

# THE EU'S EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT HERITAGE POLITICS

**Tuuli Lähdesmäki**

Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

**ABSTRACT:** During the past couple of decades, heritage has become topical in a new way in Europe as the concept has been utilized for political purposes in the EU cultural policy. The EU currently administrates or supports three initiatives – the European Heritage Days, the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, and the European Heritage Label – that address the fostering of the transnational European cultural heritage. The article discusses the explicit and implicit heritage politics included in these initiatives. In order to understand the constructive and generative nature of the EU heritage politics, it is approached in the article as a discursive meaning-making process consisting of several political aims, the strategies for obtaining them, and the underlying ideologies on which the aims and the strategies are based upon. The main focuses of the EU's heritage politics are determined in the article as: the politics of integration, image-building, education, governmentality, and the economy. The fundamental strategy in the implementation of the EU heritage politics is to mingle the top-down and bottom-up dynamics between the EU and the local agents. This is at the same time its ideological core: to produce seemingly self-creating and self-maintaining coherency and cultural integration in the EU.

**Key words:** cultural integration; discourse; European identity; the European Union; heritage politics; transnational heritage

## 1. Introduction

Heritage is a cultural and political concept which is easily instrumentalized for the use of diverse identity projects. The concept is inseparable from the emergence of the idea of national cultures and the development of the nation-state (Hobsbawm 1983: 6–7; Mitchell 2001; Peckham 2003; Risse 2003; Ashworth *et al.* 2005: 26–31). Many of the institutions through which heritage is still currently promoted have played a crucial role in the nation-building processes in the nineteenth century. However, heritage has also been approached from universalistic points of view in which it is considered as a common property of all human beings and as a shared

legacy of civilizations. This kind of discourse forms the basis, e.g., of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention (Starzmann 2008).

During the past couple of decades, the idea of heritage has become topical in a new way in Europe as the concept has been utilized for supranational purposes in the EU policy. Since the end of the 1980s, the EU has started increasingly to pay attention to the cultural connections and the identification of its citizens (Shore 2000, 2004; Stråth 2002; Näss 2010). Due to these strivings, culture has attained a major role in the EU's current integration discourses and policies. In these discourses and policies, the idea of cultural heritage in particular has been utilized for the aims of creating communality and feeling of belonging among the citizens in the EU. Several core EU documents, such as the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World, and the various recent decisions on cultural and civic programs, foster the idea of a common European identity by emphasizing the cultural heritage as a common layer of meanings shared by all the Europeans. The rhetoric in these documents directs to narrate and interpret the local, regional, and national heritage in the Member States as European (Lähdesmäki 2012). The 'invention' of the common transnational European heritage in a sense of Benedict Anderson (1983) – or the Europeanization of the local, regional, and national heritages – is taken into practice in the implementation of the EU's cultural programs and actions at the local level. The idea of the common European heritage has also been concretized in the official EU symbols, such as in the architectural designs on the Euro banknotes (e.g., Delanty and Jones 2002).

Common European identity and heritage as its mediator and maintainer are not addressed only in the EU's cultural initiatives and symbols. The attempts of fostering European identity are related to a broader frame of the EU's urban and regional policies. Thus, the EU's urban and regional policies are intertwined with identity politics. Besides cultural initiatives, the EU's interest on regional development and regeneration has been administered through European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). In addition, several recent EU-funded research projects (e.g., implemented as a part of the Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage) have explored the issues of European identity by investigating the preservation, meaning-making, and use of cultural heritage (for discussion on recent EU-funded research projects see e.g., Miller 2012).

During the past two decades the EU has launched several initiatives, such as the Raphael community action program (1997–2000), with a focus on heritage issues. The EU currently administrates or supports three cultural initiatives – the European Heritage Days, the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage, and the European Heritage Label – that

particularly address the fostering of the common European cultural heritage. The focus of the article is in these three initiatives and the explicit and implicit heritage politics included in them. The main questions in the article are: what kind of heritage politics does the EU promote and implement through these initiatives; and how and why does the EU aim to govern the heritage in Europe? In order to understand the constructive and generative nature of the EU's heritage politics, it will be approached in the article as a discursive meaning-making process that consists of several political aims, strategies for obtaining them, and the underlying ideologies on which the aims and the strategies are based upon. The fundamental aim of the article is to investigate the connections between the politics, strategies, and ideologies intertwined with the idea of heritage in the current EU policy. In the article, the theoretical discussion on heritage politics draws together points of view from the fields of heritage studies, European Studies, and cultural policy studies.

