the EHL, I did an online research via the database LexisNexis, an academic digital media repository, which scans online newspaper and magazine articles for a given keyword. Using „European Heritage Label“ as a keyword, I looked for references to the EHL in the EU’s largest languages German, English, French and Spanish. I find that the coverage of the EHL and the designated sites in national, regional and local media is very low in the member states. The only source that regularly posted about the EHL is the Brussels-based online magazine *Europolitics*, which covers mostly European affairs and is not a typical go-to source of information for the average EU citizen . The public’s knowledge and awareness of the label is very modest as well.

In the case of Austria, some major newspapers (“Archäologischer Park Carnuntum erhält Kulturerbe-Siegel”, *Der Standard* 2014, “Carnuntum erhält erstes Kulturerbe-Siegel der EU”, *Kleine Zeitung* 2013) and other newswire agencies published short reports on the designation of Carnuntum as a EHL site in their online version at the occasion of the award ceremony in Carnuntum on April 11, 2014. The articles repeat for the most part the EU’s rhetoric as found in its press releases, and do not offer an original opinion or discussion of the initiative, the expectations and implications. As the director of Carnuntum informed me during an interview, the Austrian public broadcast network ORF reported on the label preceding and following the award ceremony (Interview, June 5, 2014). As of October 2014, Austria’s official online tourism portal *austria.info* does not mention the EHL as a new attraction, unlike several regional or local tourism websites. However, it dedicated a heading on its welcome page and a whole page of its website to UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in Austria. According to a senior official in DG Education and Culture, both the Commission and the member states share the responsibility for the visibility of the label. The Commission is in charge of promoting the label at the EU level, by providing a website, organizing the award ceremonies, creating a logo in order to ensure the instant recognition of the label and sending out press releases. The DG Education and Culture is currently working on a communication strategy and preparing further information material, as well as short videos about the four EHL sites, which will be available on the EHL website (Interview, April 24, 2014). In fact, the DG launched a new website in mid-April 2014, coinciding with the award ceremony of the label to the first sites. It now includes an interactive map of the EHL sites, and much information material on the initiative. Web communication is basically the easiest and most direct way to inform and engage with EU citizens, and serves as a

means to ensure transparency in European matters. However, if and how all this information and material offered by the EU institutions is embraced and used depends largely on the citizens themselves. The member state's responsibility is to communicate the initiative to the national heritage sector and to preselect the national candidate sites. Taking again the case of Austria, the national Minis

try for Education, Arts and Culture (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur) provides on its website a fact sheet on the label and application criteria, as part of their communication strategy to spread the word about it and target potential applicant sites.



Figure 7: The European Heritage Label logo

Still, there is continuing confusion with the intergovernmental label. Various online news articles mix up the two – admittedly overlapping and easy to confuse – labels, using the old logo or ignoring that the new initiative is distinct and now run by the Commission. Increasing the visibility of the EHL will certainly be a major challenge. Public media alone doesn't do the job. The EHL could be introduced to a broad audience by heavy advertising both by EU and national institutions and the designated sites themselves, and also by tourist industry actors. Or, as it currently seems, it is left to grow over time in popularity and reach, leaving it to a more restricted

group of art and culture aficionados or EU enthusiasts, starting off with word-of-mouth recommendations to eventually acquire a status similar to UNESCO.

The many actors involved on different levels, and in particular the double channel of communication and double coordination of the label (at EU and national stage) bear the risk of hindering efficient and effective marketing and promotional campaigns, since it is not completely clear whose responsibility it is to promote the label. This mismatch and a lack of communication and distribution of competences became obvious to me when talking to the Austrian national coordinator of the EHL initiative and the manager of the site Carnuntum. The coordinator considers marketing and advertising the label as the responsibility of the sites, seeing their own mission being limited to the coordination of the organizational aspect - the call for applications, the application, appointment of the national expert jury, communication with DG Culture, and being the mediator between the EU and the sites (Interview, August 27, 2014). Conversely, Carnuntum's manager feels that the visibility of the label needs to be ensured by the national coordination office and expects a "national acknowledgement" of the sites' investment and efforts to secure the label, as well as the value and significance of the label and the quality of the designated sites, resulting in appropriate campaigns and outreach. Bearing the EHL, he understands the site to be "showcased" and also contributing to the image of Austria, which should be compensated with active support and concessions by the state. "Otherwise, you will always be the solicitor asking for something" (Interview, June 5, 2014). A member of the national expert jury with a strong background in cultural management also agrees that the popularity and clout of the label is also highly dependent on marketing in the cultural and tourism sector, and should be understood as a unique selling proposition, just as other qualifications or

designations (Interview, May 27, 2014). All that suggests that a clear strategy as to how increase the visibility of the EHL and the competences of the different actors involved in Austria have yet to be determined.

V. Document Analysis: The EU's Rhetoric in the Discourse on EHL

Although, as Barker points out, culture is a “zone of contestation” with competing meanings and descriptions of the world (Barker and Galasinski 2003:56), political discourse is capable of constructing a commonly accepted reality. Just as identities are the product of discursive practices and cultural politics, the definition and the meaning of heritage can be legitimized and determined by the use of language, resulting in Smith’s “authorized heritage discourse”. Naturally, discourse bears the risk of marginalizing or excluding certain actors or practices, and has the power of introducing new actors and practices; it allows some kinds of identities to exist and denies others (Barker and Galasinski 2003:57, Hall 2008; Smith 2006). In the case of the EU, the discourse on cultural politics is not only structural and constructivist, but also functional. It serves as a representation of the self; it creates and promotes a European identity and a common heritage to legitimate its decision-making power and supremacy over almost 500 million individuals.

This new cultural discourse blends in with the existing discourse on EU citizenship. The Maastricht Treaty created the legal status of European citizen by including a “Citizenship of the Union” chapter, in which it defined and specified their rights and entitlements. Citizenship is “an identity-marker that simultaneously ‘brands’ the population that is to be governed” and functions as an “agent of consciousness” (Shore 2000:71). But it fails to create European citizens in a cultural and social sense. The efforts of the EU to create a European heritage to foster a sense of belonging is just as the project “citizenship”, likely to be limited to discursive, administrative and bureaucratic measures. However, culture and heritage are very vaguely defined by EU institu-

tions. This holds true for the understanding and for the nature of heritage sites, too. The EHL eligibility criteria provide a few hints, and suggest that heritage is above all understood as value-laden, pro-European and not nationally claimed. A broad definition of culture can be a good thing, allowing for a lot of diversity and inclusion, and, in the case of the EHL, maximizes the number of sites eligible for applying for the label. As a national jury member points out with regard to the frequent distinction between *culture* and *high culture*, culture and heritage can be so many things: they are reflected in how we live, work, eat, reside, et cetera, making culture thus a universal notion affecting everybody (Interview, May 29, 2014). These aspects of culture, however, bear a lot of differences, since buildings and cityscapes in the Mediterranean differ largely from Scandinavian cities, as does the food, the daily rhythm, and so on, and would not make it to the list of common European heritage. But this might be just the challenge the EHL tries to overcome and deal with, although this might mean a renouncing or shift away from “everyday” culture and heritage.

