

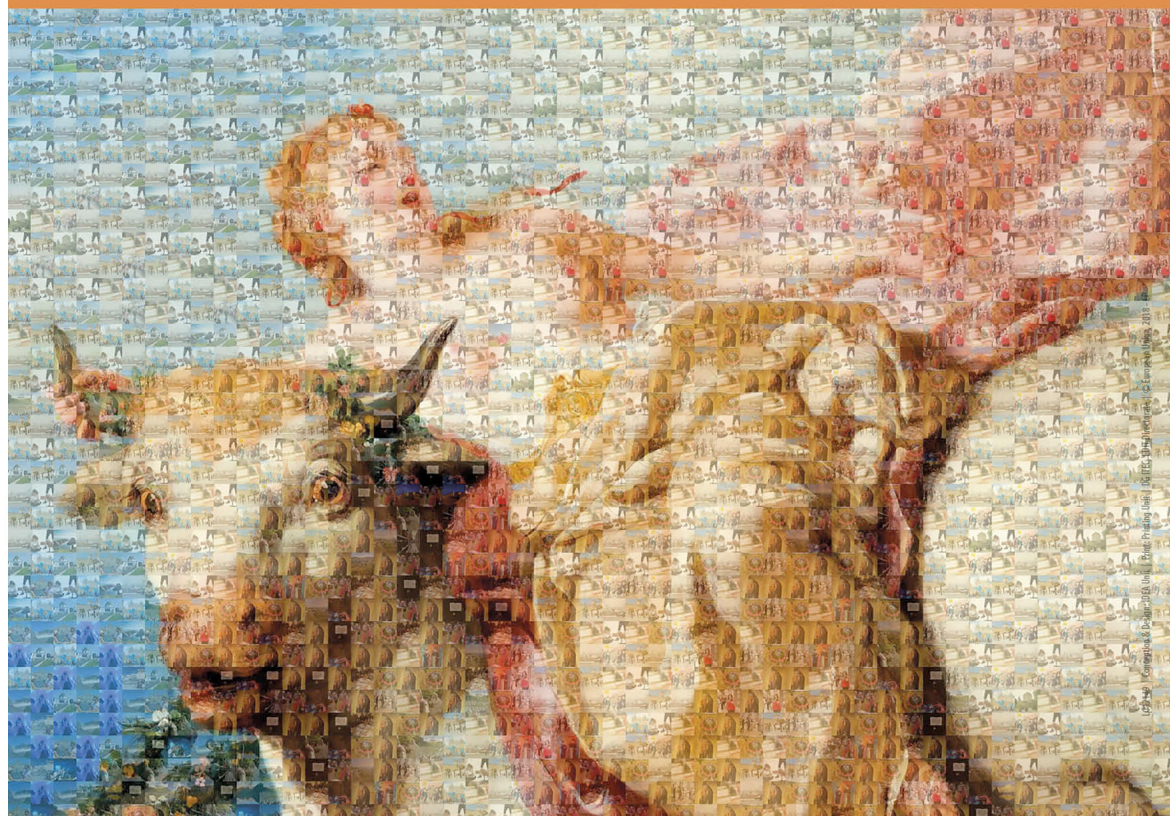
**E.C.C.O.**

European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations A.I.S.B.L.



Interparliamentary Committee Meeting  
**European Parliament - National Parliaments**

# EUROPEAN CULTURAL HERITAGE



**MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2018 15:00-18:30**  
PARALLEL WORKING SESSIONS

**TUESDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2018 9:00-12:30**  
**ROOM 4Q1**

JÓZSEF ANTALL BUILDING  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
BRUSSELS

**COMMITTEE ON  
CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

CHAIRD BY  
**PETRA KAMMEREVERT**

With the support of the  
Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments



Siège social: rue Coudenberg 70, BE-1000 Bruxelles, Belgique, Entreprise N° 0447.118.530

## European Parliament

### Interparliamentary Committee Meeting

## European Cultural Heritage

### Panel 2: Preservation, Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage

Expert: Susan Corr. President of E.C.C.O.

In this the European year of cultural heritage, the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations greatly welcomes the opportunity to speak to the Interparliamentary committee on cultural heritage.

Less than 2 weeks ago we commemorated the ending of the First World War, which was an important opportunity to reflect on the turbulent events of those years, and how they shaped contemporary Europe. Much of our ability to understand and analyse the events of the past depends on the intactness and authenticity of the historical and material record. How do we preserve and honour the historical truth of that heritage?

The transmission therefore, of an authentic material heritage; a heritage which retains its cultural and historical relevance are concepts key to the practice and understanding of conservation-restoration. Conservation-restoration acts to safeguard and transmit our material heritage because that heritage is considered unique and irreplaceable; this is in itself a European value. It is not the aim of conservation-restoration to create new objects but rather to allow us to access and use our heritage in ways that sustain it into the future while ensuring that it continues to legitimately document and testify to our past. It is a complex activity where scientific methodologies are employed in the analysis of materials, the processes of deterioration and the assessment of risk; humanistic enquiry into issues of authenticity, value and significance determine our response.

What do we change, what levels of intervention are enough or too much? How far can a restoration go before it is no longer conservation resulting in a value shift? What are the risks, what are the agents of change and the causes of deterioration and loss? How do we keep, how do we learn and know about the value of our heritage? Although these questions form part of a negotiated dialogue with communities and other heritage practitioners, the conservator-restorer, through a specialised training and education, is uniquely authorised to intervene directly on the heritage. These questions then are ethically sensitive, and routinely engage the conservator-restorer. How they are resolved, the decisions taken, informed by research and documented accordingly, are a matter of public interest. This is the reason why ECCO insists on the conservator-restorer is qualified to Masters degree equivalent to Level 7 EQF.

There are many international and European Charters and Doctrines which consider and inform the practice of conservation-restoration. E.C.C.O. is a European network of national organisations which work to set standards in best practice and quality assurance in  
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the interventions made to heritage. It makes recommendations on the education and practice of conservation-restoration through a set of Professional Guidelines and professional competences. These need to be supported both at National and European level through regulation.

Member organisations recently participated in the first European day of Conservation-Restoration which took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> October. The day was a great success as studios and workplaces opened up to the public across Europe to highlight and showcase the work that goes on behind the scenes.

Europe is a palimpsest of material evidence, reflecting many identities and traditions: the protection of this cultural fabric is part of a European value system which has its own discrete tradition, this is even reflected in the hybrid title conservator-restorer. It is critical that our heritage is offered professional care through high standards in conservation-restoration to ensure that it is safely transmitted into the future preserving its authenticity and historical relevance.

The cultural heritage sector, with its varied and diverse activities, is poorly reflected in the economic statistics gathered across Europe. This has implications for investment in heritage and its professional care, in promoting the transfer of knowledge and skills and the resourcing of education and training.

We respectfully request that the Interparliamentary Committee on Cultural Heritage, supports the work of the European Commission on Cultural heritage, through the findings and recommendations that are proceeding from the Open Method of Coordination and the Voices of Culture Dialogue and as these are set within the New European Agenda for Culture.