



Intervention to the ICCROM GA 2015

November 20th FAO, Rome.

Madam President, Madam Chair, Director General, Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations, I would like to thank ICCROM for the kind invitation to attend the ICCROM GA. It has been a most stimulating three days and so interesting to see the diverse range of issues that affect cultural heritage and the way in which response measures are coordinated and facilitated at an international level by ICCROM to address threats to the preservation of same.

My comments here today speak to collaboration and 'contribution in kind'. E.C.C.O. is a network of national associations that represent the profession of the conservator –restorer; these associations also work to advocate for the proper care and preservation of cultural patrimony in their own countries. E.C.C.O. does this at European level. As a result we very much welcome the formal support that E.C.C.O. has received through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with ICCROM earlier this March, specifically to promote conservation-restoration in Europe. This aligns our efforts with those of ICCROM to work in the same direction and this is already bearing fruit. E.C.C.O. was invited as an Expert Group to the Council of Europe's meeting of Ministers of Heritage in Namur, Belgium in April where a declaration on the strategic importance of cultural heritage to Europe was signed. Since that meeting E.C.C.O. has been granted Observer Status to the Plenary sessions of the CoE steering committee on Landscape, Heritage and Culture having recently submitted an invited opinion on priorities for developing the above strategy for cultural heritage.

Such a strategy comes at a time of pressing social and economic difficulties within Europe and, as can be seen by presentations here today, climatic difficulties also. Fiscal retraction affecting the field of cultural heritage has been directly felt by those working in this field no less so than the conservator-restorer. Europe has a long history of training and education in conservation-restoration and continues to produce highly trained and motivated conservator-restorers. This was recently demonstrated at the IIC Student and Emerging Conservators' conference that was held in Poland last month and in which E.C.C.O. participated. However, for young conservator-restorers to have viable careers at a time when many established professionals are really struggling to survive, it is even more important that cultural heritage is properly resourced and its value to society as a driver of economic growth and indeed, social cohesion is fully grasped. In this we welcome the work that the European Commission has been undertaking as outlined by Erminia Sciacchitano in her presentation.



The capacity building in which ICCROM has so much experience and makes such a contribution to through the work of its amazing staff, is demonstrated by the many projects that have been presented over the last few days. This needs the support of host countries to enable a professional demographic to emerge based on accredited training and education. In Europe, equivalence and recognition of professional qualifications are very live and real issues affecting mobility, professional recognition and the transfer of services. To help address these issues, competences for the profession have been developed by E.C.C.O. to help in the delivery of learning outcomes and these may be of help in the development of university programmes elsewhere.

Finally, E.C.C.O. is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2016. Together with the German organisation VDR, we will have a Presidents' meeting based on the theme 'Conservation Matters' where we will consider the profession of the conservator-restorer as a strategic resource for cultural heritage. I would like to take this opportunity to invite the Director General to celebrate this event with us. In conclusion I extend my thanks once again for the kind invitation to be here and to all for their attention.

Susan Corr

E.C.C.O. President