The sources for my discourse analysis are EU documents on the EHL (Council decisions, the application form for EHL candidate sites, panel reports etc.) as well as the official communication on the Commission’s website. Although the quantity of those official documents is rather limited, given the recency of the initiative, some patterns in the EU’s official rhetoric on the EHL, culture and identity can be identified. Usually, EU documents are produced and designed very deliberately and the language used is chosen very consciously. The most recurrent and salient themes are the narratives of unity and diversity, European dimension, added value and citizen engagement. I will also discuss how these narratives are put into practice, and embraced by the designated EHL sites.

The unity in diversity discourse

“Unity in diversity” has been the EU’s universal discourse on identity for more than two decades, and is also reproduced in the rhetoric on the EHL. Under the premise “unity in diversity”, culture is not a unifying factor, and does not represent a common ground or point of departure. It does, however, appeal to the tolerance and the will to mutual understanding of the Europeans, in an effort to overcome differences. Diversity also entails the freedom of an individual or a collectivity to exercise their cultural, social and religious practices, have their life styles, and to speak their languages. Recognizing and safeguarding this diversity and promoting it in its heritage aspect is a priority of the EU, which explicitly refers to the “dissemination of the culture and history of the European *peoples*” (Council 2011:1, emphasis added). The EU appears to encourage this diversity at the national and regional levels, and does not understand them to be competing with the European identity it aims at creating, but rather to complement it. Yet the frequent reference to the dichotomy “shared – different/diverse” and “unity – diversity”, as the EU’s task of “respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore” (ibid.) puts the national or regional at the same level with European identity. At the same time, shared values, common history and common heritage account for continuity in a complex and multifaceted imagined community. However, diversity often leads to conflicts in the past and even in the present day, (too much) diversity in European societies is a target of rising right-wing parties across the EU, especially when diversity comes from outside the EU. The binary opposition unity and diversity reflects the key concepts of integration and differentiation in social theory (Delanty and Rumford 2005:10). In the EU, these

concepts are articulated alongside each other, and they relate to each other in complex ways. The EU discourse emphasizes the synergies generated by them, without the intention to overcome differences. Rather, the goal is to achieve mutual understanding by integration. This process is immanent to globalization and thus also to Europeanization, being rather a version of globalization than of transnationalization, as Delanty and Rumford argue. It is a characteristic of multicultural and transnational societies, producing a sort of hybridity, interpenetration and interdependencies, and may entail new, cosmopolitan forms of identity negotiations (Delanty and Rumford 2005:11-12).

When I say culture or common history, I have to face the problem of exclusion. [...] There is this key concept of diversity, but then, the EU's heritage as a conglomeration of nation-states leaks through, and the idea that a common culture and history are based on the idea of the nation-state. This kind of argument should be avoided, because it implies the exclusion of ethnic and social groups that don't fall into that idea. (Interview, June 2, 2014)

Diversity in the EU context is often understood as the co-existence of nation-states and different levels of governance within a bigger, supranational space. In a cultural sense, diversity means the different peoples, cultures, identities, languages and heritage. Common differentiations and divisions of Europe in Southern, Central and Eastern, Northern Europa and *Mittleuropa* all evoke very different cultural, political and historical connotations and make it hard to give an account of Europe as a unity.

The "added value" discourse

The label is conceived to be complementary with regard to other initiatives in the field of cultural heritage such as for example the UNESCO World Heritage List, the European Heritage

Prize 'Europa Nostra' and the Council of Europe's 'European Cultural Routes'. This complementarity and distinction shall be achieved by the *added value* of the selected sites, according to the EHL concept. This *added value* is based on the contribution of the sites to European history: the EHL would only designate sites which have played a key role in the history of the European Union (again, note the ambiguity- is it the EU since being formed or the countries therein), it is not about a site's beauty or architectural quality but rather its symbolic value for European integration (Council 2011:3). The representational and symbolic value of heritage, especially in national contexts, has been the object of study and discussion of many scholars. As literature suggests, value is relevant in how we interpret and engage with heritage, but there is disagreement over whether value is culturally constructed and if it is inherently part of an authorized discourse (see Smith 2006 and Schofield 2008 on value and heritage). The notion of *added value*, however goes beyond the physical and symbolic value of the site, it is abstract enough to allow for broad interpretations and components. It can be understood from the EU's rhetoric as the contribution of a heritage site to a better understanding and knowledge of the EU, it "adds" interest, attraction and a meaning besides being only looked at. *Added value* is the purpose, the function that heritage fulfills in order to achieve political and cultural goals. *Added value* may also be understood in economic terms, since the label is expected to increase tourism and to contribute to sustainable regional development (Council 2011:2). An EU signature compilation of heritage sites throughout Europe may certainly attract cultural tourists and give them a new alternative to the typical UNESCO sights tourists might already have visited. It also represents *added value* for the managers of the sites themselves, since they reap benefits by being included in a network and they also can engage in valuable exchanges with other heritage sites and her-

itage professionals and the contemporary creative sector (EC 2014a, EC 2014b:6). The EU understands heritage as a catalyst, capable of producing growth and creativity, and also identifies it as a commercial good. This approach is in line with the goals set out in the Commission's recent report on the European Agenda for Culture, which aims to include culture in external relations (EC 2014c).

European dimension

The discourse of *European dimension* and significance is another very broad and vague concept. It outlines the components and values of European cultural identity. There are two strands under which the European significance can be demonstrated, both of which are equally important: European history and values, and European integration. In its panel report on the selection of sites for the EHL, the *European dimension* is often linked to European values that the EU promotes and enshrines in its Treaties. The Peace Palace in The Hague, is an “icon and a symbol of Peace and Justice in Europe and in the world” (EC 2013b:5); and at the same time, the EU itself is a success story of building and keeping peace in a decade-long effort that has in 2012 been crowned by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize. The EHL designation of Camp Westerbork brings to the fore the shared memory of the Europeans, but not so much that of war and destruction but of the “Culture of Peace and Reconciliation” (EC 2013b:8). The remarkable decision to include negative heritage in the EHL list demonstrates a truly comprehensive conception of heritage. However, the emphasis on the reconciliation process, an achievement which can be

attributed to the EU's founding fathers, makes the discourse of European history seem a little selective.

Beside the values rhetoric, the *European dimension*, encompasses as a second strand the integration rhetoric. The EHL should be linked to places, events or personalities that helped Europe to become an ever closer Union. The *European dimension* of the Archeological Site of Carnuntum, Austria, stems from its importance as a trading crossroads in the Roman Empire, considered as a “predecessor of Europe, combining different cultures, religions, and geographic areas under one administrative system” (EC 2013b:7). Carnuntum can in fact be attributed to both strands. The Great Guild Hall in Tallinn is mentioned as an example of early European integration, because it was part of a trade network in medieval Northern Europe (ibid.:6). Moreover, the Panel report stresses that the site contextualizes Estonian history within European history and symbolizes the resistance to enemies and occupations. This reflects the common European self-understanding as being different from other great regional powers in its immediate surroundings, like Russia or the former Ottoman Empire.

