



PRESS RELEASE

Kamos of Chios among the 14 most endangered heritage sites in Europe

The Hague / Luxembourg, 10 December 2015 - Europa Nostra, the leading European heritage organisation, and the European Investment Bank Institute announce today the **14 monuments and sites shortlisted for 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme 2016** by an international panel of experts in various fields. These endangered landmarks from **14 European countries** are: Archaeological site of Ezerouk and village of Ani Pemza, **Armenia**; Palace of Justice in Brussels, **Belgium**; Patarei Sea Fortress in Tallinn, **Estonia**; Helsinki-Malmi Airport, **Finland**; Colbert Swing Bridge in Dieppe, **France**; Castle in Divitz, **Germany**; Kamos of Chios, **Greece**; Venice Lagoon, **Italy**; Castle Rijswijk, **the Netherlands**; Y-block in Oslo, **Norway**; Valfiores Palace and Estate, near Lisbon, **Portugal**; Convent of St. Anthony of Padua, Extremadura, **Spain**; Ancient city of Hasankeyf and its surroundings, **Turkey**; and Mavisbank House, near Edinburgh, **the United Kingdom**. Some of these sites are in danger due to neglect or inadequate planning/development, others due to lack of resources or expertise. **The final list of 7 sites will be unveiled at a public event in Venice on 16 March.**

The 14 shortlisted monuments and sites were selected taking into account their outstanding heritage and cultural values as well as the grave danger that they are facing. The commitment of various public and private stakeholders and the engagement of the local communities to rescuing those sites were also considered essential. Another important criterion was the potential of these sites to serve as a resource and a driver of sustainable development for the wider region in which they are located.

Nominations for 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme 2016 were submitted by civil society or public bodies which form part of Europa Nostra's vast network of member and associate organisations from all over Europe. Fourteen sites were shortlisted by a panel of experts in History, Archaeology, Architecture, Conservation, Project Analysis and Finance. The final list of 7 sites will be selected by the Board of Europa Nostra.

'The 7 Most Endangered' programme was launched in January 2013 by Europa Nostra with the European Investment Bank Institute as founding partner and the Council of Europe Development Bank as associated partner. It was inspired by a successful similar project run by the US National Trust for Historic Preservation. 'The 7 Most Endangered' is not a funding programme. Its aim is to serve as a catalyst for action and to promote "the power of example". 'The 7 Most Endangered' has the support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, as part of Europa Nostra's 3-year Network Project 'Mainstreaming Heritage'.

"Europa Nostra welcomes the growing recognition by EU Institutions, including the European Investment Bank, that Cultural Heritage indeed counts for Europe: it is a driver for sustainable development and a cohesive force for our multicultural societies. Our advocacy programme 'The 7 Most Endangered' has a great significance, but its goals can only be achieved with widespread support from EU Institutions and with joint action by different public and private partners. We therefore count on them to assist Europa Nostra and our members to rescue and give a new life to our shared heritage," stated **Denis de Kergorlay**, Executive President of Europa Nostra.

"Experts from the EIB Institute will visit and analyse the selected '7 Most Endangered' sites and will contribute to the formulation of realistic action plans. The case in favour of those sites will thus become more visible and more credible. Experience over the last few years shows moreover that the local and national ownership and involvement is particularly crucial when it comes to mobilising support to save the selected endangered sites," added **Guy Clause**, Dean of the European Investment Bank Institute.

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TO FIND OUT MORE

www.europanostr.org/7-most-endangered

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**14 European sites shortlisted for
'The 7 Most Endangered' programme 2016**
(listed in alphabetical order of their country)

Archaeological Site of Ererouyk and village of Ani Pemza, ARMENIA

Sitting on a rocky plateau close to the Turkish-Armenian border, Ererouyk was once one of the most important centres of worship in the region. Despite some restoration works undertaken in the last two decades, the 6th century basilica remains highly endangered. The surrounding archaeological area is at risk of being lost before it has been comprehensively studied. The Centre of Studies and Documentation of Armenian Culture in Italy (CSDCA), which made the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, proposes a multidisciplinary project in order to study and rehabilitate the site and the establishment of a transnational archaeological park along the Akhurian River. The village of Ani Pemza, built in 1926 and located a few hundred metres away, could serve as a cultural tourism centre, thus contributing to the socioeconomic revitalisation of the area.

Palace of Justice in Brussels, BELGIUM

The Palace of Justice, home of Belgium's supreme court of law, was the largest building erected in Europe in the second half of 19th century. Designed by the Belgian architect Joseph Poelaert, this monumental piece of eclectic architectural style employed the most advanced industrial iron technologies. Despite its outstanding architectural, historic and civic values, the building has remained underappreciated. The scaffolding installed on the front facade and on the portico some 30 years ago has now become rusty and unusable. Many areas in the Palace are empty, while offices are rented in adjoining buildings to perform judicial functions. The nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016 was made by **Patrimoine Culturel Immobilier**. Widespread (inter)national know-how and support are needed to rehabilitate the building, which has also been included on the 2016 World Monuments Watch list.