The European Heritage Days (EHD) was officially launched by the Council of Europe (CoE) in 1991, but since 1999 it has been organized as a joint initiative between the CoE and the EU. Every September this locally-led initiative opens buildings with restricted access together with museums, monuments, and heritage sites for free entry to the public in the 50 signatory states of the European Cultural Convention. In 2002, the European Commission (EC) launched the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage as a part of the implementation of the Culture 2000 program. Europa Nostra, the pan-European federation for cultural heritage with representatives from over 200 heritage NGOs active throughout Europe, was selected to run the prize scheme. The prizes are annually awarded in four categories: conservation; research; dedicated service by individuals or organizations; and education, training, and awareness-raising. Europa Nostra has supported the EU's interests for strengthening the EU-led governance of cultural heritage in Europe (e.g., Europa Nostra 2005, 5).

The latest EU initiative with the focus on heritage is the European Heritage Label (EHL). Its scheme was launched in 2006 as an intergovernmental initiative under the leadership of France, Spain, and Hungary. In 2007, the first series of sites were awarded with the label. After the first 2 years, it turned out that the initiative was difficult to effectively implement on intergovernmental basis due to the lack of common co-ordination and possibilities for operational arrangements (MacCoshan *et al.* 2009; EC 2010a: 18–20). The scheme was, however, considered important by the European Parliament and the European Council, and in 2008 the European Council adopted conclusions transforming the initiative into an official EU action. The action was launched in 2013 with 2-year transitional provisions after which it will turn into a regular

action. The labelled sites are first pre-selected at the national level and the final selection is made by an expert panel appointed at the EU level. Altogether 23 Member States have announced their participation.

## 2. Data and methods

The research data used for the article includes the official policy documents, such as the decisions, guidelines, and application forms, of the heritage initiatives, the preparatory documents of the EHL, the official reports on the implementation of the EHD, and press releases, brochures, and official web sites of the initiatives by the EC and the CoE.

The data is analyzed using critical discourse analysis. In the analysis of the data, the connections between micro-level linguistic utterances and macro-level socio-cultural structures are identified and explained in order to understand their mutual interaction and interdependence (see, e.g., Fairclough 1992, 1995). A core motive of the analysis is to make transparent the existence of ideologies, the naturalization of certain discourses, the emergence of taken-for-granted meanings, and the power mechanism in the EU's heritage policy discourses. The analysis aims to bring to the fore the political and ideological basis of the meaning-making processes of heritage. In the concluding chapter the results of the analysis are drawn together with the current academic discussions on identity and heritage politics in Europe.

Politics is made in language and through discourses. Due to the discursive nature of politics, political innovations are always conceptual and conceptual changes embody politics (e.g., Farr 1989: 31). Political language in the administrative documents does not only describe the reality of policies, but it participates in the production of them. Thus, political language is a performative speech act in a sense of John L. Austin (1982) even though its explicit claims might not be fulfilled. The EU heritage politics is a discursive attempt to produce the European cultural identity and define the relations between it and the integration of the EU.

## 3. The concept of heritage used in the study

Several scholars have pointed out how the quickly transforming, globalized, technologized, and digitalized societies have not lost their interest in remembering the past and preserving its remnants for future generations – quite the contrary (Huyssen 1993; Lowenthal 1996; Harrison 2013). Societies have faced an increasing memory boom with an exponential growth in the number of objects and places which are

actively identified, listed, conserved, and exhibited as heritage. Through active and all-ranging 'museumisation' and 'heritagisation' (e.g., Walsh 1992) the traces and memories of many different pasts pile up and surface and intervene in our present (Harrison 2013). The increased interest in the past and the various practices of preserving, transmitting, and fostering it in the present has made the concept of heritage even more complex and ambiguous – the contents of the concept vary, and it has been put into practice in various ways.