The discourse on *European dimension* serves thus as mere self-reference and self-representation. In the application form, the sites must indicate if they have already been awarded some sort of label or if it is part of a cultural or heritage program (such as the Council of Europe's cultural routes), emphasizing the requirement and distinctive feature of the EHL, to have and communicate a strong European character, which sets the label apart from other initiatives, but which are not mutually exclusive. The *European dimension* serves thus also the purpose of avoiding duplication or overlap with other existing programs, and is intertwined with the *added value* discourse. It is important that the *European dimension* is appropriately communicated at

the sites, which should not be sites destined for passive consumption, but offer activities, education, with maximal accessibility and multilingualism. The discursive construction of a *European dimension* as something that applies to and includes all of Europe and its citizens is problematic, though. It disregards the difference in interpreting historical events and identity negotiations and uniqueness. It creates the homogenization of what Benedict Anderson calls “imagined community”. The EU, by emphasizing the “European dimension” of the selected sites disconnects them from their national, regional or local relevance and gives them a European significance. This discourse of the “European dimension” allows for heritage to be embraced and claimed by a collectivity, and for sites to position themselves in a broader, more supranational and collective and less parochial context. The issue then becomes how these EHL sites are received by those living in and near them.

Engaging with EU citizens

Another feature of the EHL discourse is the focus on EU citizens and the interactive nature of the EHL sites. The EHL site should serve as a gateway to the European dimension, to help understand and interpret European integration, its unity and diversity, and to engage in an intercultural dialogue. According to the panel report,

EHL sites should invite citizens to think about Europe, what Europe stands for and what its core values are;

EHL sites should be made accessible to all European citizens by appropriate means, especially through multilingualism and the web;

EHL sites should connect citizens with other EHL sites, and ven (sic!) future EHL sites of the same category (EC 2013b:3).

This discourse on the functionality and the purpose of the EHL goes well beyond the consumption of heritage, and promotes the interaction and involvement of the visitor. It has clearly an educative function, by instructing the EU citizens on the values and benefits of the EU. Citizenship of Europe is perceived by the EU as complementing national citizenship and an “important element in safeguarding and strengthening the process of European integration” (Council 2011:1). Although EU citizenship is merely a legal category, it is built on cultural foundations, namely the values and principles that hold Europe together, such as democracy,

Respect for human rights, freedom, cultural and linguistic diversity, tolerance and solidarity are features of the discourse of Europeanness. Moreover, the Commission has emphasized the youth as its priority target group, since they represent the future of Europe and the path it will take. In a period of high youth unemployment, the attempt to bring Europe and European heritage on the radar of young Europeans to foster their sense of belonging may not calm their frustration. But the youth has proven to be very receptive to European projects, which explains the great success of the student exchange program Erasmus, which has certainly contributed to pro-EU sentiments among many participants.

Providing greater accessibility to heritage is a requirement for engaging with EU citizens. Another priority of the EHL is thus multilingualism. Providing websites and on-site information and activities in multiple languages and for multiple audiences (students, EU citizens, non-EU citizens) are indeed means which enable the sites to target and reach a broad audience. An examination of the four designated EHL sites’ websites, however showed the quite the opposite:

As of late October 2014, of the four official websites, three were available in English (Carnuntum, Great Guild Hall and Camp Westerbork) in addition to the respective national language, while the Peace Palace's site was exclusively in Dutch. The Great Guild website offered the most options (Estonian, English, Russian and Suomi), followed by Carnuntum (German, English, Slovakian) and Camp Westerbork (Dutch, English and German). The sites' current language policies suggest the nationalities of the bulk of visitors: based on the languages available on the websites, it can be assumed that the sites have so far attracted a mostly domestic or regional audience (including visitors from nearby neighbor states, like in the case of Carnuntum, which is located only about 30 km from Bratislava). As stated in the Panel Report, the designated EHL sites commit in their work plans to extend the online and on-site language offer (EC 2013b:5-8).

The analyzed documents suggest that first and foremost, the EHL is conceived for EU citizens, thus to generate intra-EU tourism, but it also tries to attract international tourists. Europe has lost its global market share in the tourism industry (Robinson 2014), and now with the populations of emerging markets starting to travel more, the EHL could be a means to develop a new profile as a destination for heritage tourists, by establishing a new in-house brand, contrasting and competing with the well-known and renowned UNESCO WH. The EHL promotes an alternative to the dominant contemporary discourse on heritage, highlighting the universal value, beauty and aesthetics of heritage. The EHL focuses attention on Europe as a historically interconnected region characterized by cultural diversity that today promotes its characteristics toward the goal of unity understood as peace and tolerance.

Concluding remarks

In the EU's rhetoric on the EHL, three semantic narrative can be distinguished: the narrative on unity and diversity; the narrative on European dimension; and the narrative on citizen engagement. With its discourse on the EHL, and on cultural policy in general, the EU appropriates several tools that are common for nation-building. Its discursive strategies aim at constructing a common history, a common heritage and promote remembrance and memory. For the purpose of defining a common heritage, the EU's focus has shifted from the future to the past. However, a common heritage is far from creating a 'collective memory', given the differences in the national historiographies and identities of the member states. The EU's discourse on heritage does not aim at eradicating national or alternative identities and heritage, but introduces a new understanding and interpretation of heritage sites, by adding a new narrative to the existing discourse and meaning of those sites. These narratives fit in with the EU's newly adopted "take" on cultural governance and its culture mainstreaming strategy. The EU could thus be considered, in addition to an imagined community, as a discursively created symbolic community. The EHL represents symbolic value for the EU, European history and integration. It is also a symbol itself, adding to the EU flag, EU citizenship and the common currency as reference points for a collectivity.

VI. Ethnographic and Institutional Case Studies: The Austrian Candidate Sites

This chapter reports on the implementation of the EHL initiative, the application and selection processes of the candidate sites and on the current state and outlook of the designated EHL site Carnuntum. As mentioned earlier, this case study is based on interviews with individuals involved in the coordination, application and selection procedures. The interviews were conducted in May, June and August of 2014. In order to provide some context for the case studies, a section on culture and heritage in Austria and the Austria - EU-relations serves as an introduction.