Patarei Sea Fortress in Tallinn, ESTONIA

Built in 1840, Patarei Sea Fortress is the largest classical style defence ensemble in Estonia. Between 1920 and 2002, the fortress was converted into a prison in which political prisoners were detained. Today, this site is a "lieu de mémoire" and a powerful symbol of national resistance to both the Communist and Nazi regimes. The main threat to the ensemble is its rapid deterioration due to the harsh climate and the lack of maintenance. Several areas are closed for safety reasons. The **Estonian Heritage Society**, which submitted the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, proposes the regeneration of this large ensemble and its reuse as a museum complex, a centre for creative industries, a hotel, or offices and apartments. Patarei has the potential to become a major tourist attraction in the Baltic Sea Region, in combination with the adjacent Tallinn Seaplane Harbour (a Grand Prix winner of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award in 2013), the Old Town of Tallinn and also with the Suomenlinna Fortress in Helsinki.

Helsinki-Malmi Airport, FINLAND

Built in the mid-1930s in the functionalist architectural style, the Helsinki-Malmi Airport is one of the best-preserved still active pre-World War II international airports in the world. With about 40.000 landings per year, Malmi is by far the busiest airport in Finland after Helsinki-Vantaa International. The terminal and hangar are in good shape thanks to good maintenance over the years. The airport is now under serious threat from a new development project. The City of Helsinki's new General Plan proposes that the site be used for new residential development to be constructed in the early 2020s. **Europa Nostra Finland, supported by the Friends of Malmi Airport (FoMA)**, submitted the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, advocating that the site can either continue to be a commercial airport or alternatively be retained as a repurposed facility.

Colbert Swing Bridge in Dieppe, Normandy, FRANCE

Contemporaneous with the Eiffel Tower and using the same building techniques and materials (puddled iron), the Colbert Bridge is the last large swing bridge still operating in Europe with its original hydraulic mechanism. It is crossed by 12,000 vehicles and 1,800 pedestrians every day. In 2014, the Syndicat Mixte du Port de Dieppe (SMPD), which owns the bridge, decided to replace the 1889 bridge with a new structure. In its turn, Dieppe's Colbert Bridge Protection Committee has demonstrated not only that the bridge's restoration is technically and financially feasible, but also that this could be carried out at a considerably lower cost than the plan put forward by the SMPD. The **Fondation du Patrimoine**, which nominated the site for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, proposes the restoration of the bridge and the modernisation of its mechanism.

Castle in Divitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, GERMANY

Schloss Divitz is a historic moated castle in northern Germany. The oldest surviving parts of the mansion date from the 15th century while its present appearance is the product of several renovations, from 1785 until the 1850s. The 12-hectare garden is a representative example of 19th century landscape gardening. After many years of total neglect, the estate is in a poor state of conservation. According to a concept study commissioned by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), the Castle in Divitz possesses all the attributes of a nationally important monument justifying immediate measures towards its rehabilitation. The study proposes the restoration of the site and its conversion to an "excursion castle" with a museum, a hotel and a summer theatre. The nomination was made by **Europa Nostra Deutschland**.

Kamos of Chios, GREECE

The Kampos of Chios is a semi-rural area within the city limits that exemplifies the coexistence of Byzantine, Genoese and local architectural styles and influences. It consisted, principally, of more than 200 estates containing orchards (typical agro-ecosystems), mansions and churches. The existing urban tissue includes buildings from the 14-18th centuries as well as neoclassical buildings from the beginning of the 20th century. The site is under permanent threat due to the inability of the owners to maintain the properties and to unsuitable uses and provisions introduced by the 2008 Urban Plan for Chios. **Elliniki Etairia - Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage** in collaboration with **The Society of Friends of the Kampos of Chios** nominated the site for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, putting forward a number of actions for its preservation and enhancement.

Venice Lagoon, ITALY

Covering 550km², the Venice Lagoon is the most famous lagoon in Europe and one of the most important transitional ecosystems in the Mediterranean. It is protected by a range of EU and national regulations and has been inscribed – together with the city of Venice – on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1987. Despite all that, the Lagoon faces great threats – increased traffic flow, particularly of large-scale container and cruise ships, dredging of ever deeper channels, erosion of the seabed and salt marshes, pollution and industrial fishing – which are jeopardizing its integrity and very existence, thus putting the historic city of Venice at higher risk. The nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016 was submitted by **Italia Nostra**, which proposes a series of short and long-term measures towards the much needed preservation of the Lagoon of Venice.

Castle Rijswijk, Gelderland Province, NETHERLANDS

Located near the village of Groessen, Castle Rijswijk is a 14th century manor house. Although significantly altered in the 19th century, the castle retains some of its original elements, such as the thick walls, the remains of the tower, the arched basement and the stairs. It was classified as a National Monument in 1966. The conservation state of the manor house has deteriorated considerably over recent years. In 2012, the Dutch Government announced a plan to build a new highway that will cut across and, therefore, destroy the site. **Bond Heemschut**, which made the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, strongly advocates an alteration of the trajectory of the highway, so that Castle Rijswijk can be preserved, rehabilitated and given a new function compatible with the highway. The house could offer leisure facilities and/or host a small museum.