Physical sites, objects, values, and customs 'become' heritage and gain their shared and common meanings in an interactive and continuous process within a specific social context. Therefore, scholars in the field of heritage studies have often found the processes of 'becoming' a heritage an interesting point of view for their investigations. In the movement from the past to the narrated history and from the history to the fostered heritage, there is an evaluation of the past in order for the present to judge what legacy it should derive from history (Delanty 2009: 36). The memories that are encapsulated in a heritage allow a society to interpret history and the relation of the present to history. As Gerard Delanty (2009: 38) has pointed out, to speak of heritage in such terms is to see it as a cultural model of interpretation. As several studies have emphasized, the interpretations of the past are seldom univocal or unanimous – multiple and contradictory meanings are often infused and suffused within a heritage site or object (e.g., Breglia 2006: 12). What is considered as heritage is continually subject to interpretation and reinterpretation, claim and counter claim – i.e., negotiations and contests over the interpretations of the heritage. What is the outcome of this process depends on the status and power on who among the various stakeholders has the loudest 'voice', as David Harrison (2005: 7) express it.

Many of the recent studies on heritage emphasize the heritage-as-practice approach, i.e., heritage is considered as a particular kind of social relationship among different kinds of users of a heritage site or object (Breglia 2006: 14). In this approach people and their needs lie at the very center of heritage (Howard and Ashworth 1999: 5–6). Thus, 'becoming' a heritage is an interactive social practice in which the traits of the past are operationalized by those who 'need' the heritage. One mode of operationalizing the past is to perform it for those who are not 'us' (Harrison 2005: 3), but also to the members of the heritage community expected to share it. Thus, the heritage-as-practice approach includes the idea of heritage as a form of performance produced and maintained by the people.

When heritage is perceived as a practice and a social relationship (as is the case in this article), the question of power hierarchies and the use of power can be perceived as determining the process of 'becoming' a

heritage. Power is not only a central matter within the realm of heritage but generative to it (e.g., Silva and Mota Santos 2012: 438). Due to the involvement of power, heritage as a concept, idea, and practice is easily politicized (e.g., Ashworth 1994). The heritage inevitably involves a political component intertwined with its governance. Therefore, the idea of heritage has also been discussed as a form of governmentality (Smith 2004) – the concept originally formulated by Michel Foucault (1991). For him, governmentality represents the modern government of territories and populations that the state exerts through ‘technologies of power’ inspired and justified by one or more scientific rationales. The recent increase of commemorative practices and the production of heritage sites and objects in the modern societies have taken place under various technologies of power aiming to legitimate and justify certain political ideas and ideologies. Heritage politics as an ideology of governing the past comprises various technologies of power and aim to produce and maintain certain interpretations of a heritage as a part of people’s every-day values and beliefs, and of a common understanding of their identity and belonging.

One of the political and ideological means of the heritage politics is to rely on the ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ – the concept used by Laurajane Smith (2006). It promotes a consensus approach to history by smoothing over the possible conflicts and social differences between people. The rhetoric in the EU’s heritage initiatives obeys the ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ by representing the history of Europe as a unification narrative and a source of a common European identity. Discussing the European heritage in consensual, collective, and ennobling terms is a political choice. In the initiatives, heritage is a practice through which the evidence from the past ‘becomes’ – or is discursively produced as – a common European heritage.