Culture, heritage and identity in Austria

One of Austria's most favorite claims is to call itself the heart of Europe, positioning itself in the center of the continent, a pivot between the East and the West, an intersection of the routes crossing the continent from the North to the South. The self-perception of Austria's centrality Austria still echoes the days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, spanning at its maximum expansion from the Carpathians to the Adriatic Sea and the Lake of Constance, comprising Bohemia, and most of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Austria's history in the twentieth century can be summarized with the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, World War I and the subsequent loss of territory; political and economic instability gave way to rising fascism and national-socialism, and culminated in its annexation by Hitler and World War II; the reconstruction of the country and its democratic stability, and the emergence of a new self-understanding and self-confidence as being a culturally and politically independent nation (especially with regards to

Germany), affectionate-naively called, “the island of the blessed”. Austria’s self-understanding as the central spot of Europe is also transmitted on Austria’s official tourism website *austria.info*, where Austria is presented as ‘*Treffpunkt Europas*’ (Europe’s meeting point). The discourse of being bridge and place of encounter constructs Austria as a crucial and central actor in European history (austria.info 2014). At the same time, Austrian identity and culture are often said to be the result of combined influences from Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern Europe. Although Austria’s national identity makes strong claims of its centrality within and for Europe, Austria’s official profile does not say so much about Austria’s identification with the EU. Rather, *austria.info* and most other tourism portals specialized in holidays in Austria emphasize Austria’s imperialistic past (embodied by the icon of nineteenth century Empress Sisi), alpine traditions and *Gemütlichkeit*, Austria’s slow-paced lifestyle and pleasure-oriented conviviality, the rich offer of high culture and classical music festivals, and culinary excellence, usually wrapped in a sense of historical grandeur. This contrast between an authentic Austria and its projected and perceived image becomes particularly salient in the example of the city of Salzburg, torn between what Austrians consider to be their true heritage (Mozart), and a cliché that attracts visitors (*The Sound of Music*) (see Graml 2004). As of October 2014, there is no reference to the EHL and no specific promotion of the Archeological Site of Carnuntum on Austria’s official tourism website. The site does, however praise Austria’s UNESCO World Heritage, which includes seven sites and two transnational sites (one with Hungary, one with France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland, boasting remains of prehistoric pile dwellings in the Alpine and sub-Alpine regions.

This past as a century-long conglomerate of different cultures, ethnicities and languages during the Habsburg reign is still present and cherished in the cuisine and the arts and promoted in tourism. Being part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Austria has participated in various forms of international migration, including immigration, emigration, and transit migration. However, immigration, especially coming from Turkey, and the management of multiculturalism have become controversial topics over the last decade (Jandl and Kraler 2003). The rise of the Freedom Party Austria (FPÖ), arguing for a cessation of immigration and a strict integration policy by very populist means and lurid slogans, such as “*Wien darf nicht Istanbul werden*” (Vienna must not become Istanbul), “*Daham statt Islam*” (Home instead of Islam), “*Heimatliebe statt Marokkanerdiebe*” (Love of your home country instead of Moroccan thieves) and others, targets primarily migrants from Turkey and the Maghreb. Following the same syntactic scheme, their criticism and claims also aim at the EU, and the loss of sovereignty in favor of supranational policies: “*Heimat statt Schüssel & Brüssel*” (Home instead of Bruxelles and Schüssel -referring to former pro-EU chancellor of the People’s Party ÖVP and Wolfgang Schüssel), “*Echte Volksvertreter statt EU-Verräter*” (True representatives of the people instead of EU-traitors).

It is worth noting that after WW II, no systematic top-down identity building efforts had occurred, probably because the memory of nationalistic and fascist propaganda still reverberated too heavily in the minds and history textbooks of the Austrian population. Austrian policymakers and elites had failed to foster a sense of positive identification and were reluctant towards the use of national symbolism and patriotic discourse, the only exception being the right-winged FPÖ (Bruter 2005:50-51). In fact, only a few events in the second half of the 20th century impacted or redefined Austria’s national identity, and also affected Austria’s image abroad. The

controversy surrounding Kurt Waldheim's presidential election² triggered a critical discussion and thorough rewriting of recent history and of Austria's role in WW II and the Holocaust and its construction as Adolf Hitler's 'first victim'. The Austrian government now made a meaningful turn in contemporary historiography and acknowledged Austria's collaboration with the National Socialists. In 2000, 5 years after Austria's accession to the EU, EU 'sanctions'³ against Austria also impacted the Austrian identity and their sense of identification with the EU, bringing to the fore a positive self-perception and negative perception of the „Other“ (the EU).

Austria and the EU: Competing identities?

Austria's way toward the EU was long. After World War II and during the Cold War, Austria bordered the Iron Curtain between the Soviet bloc and the free Western world, and remained committed to Western political values. In the 1970s and 1980s, the offices of several international organizations were established in Vienna⁴, due to its strategic geopolitical location as a bridge between the East and the West. This crucial geopolitical position in a bipolar world had prevented an earlier accession to the EU. Austria applied for membership in July 1989, once

² Kurt Waldheim, who was appointed Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1972 to 1981, was elected president in 1986 and had served as intelligence officer in the Wehrmacht. He justified his affiliation with the National Socialists in an interview by saying that during the war, he had only done his duty, just as hundreds of thousands of other Austrians. This controversy became known internationally as the "Waldheim Affair".

³ So-called 'sanctions' were put on Austria by the other EU member states as a reaction to the coalition including far-right party FPÖ, during which three wise men, appointed by European states, were sent to Vienna to observe politics.

⁴ Vienna is home to the IAEA (since 1957), to the OPEC headquarters (since 1965), to the OSCE (since 1975) and to one of the four United Nations Offices (since 1979).

the Soviet Union was no longer an issue. Negotiations started formally in 1993, in a group together with Finland and Sweden and proceeded smoothly and quickly (Bundeministerium für Integration, Europa und Äußeres 2014). On March 1st, 1994, talks were concluded and Austria's accession confirmed, the debate on EU membership, however, continued in the *Nationalrat*, the National Assembly, with the coalition of the Social-Democrats SPÖ and the People's Party ÖVP in favor and the Green Party and the Freedom Party FPÖ against it. A referendum on EU accession was held on June 12, 1994, after the negotiation talks had already been concluded and all the terms set, in which the Austrians voted 66.58 % in favor of membership, with an overwhelming turnout of 80%. There was almost perfect consensus among the ruling political parties, the social partners, the Farmers' Association, and the religious communities in support of EU membership (Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten n.d.:5). The overall pro-EU attitude of the elite was, however, far from being backed by the population. Three years prior to accession, only 16% of Austrians felt European, and the general interest in European issues and in the EU had been extremely low (Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten n.d.: 9-10). When in 1992 only one-third of Austria's population had been in favor of joining the EU, the Austrian government decided to launch a long-term campaign aiming at informing the citizens about the meaning and implications of EU membership, including a free Europe phone hotline, and the participation of well-known Austrian artists, athletes, and actors. At the end of the campaign the referendum, the feeling of being European among Austrians had risen from 16 % to 46 % (ibid.:11).

Austria joined the EU on January 1st, 1995, in a group of three neutral⁵ countries together with Sweden and Finland. In 1998 and 2006, Austria held the presidency of the European Council for 6 six months respectively.