Y-block, Government Quarter, Oslo, NORWAY

Forming a unified ensemble, the H-block (1958) and the Y-block (1969), designed by the Norwegian architect Erling Viksjø, are key works of modernist architecture in Norway. The construction technique is also unique. The Y-block is famous for its major murals by Pablo Picasso. The Government Quarter was one of the targets in the 22 July 2011 terrorist attacks. The Norwegian Cabinet decided to redevelop the existing area but to demolish the Y-block, arguing that part of the building is situated over a road and that this is a real security threat. The nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016 was submitted by **Fortidsminneforeningen - the Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments**, which firmly advocates that it is feasible to strengthen the security of the Government Quarter and hence the urban space while preserving the Y-block.

Valfiores Palace and Estate, near Lisbon, PORTUGAL

The Valfiores Palace (1558) is a fine example of 16th century residential architecture in Portugal and a rare case of such a building with Renaissance style characteristics. Integrated in a 4.5-hectare estate, the palace is prominently located in Santa Iria de Azoia, close to the Tagus estuary. Despite its classification as a Property of Public Interest, the palace is today in a pitiful state. Most of the ten arches and Tuscan columns of the loggia in the south facade have collapsed. The historic garden and the aqueduct pertaining to the estate also need urgent repair. The **Centro Nacional de Cultura** made the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016. The restored site could serve as a cultural centre, with a school of arts and crafts and a small museum, thus fostering sociocultural cohesion and re-establishing the palace within the region's urban development.

Convent of St. Anthony of Padua, Extremadura, SPAIN

Located in the village of Garrovillas de Alconétar, the Franciscan Convent of St. Anthony of Padua was for centuries a religious and cultural landmark in western Spain. Built in the late 15th century and greatly renovated and expanded in the mid-17th century, it featured a Gothic church and a Renaissance cloister. Although it was classified as a Monument of Cultural Interest in 1991, the Convent is now in an advanced state of disrepair. The nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016 was made by **Hispania Nostra**, which puts forward an emergency intervention plan based on volunteer work managed by experienced professionals. With this proposal, the nominator aims not only to mobilise the public authorities at various levels of governance to carry out the rehabilitation of the monument, but also to set an example for similar cases throughout the country.

Ancient city of Hasankeyf and its surroundings, TURKEY

The 12,000-year-old settlement of Hasankeyf is located on the banks of the Tigris River in south-eastern Turkey. From Neolithic caves to Roman ruins and Medieval monuments, Hasankeyf is a living museum of epic proportions. Despite its exceptionally rich multicultural history and heritage, 80% of Hasankeyf will be flooded if the Ilisu hydroelectric dam project is implemented as planned. There is no internationally recognised scheme for the relocation and preservation of the monuments. The most urgent actions required are to alter the Ilisu Dam project and to formulate an independent strategic plan that balances conservation and sustainable development. Hasankeyf was nominated for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016 by the **Cultural Awareness Foundation** whose campaign is supported by a range of national and international bodies.

Mavisbank House, near Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Designed by the Scottish architect William Adam and Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, owner of the house, Mavisbank (1726) is one of the most significant works of architecture of early 18th century Scotland. It is essentially a Palladian villa adapted to northern European conditions, with a centre block and two pavilions creating an extraordinarily picturesque composition. Despite its historical and architectural significance, the house is in an advanced state of disrepair and at risk of a substantial collapse. It is hoped that the nomination for 'The 7 Most Endangered' 2016, submitted by the **Mavisbank Trust**, will help focus the relevant authorities on solving the difficult problems of ownership and access, allowing the Trust to move forward with its work to find an economically viable solution for the restored building, which could serve as a community institution.

Background information

[Europa Nostra](#) is the pan-European federation of heritage NGO's which is also supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals. Covering 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Founded in 1963, Europa Nostra is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe. **Plácido Domingo**, the world-renowned opera singer and conductor, is the President of the organisation. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a structured dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3. In 2014, the organisation received an EU grant from the Creative Europe programme to support its 3-years Network Project 'Mainstreaming Heritage' in Europe.

The [European Investment Bank Institute \(EIBI\)](#) promotes European initiatives for the common good. It was created as part of the European Investment Bank Group in January 2012 to act as a catalyst for social, cultural, educational and research activities directed towards economic and social development in Europe. Detailed information on the activities of the Institute can be obtained from its website: <http://institute.eib.org/>

The [Council of Europe Development Bank \(CEB\)](#) is "the social bank of Europe". A multilateral development bank with 41 member states, it represents a major instrument of solidarity policy in Europe. Preserving Europe's cultural heritage is part of its mandate.

[Creative Europe](#) is the new EU programme to support the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014-2020, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals. The funding will allow them to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills required in the digital age.