Several EU myths exist in Austria's popular society, which are often exploited in the sensational press, discussed in countless letters to the editor and online commentary postings of newspapers, and ridiculed in satirical performances and TV shows. The most popular myths concern the alleged EU-standardized curved cucumber rules, the ban on the use of 'Austriacisms' (Austrian German terms, most prominent in culinary vocabulary), and generally, the overregulation, overstandardization and huge bureaucracy of Brussels (Wirtschaftskammer 2014a). Most of these false legends and popular outrages are rooted in a feeling of attack of Austrian national identity and practices, a restriction of Austrian particularism and mistrust against the EU. Austria ranks among the EU's most skeptical members: EU approval rates have been fluctuating since Austria's accession almost 20 years ago. They reached a low point in 2000 in reaction of the "sanctions", but increased with the emergence of the crisis in 2008 (Karner 2013:253), hitting now 38% of people considering EU membership a good thing, compared to the EU-average of 50% (Eurobarometer 2013:41). Karner (2010) suggests that reasons for contemporary Austria's euroskepticism, reflected in the media discourse on the EU, go deeper and involve the discursive negotiation of national identities, the issues of European integration, functioning and enlargement. In his study, Karner analyzed letters to the editor, published in

⁵Austria is bound to neutrality by the 1955 *Staatsvertrag*, its first post-World War II State Treaty, when it regained full sovereignty after 10 years of occupation by the US, British, French and Soviet allies. In agreement with neutrality, Austria has consistently refused NATO membership, although it cooperates with NATO in a "Partnership for Peace" on its own terms (NATO 2013). One of the underlying reasons for the wide-spread opposition against EU membership was and still is the public concern about the potential loss of neutrality.

Austria's most widely read and politically influential daily newspaper, and he points out that Austrians, "citizens of one of the world's most affluent nation-states" (Karner 2010:390) are deeply concerned and anxious about their welfare state, social change and the possibility of being deprived of their rights and 'entitlements', about the local effects of trans-national markets and bailouts, about immigration, and about feeling ignored by the national political elite and being ruled by distant 'Brussels' (Karner 2010; Karner 2013). Many of these anxieties and perceived social ills have to do with the EU and competing models of identity, but are also rooted in other contexts. Select historical episodes and national myths are used as analogies and projected into the EU, in order to interpret the present and to anticipate a usually frightening future (Karner 2010:392). This reveals the tendency to blame the EU and Brussels elite for everything; also politicians tend to use the EU as scapegoat for unpopular decisions or developments. A popular discourse in Austrian media and public sphere is also to point out discrepancies between an idealized EU and the shortcomings of the reality (ibid.:402-403). Lack of transparency, democratic deficit, the alienation from the EU and institutional distrust are all issues of concern.

The struggle for identity is also reflected in the Eurobarometer polls. The latest Eurobarometer from Fall 2013 reveals that most Austrians (52%) see themselves as Austrians and Europeans, while 36% see themselves as Austrians only, against the EU average of 49% and 38% identifying with the EU and their nationality and with their nationality only, respectively (Eurobarometer 2013:23-25). The overall trend of feeling more European than ten years ago (44% in EU-28) is not reflected in Austria, where the sense of belonging is rather stagnating (40% say that they feel neither less nor more European than a decade earlier) (ibid.: 26-28). National, local and regional identities are almost equally pronounced. The Austrians feel very

attached to their country (94%), and to a slightly lesser extent attached to their city or town and region (both 93%). Asked what the EU means to them, 63% of the Austrians responded with “the Euro”, 52% with “freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU”, 50% with “waste of money” and 38% with “Peace” (Eurobarometer 2013:22). The single currency is for most Austrians the most important component of European identity, followed by the values of freedom and democracy, history and culture (ibid.: 31).

Implementation of the EHL in Austria

As mentioned earlier, Austria had not participated in the previous intergovernmental label, due to the lack of clearly defined criteria and transparency, as the government official in charge of coordinating the EHL emphasizes (Interview August 27, 2014). However, the EC’s proposal of creating a EHL as a formal EU measure had not found immediate approval in the Austrian parliament. The Socialist and People’s Party government was in favor, the opposition (the Green Party, the Freedom Party and the Freedom Party’s splitter group BZÖ) were against the initiative. The objections put forward touched on the anticipation of a huge bureaucratic effort, and on the EHL being an attempt to construct an identity that yet needs to grow. Only after fierce debate, the parties were able to agree upon the approval of the proposal (Brandt 2011:23).

In Austria, the EHL is coordinated by the Department of European Cultural Policy, originally administered by the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture (*Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur*; BMUKK in its abbreviation). After the last Austrian general elections of 2013, the coordination of the EHL program was transferred to the Office of the Chancellor (*Bundeskanzleramt*), which only meant a structural change, but no changes in terms

of staff and management. In Fall 2012, the national coordination office issued an official press release, which went out in particular to the Departments of Culture of Austria's nine regional governments, which then called for applications on their websites. The national coordination office also informs in regular meetings with the heads of the regional Departments of Culture about new cultural initiatives such as the EHL (Interview, August 27, 2014). The applications of the interested sites had to be submitted to the coordination office by December 31, 2012. The communication and outreach of the label was considered difficult in the pilot round of the label, both by the national coordinator and by the site managements. All of the applicants learned very late about the label and prepared the application within a couple of weeks, some of them sacrificing Christmas holidays to complete the extensive form.

As was pointed out to me during the interview with the Austrian coordinator of the EHL, every participating state can operate the application and nomination process at their own discretion. Interestingly enough, the governments of Spain and France abstained from a public call for applications. Instead, they opted to select suitable sites themselves. She suspects that the higher significance those countries attach to cultural heritage compared to Austria may be an explanation to this more undisclosed way of proceeding. Her feeling was backed by observations at a workshop which the coordination office offered in order to inform about the EHL, to present some of the designated sites, and to show best practices in the realm of cultural management and cultural heritage. The workshop participants were overall in their fifties, sixties or beyond, leading her to the assumption that cultural heritage in Austria attracts and is run by mostly older generations.

The BMUKK then convoked a jury of five individuals to evaluate the sites and give their recommendations for selection. The jury consisted of scholars and professionals in the culture and heritage sector: Mag.phil. Gabriele Eschig, Secretary-General of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO; Dr.phil. Monika Kalista, former director of the Department of Culture both at the national Ministry for external relations and at the regional government of Salzburg; Dr. phil. Walter Putschögl, financial manager of the Museums of Upper Austria (*Oberösterreichische Landesmuseen*) and former financial director of the European Capital of Culture Linz 2009; Dr.phil. Oliver Rathkolb, historian and professor for contemporary history at the University of Vienna; and Dr.phil. Heidemarie Uhl, historian and member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences' institute for cultural sciences and theater history. Of the five jury members, three were available for interviews. The jury members were selected deliberately in order to reflect the EHL's criteria - thus, experts on symbolism of monuments and memorials, European history, but also individuals with strong know-how and expertise in cultural management. Moreover, with Gabriele Eschig the BMUKK invited an expert qualified for evaluating and focusing on the demarcation with UNESCO WH (Interview, August 27, 2014). Throughout the whole application, evaluation and nomination processes, the communication took place exclusively between BMUKK and the EC. Further questions concerning the applications were directed at the BMUKK, which then contacted the respective sites. The applicants and the EU were not in direct contact.

In the spring of 2013, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied nominated two sites (although a maximum of four sites per state would have been allowed), based on the recommendations of the expert jury. In a press release, Minister Schmied states that she is happy the EHL

focuses on the youth, understanding the initiative to be a valuable contribution to political education (cited in Ots 2012). While Austria was not eligible to present candidates in the second round of the EHL in 2013, when the other interested EU member states that had not been invited to submit sites during the first round, it can again participate in 2014. In June of 2014, the national coordination office organized a workshop for professionals in the Austrian heritage sector and for managers of heritage sites, designed to present the currently designated EHL sites and to inform about the application criteria and the application process. Best practices from international sites and projects were presented, and Camp Westerbork and Carnuntum were presented as case studies and shared some experiences and insights into their successful applications. The deadline for submission is December 31, 2014. The candidates will again be evaluated by a national jury and a maximum of two nominees will be announced in Spring 2015 (Bundeskanzleramt 2014).

The Austrian EHL candidates

Two sites were recommended by the Austrian Ministry of Culture to be candidates for the EHL: The Archeological Park Carnuntum in Lower Austria, which hosts the remains of a Roman army camp and civilian city, and was the temporary residence of Marcus Aurelius and other Emperors. It is located 30 km away from the capital Vienna and 15 km away from the Slovakian border. The other site is the thematic site “Silent Night! Holy Night!” (*Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!*), suite a joint application by the three localities of Oberndorf, Arnsdorf and Mariapfarr, located in the region Salzburg, focusing on the origins and dissemination of the world’s most popular Christmas carol. A third applicant, the historical horse-drawn railway between the Austrian city of Linz and the Czech city of České Budějovice (*Historische Pferdeeisenbahn Linz-*

Budweis), a transnational site⁶, had been rejected by the Austrian expert jury because the application was not elaborate and complete enough. An additional point of criticism was the site itself did not fulfill the criteria, lacking most of all a sound management (Interview, June 4, 2014).

For the Archeological Park, the EHL application was motivated by the desire to give back to Carnuntum the significance and the role in world history that it had during the Antiquities (Interview, June 5, 2014). Carnuntum had been a Roman settlement, housing in its heyday a population of about 50,000, featuring a gladiator's school, amphitheaters and public baths. In 308 CE, it was the focus of world politics as it hosted the Emperor's Conference, bringing together three Roman Emperors, and paving the way for Christianity to become Europe's dominant religion. Boasting the most comprehensive remains of a Roman city in modern Austria, it is now an interactive museum with an open air-area, where original dwellings and buildings of Roman Times were recreated and can be entered by visitors, Roman games and festivities are enacted by museum staff in period costumes. A great part of Carnuntum's annual 160,000 visitors are primary and middle school students from Austria and nearby Slovakia who come to Carnuntum to experience a day in the life of an inhabitant of the Roman Empire during a school excursion. The transmission of culture and interactive visits are the priorities of Carnuntum's strategy. For Carnuntum, the EHL accommodates very well the desire to attract more international visitors and to develop a "brand" Carnuntum. The label diminishes the need to do excessive marketing, which is also a budgetary issue. Science and research is what Carnuntum focuses on. The EHL is

⁶ The historical horse-drawn railway, which had been inaugurated in 1832, was the first public railway on the European continent. Although at the time of its creation, it was running at the time between destinations that were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, it connected and still connects two historically, culturally and linguistically distinct regions, Bohemia and Upper Austria.

thus for Carnuntum a perfect marketing tool to be recognized and promoted within a greater communication network and to increase the popularity without spending a lot of money. The site manager also points out to the authority and official factor of the program as a formal EC initiative and the connotation of quality it implies. Given the flood of labels, prizes and awards, what made the EHL particularly attractive for the director was its selective character and the focus on sustainability in the site's management, ensured by regular monitoring and evaluation of the site by the EU. During the evaluation process by the EU jury, Carnuntum received a "mystery visit" by an EU official. The management only learned after being awarded the EHL that there had been an EU official seeing for themselves if Carnuntum was a suitable laureate (Interview, June 5, 2014). As an effort to increase the visibility and recognition value of the label and to communicate the award, Carnuntum now uses the EHL logo in its public relations and corporate design.

EHL candidate *Stille Nacht!* is a thematic site shared between three municipalities, and operating on a far more modest scale than Carnuntum. The site consists of a small chapel, a museum, several memorials and memorabilia displayed at various spots in the municipalities, and is managed by the non-profit *Stille Nacht* Association. The sites center around the universally known Christmas carol "Silent Night" that was written and sung for the first time by Catholic priest Joseph Mohr and school teacher Franz Xaver Gruber on Christmas Eve of 1818. Visitors from around the globe mostly visit Oberndorf, which could be called the main site with its Silent Night Museum, Silent-Night-Memorial Chapel standing on the very spot of the original church that witnessed the song for the first time, and office of the *Stille Nacht* Association. The three municipalities of Arnsdorf, Mariapfarr and Oberndorf were all in a way involved in the origin of the song (the lyrics being written in Mariapfarr, the melody in Arnsdorf, and the first public

performance taking place in Oberndorf). In fact, there are twelve towns in total reclaiming merit in the creation of “Silent Night”, but as the manager states, the small time frame they had for the application made it impossible to coordinate with and to include all of the stakeholders into the application (Interview, June 17, 2014). An anthropologist was hired to take care of the application. The application for the label was considered as “necessary”, because it was a brand new initiative and a chance for the site to progress in outreach and activity. The site was already inscribed in Austria’s UNESCO list of intangible heritage in 2011, which the manager describes as helpful for the EHL application as it made clear to them that the song “Silent Night” is linked with togetherness and collective singing and thus everyone’s cultural heritage. This emphasis on togetherness and collectivity is also reflected in the semantic use of “sung together for the first time” rather than “performed” for the first time in the Association’s rhetoric on the origin of the carol. *The Stille Nacht* Association is determined to repeat and improve their application at the next opportunity, or even extend their application to the other towns in question that had been left out in the first take on the EHL.

Interestingly enough, both candidates that made it to the EU short list are linked with Christianity. Silent Night celebrates the creation of an originally Christian song that went on to be universally popular across cultures. Carnuntum claims its importance for Europe because it hosted a Roman Emperor conference that initiated the spread of Christianity. This raises important questions about inclusion and exclusion: How representative is Christian heritage for a European identity? Isn’t it exclusive towards adherents of different religions or people who don’t have a faith at all? The case of Silent Night, however, is understood by the *Stille Nacht* Association as an example of inclusion, since it has seen the evolution of a song for a small local

community to the global Christian community (spread with European out-migration) until leaving the religious setting and conquering the stage, becoming a universally known common good, covered countless times even somewhat detached from its Christian origin and meaning. As the site manager states, although being part of Europe's folkloric traditions, he sees the carol as a song of peace crossing cultures and boundaries and not exclusively to be claimed by the Christian block (Interview, June 17, 2014). This universality may have caused the EU committee to reject the site due to lacking reference to Europe or European history and integration (EC 2013b:12). As for Carnuntum, the manager states that it is important to separate Christianity as a faith and set of values from the Catholic church as an institution, and in that sense, Europe is indeed based on a system of Christian values. He points out that in Roman Times, the Christian faith in fact stood for inclusion. Christianity increased in Europe because it was not exclusive, unlike Judaism or other celtic beliefs at that time (Interview, June 5, 2014). Culture and cultural labels bear a particular risk of excluding and including groups of people. Inclusion (or, in the EU terminology, diversity) is indeed a crucial factor that the EHL aims at, as seen in their discourse on the initiative (see Chapter IV) .

It is important to ensure at the European level the inclusion of the broadest diversity possible. But even the broadest diversity will still and always be inclusive and exclusive. [...] The less culture is used as an instrument of inclusion and exclusion, the better it is. (Interview, June 4, 2014)

Moreover, Carnuntum's manager draws a parallel between the EU as a peace project and the Roman Empire, which was, notwithstanding its military conquests, a superb administrative and structural effort with the introduction of a legal system, and mobility of goods and people in its very own way.

Evaluation and outlook

Can culture change the Austrians' opinion and perception of the EU? Most interviewees agreed that cultural initiatives such as the EHL, the European Capitals of Culture or other projects are capable of conveying a positive image of the EU. Initiatives like these are especially embraced and appreciated among those who have already gotten in touch with the EU as an institution in one way or another, in particular in the culture, arts and heritage sector (Interview, August 27, 2014). Another important point, raised during an interview, was: Does culture change the thinking of institutions?

The current concept of culture - and this was also illustrated by the discussion on World Cultural Heritage - is very much based on strong institutions. Culture is a segment in society. [...] That's also the advantage of soft transnational networks [as the intergovernmental EHL], that can, without representing the EU institutions, award all types of cultural heritage labels. But once the label is formalized and legitimized on EU-level, it represents Europe, and that's where the questions start. (Interview, June 2, 2014).

As the statement points out perfectly, the institutionalization of cultural heritage indeed raises questions: questions of exclusion and inclusion, authenticity and the invention of tradition and imagined communities. In that sense, the EHL as a supranational initiative based on more objective criteria, legitimizes and connects the dots in the landscape of Europe's heritage and the puzzle pieces of history and pools them under a common cluster. The underlying sense of initiatives of that kind is, of course, creating a common sphere of communication in specific fields via calls for applications and via the exchange and cooperation between stakeholders and institutions at all kinds of levels and both from the public and private sector. All of these actors

create a network by engaging in a European initiative and this network accounts for the visibility of the initiative. Bearing a European label and being part of a European network and of a European space of communication is also a distinction from other actors and institutions, and gives them a sort of justified claim to be European. The EHL functions like any other label as a certificate of something, but in a double sense: it is a site's acknowledgement of being European and the EU's attestation to be something more than a regular heritage site, a site (to use the EU's jargon) with added value in a political and cultural sense. In a way, this process is bottom-up and top-down. A European heritage is proposed and applications are called for by a supranational institution (top-down), while actors and institutions at a local, regional or national level respond to that because this European dimension speaks to their European self-conception.

The significance and potential of a network of European heritage sites and actors is repeatedly underlined by members of the committee and by the site manager of Carnuntum. He sees the *network* as the precondition and base for the emergence of a European consciousness and the sense of a common cultural heritage, rather than the EHL sites themselves (Interview, June 5, 2014). As one jury member observes, based on his own experiences in the network of European Capitals of Culture, in networks or during pan-European get-togethers and conferences with artists and cultural managers, national barriers cease to exist. What counts is the cooperation, the European spirit, the exchange of ideas and practices and the project itself. He envisioned the same thing for the EHL and the participating sites. Calling himself an optimist, the committee member believes that “art, and culture in general, would be an incredible engine to generate a sense of Europeanness” (Interview, May 27, 2014).

There is an interesting paradox concerning the different contexts the applicant sites cross in the course of their application and evaluation process. The national, regional and local character is irrelevant in the sites' applications, what counts is the European dimension. In the national selection process however, the sites are evaluated in a national context, and evaluated against each other. In other words, as cited as an example in an interview, the archaeological park Carnuntum may not be the most impressive and most significant Roman site on the European continent, but it certainly is the best-preserved and most important Roman site in Austria (Interview May 27, 2014). So the scale is smaller, embedded in a national context and disregarding the European context. The supranational jury, navigating the European context, evaluates the candidates detached from their national ranking and relevance, and has to decide, if necessary, which of several applicant Roman sites is the "archetype", the one(s) bearing the utmost European dimension and symbolic value, keeping in mind the diversity of European cultural heritage and the balanced character of sites the label assumably is supposed to achieve. As the EHL list will grow over the coming years, it will be interesting to see how the different heritage sites - places and sites of positive and negative heritage; diversity in terms of themes, eras, styles and character - will be balanced.

An issue that came up frequently was the criteria of the label. For many of the interviewees, the criteria were still vague (or, as one of the site managers put it, "A lot of fantasy was needed."), despite being more precise than in the previous intergovernmental label, which had discouraged Austria from participating. On the other hand, the national coordinator feels that the criteria tend to be overdone and prevent smaller sites, lacking the required capacities, from applying. These strict (yet vague) criteria can be understood as parameters and guarantors of qua-

lity, contributing to the success of this young initiative to succeed in the long run. It can only succeed if the designated sites have enough capacity, a sound management and a certain size and funding to be able to meet the infrastructural requirements (such as project development, language policies, etc). In that sense, as the Austrian coordinator points out, the preconditions of the Austrian applicants were far from being equal- Carnuntum had an advantage in size, resources and corporate structures over its significantly smaller competitors with less entrepreneurial ability and activity. One of the interviewees estimated that the catalogue of criteria will change and be extended over time, as the label grows, and reflect what will be important for Europe in the future (Interview, June 4, 2014).

In addition to the vague criteria, the evaluation and the weight attached to each one of them was also left in the dark. Carnuntum's manager says he was surprised to learn that one of the reasons for the site's selection was its sustainable and sound management. This factor was not explicitly asked for or mentioned in the application form (Interview, June 5, 2014). The managers of both sites confirm that the requirement to develop a project and a work plan was the greatest challenge in the application process. This is also reflected in the EC panel report following the first EHL award: In fact, the EU evaluation committee realized the struggle some applicants had with understanding the criteria and requirements and the need to clarify some key concepts of the European Heritage Label (EC 2013b: 9ff.)

The overall tenor is that the label will evolve and get its own dynamic, but that there is still untapped potential especially in marketing. For example, one of the interviewees suggests that the EU write a short mission statement or slogan for the EHL, a short phrase that is recognizable and will be known and recited by every European thirty years from now (Interview,

June 5, 2014). Most agree that the EHL needs a critical size to be noticed and appreciated, but not too many to be inflationary and random. It should stay selective and elitist. An emancipation vis-à-vis UNESCO' World Heritage Sites also requires a certain number of designated sites, but also the continuing commitment to quality and to the specific European criteria.

The diversity of sites is appreciated by almost all of the interviewees, leaving it to member states to choose what they consider appropriate to bear the EHL, but enabling a very heterogenous and broad spectrum of designated sites. However, one of the Austrian expert jury members declares she is not very satisfied with the set up and conceptualization of the EHL:

I do believe that [designating] the key places of European history and cultural history is a wonderful idea. It is just questionable if the system to get there is very useful. [...] The problem is that the visitors are not able to contextualize them. I would have made it differently: I would have created categories of sites, related to politics, music, art. If I have those categories, and the respective sites spread all over Europe, it is easier to understand the idea, than if I have an archaeological site and the place of birth of a composer. That's a bit random. I would have made a call for applications for one category in one year, and another category the following. This makes comparing and evaluating a lot easier. (Interview, June 4, 2014).

Apparently, the criteria and uncertainty of the first round were a challenge for everybody involved in the application and evaluation process. The interviewee also would prefer to see a bottom-up approach towards European identity and heritage and suggests surveying the EU citizens to ascertain what they identify with, including melodies, personalities, etc. "Maybe the EU should start working differently."

VII. Conclusion

Although identity and culture have only been vaguely defined by the EU, cultural policy has always aimed at fostering specific identities. Within the context of the EU, culture is instrumentalized as a means of Europeanization. It can be interpreted as either undermining the cultural policy and the heritage of the nation states, or adding a new, supranational layer to it. The EU's rhetoric on the EHL can be understood as an authorized heritage discourse as defined by Smith (2006). With the transformation of the previous intergovernmental label into a supranational initiative, the EC now constitutes and legitimizes what European heritage is. This discourse gives new meaning to heritage and alters the way we think, write and talk about and interpret heritage. This adds to the process of European identity-building as a top-down elite project. As I demonstrated in my analysis, the most recurrent themes of the EU's discourse are the unity-diversity dichotomy, European dimension, added value and the engagement with citizens. Especially the importance of European symbolic value suggests that the EU perceives heritage to be innately valuable, that heritage is not only the material site itself, but the values and meaning it represents. The strong emphasis on educational activities also suggests that the EU perceives heritage as an active experience, meaning a shift away from the typically passive consumption and appreciation of heritage.

The EHL will be a way to raise awareness of European values and culture, but this depends largely on the reception of the public. We should remember that the EHL creates a common heritage in a space and society shaped and characterized by diversity. Rather, it tags national sites with a new, transnational feature, emphasizing its "European dimension", which formerly had national or local significance. The EHL can be interpreted as the Europeanization

of places, functioning as a tool of self-representation and self-reference and to construct a common identity. The EHL is a bureaucratic tool and process to accommodate the EU's cultural-political goals, namely the building of a common heritage and identity. The EU's discourse is authoritative in the sense that it spills over to and is adopted and reproduced by the candidate sites, since the qualification criteria require them to emphasize the European value and symbolism in order to be considered potential candidates. Sites (in other words, their managers) are required to change their discourse on their heritage, to re-invent or at least reframe their heritage and by that, give the EU authority, if not ownership over their heritage. The selected sites get their meaning and value through the validation and authorized discourse of the EU, and would be unlikely to convey the same message without the discourse on European symbolic value. Especially in regards to UNESCO, it will be interesting to pursue how European countries deal with their heritage and how they want to frame it, since UNESCO stands for outstanding universal value and the EHL promotes a narrower, symbolic European value. Is the branding as a European heritage attractive and desirable for a site compared to the global appeal of UNESCO? This is a question for future investigation. Especially in Western Europe, which counts the largest number of World Heritage sites in the world? In this regard, the EHL might be more appealing to Eastern European post-socialist countries. They might see it as a way to express and stress their belonging to Europe as the new member states, after having culturally and politically long been excluded from their Western neighbors through decades of foreign rule. Also, the application for the EHL requires a smaller budget than the UNESCO application.

In its current conception, the EHL is limited to tangible, material heritage, or to intangible heritage linked to a place, thus a site that can be visited, looked at and potentially explored in

activities offered in situ. This makes it impossible to represent heritage that is traditionally intangible, such as the heritage of the Roma population of Europe, a people historically not bound to a single place. The criterion of a physical site is exclusionary, and this exclusion applies to other minority groups in the EU as well, most notably to migrants from third states. Migration poses a challenge to the authenticity and the true symbolic value of an EHL for European history, but as migration statistics suggest, migration is indeed a new European dimension and should be accepted as a permanent phenomenon. Moreover, would the long present Russian minority in Estonia be eligible to submit an application for the EHL? Since the EHL applications are submitted by the national governments, it is unlikely that candidates proposed by ethnic minorities are approved of. The issue is that they are excluded. The question of “whose heritage is represented?” gets even more explosive and complex in the light of past and future enlargements. From Lisbon to Warsaw, from Lapland to Malta, the EU has grown in scope, but also in size. If we consider that the EU is meanwhile a popular destination for migration and most of the member states are multicultural, multilingual and multi-confessional societies with growing minorities from third states, a EHL promoting European values seems to be a rather exclusive and backward enterprise.

In 2014, the second selection round will take place, this time open to all other member states, with the exception of the most recent member, Croatia. The list of preselected sites counts 38 candidates submitted by 18 member states, including all of the new member states from Central and Eastern Europe. States that chose not to participate in the initiative are Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK (UK’s representative had also abstained from the vote on the EHL proposal in May 2011).

The evaluation of the first round of selection and the case study presented in this paper shows a couple of things: For the applicants and the national evaluation committee, the EHL was a dive into unknown waters, since the intentions, the criteria and requirements were not very clear and no references available. Larger sites with sound and sustainable management have advantages in meeting the criteria over smaller, less established sites. In Austria, the initiative to participate in the EHL program- though encouraged by the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture - lies with the heritage sites, leaving it to sites and institutions to discover and display their European dimension. For the designated sites, the real challenge will be to communicate clearly their European dimension to the public. There is only a limited number of sites in the EU with a genuine pan-European significance. They are outnumbered by far by sites of more national or regional importance. Also, the visibility of the label is certainly crucial for its success.

This new policy initiative has great potential to be further explored, and also evaluated over the course of time. As the compilation of selected sites grows, there might emerge some patterns, preferences for specific types of sites, etc. Also, the visibility, popularity, touristic attractiveness and prestige of the label will only be assessable over time. With institutionalization, instrumentalization and clever marketing at the EU and national level from a cultural policy and tourism angle, and a growing number of credible and emblematic sites being selected, the EHL has potential to turn into a dynamic addition within the field of cultural heritage and an identifier for EU citizens. It would be desirable if the focus on engaging with citizens included encouraging or initiating a grassroots approach to identifying and selecting suitable sites.

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