#### **4. The politics in the EU’s heritage initiatives**

The main objectives of the EU’s three heritage initiatives are described in the policy documents, reports, and the official communication of the EU. However, these explicit policy objectives are broad and include diverse – even contradictory – goals. In general, the rhetoric of the main objectives in the data reflects and repeats the idea of the EU’s official slogan ‘united in diversity’ by simultaneously emphasizing the importance of strengthening the unity of the union and respecting its manifold diversity. Even though the EU policy rhetoric emphasizes diversity as a core value of the union, the fostering of unity, coherence, and multilevel integration in the EU dominates the emphasis on diversity. The attempts to stress cultural diversity and the importance of respecting it can also be interpreted as

instruments, or phases, in the creation of common European cultural heritage. Fostering diversity (and paradoxically unity at the same time) in European culture(s) is expected to produce a dialogue and understanding between people, a familiarization with different cultural features, a participation in cultural events, and finally, a feeling of belonging to a common 'European culture' (Lähdesmäki 2012; for further discussion on the interpretation of the slogan, see Fornäs 2012: 103–14).

Recently the EU has adopted a new discursive approach regarding the diversity issues and the cultural and social challenges the diversification of European societies has brought along. The policy objectives of the heritage initiatives include the rhetoric of this new diversity discourse by emphasizing the promotion of the 'intercultural dialogue' as a focus. In addition to the general emphasis on the 'united in diversity', the data reveals a more complex texture in the EU's heritage politics. The discourse analysis of the data brought to the fore five main discursive politics embedded in a multilayered way into the rhetoric of the initiatives. All these politics comprise more or less implicit strategies through which the politics are aimed to be promoted and operationalized – i.e., transformed into practice. In the following analyses, the selected quotations from the data illustrate these politics and their strategies and the mutual relations and interconnections between them. The discourses in the EU's heritage politics and the strategies through which the politics are aimed to be promoted are summarized in Table 1.

**TABLE 1. Discourses in the EU's heritage politics and the strategies through which the politics are aimed to be promoted**

Politics of integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Europeanization of national, regional, and local history, culture, and heritage</li> <li>● assimilation of heritage politics with identity politics</li> </ul>
Politics of image-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● increasing the visibility of the EU in heritage sites</li> <li>● 'placing heritage'</li> <li>● branding</li> </ul>
Politics of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● young people as the target audience</li> <li>● 'past presencing'</li> <li>● activating civil participation</li> </ul>
Politics of governmentality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● making top-down policies look like bottom-up attempts</li> <li>● multisectionality of politics</li> </ul>
Politics of economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● boosting cultural tourism</li> <li>● strengthening cultural industries</li> <li>● enabling regional development</li> </ul>

#### 4.1. Politics of integration

Even though the core EU policy documents emphasize the importance of fostering the cultural, linguistic, and regional diversity in Europe, the underlying goal of the policy rhetoric in them is, however, the strengthening of the EU integration at different levels (Lähdesmäki 2012). The manifold diversity in Europe can, in fact, be perceived in the policy rhetoric as a problem that should be solved. In the data, the problem of the diversity in Europe was presented as one of the points of departure for the establishment of the EHL, as the following quotation from the web site of the EC illustrates:

The European Union is home to 500 million people. But most don't usually refer to themselves as EU citizens. When asked about their origins, they tend to answer in terms of their nationality. The lack of a strong European identity is seen as a challenge to integration in Europe, but it is hardly surprising. The continent is a vast smorgasbord of languages and customs where countries often seem more different than alike. To give Europeans a greater sense of belonging, the commission has decided to sponsor the European heritage label, a registry of historical sites whose significance transcends national borders. (EC 2010b)

In the data, the problem of diversity and national preference for identification were aimed to be tackled by the means of producing a transnational European heritage as the common ground for a sense of belonging and the identification with Europe and the EU. In the preparatory phase of the EHL, the policy rhetoric emphasized how 'the European dimension of our common heritage is still very insufficiently highlighted and its potential insufficiently exploited' (EC 2010a: 17). Heritage was turned into an instrument for the politics of integration.

One of the main strategies of the politics of integration in the data is the Europeanization of the national, regional, and local history, culture, and heritage. As the preparatory documents (EC 2010a: 30) of the EHL emphasize: 'It is essential for the EHL that national interpretations of culture and history are balanced with interpretations of sites' European significance'. The nationalist interpretation of heritage was also considered as a problem by the participants of the first European Heritage Forum, which was organized as a part of the EHD in 2008. According to the Forum report (Matarasso 2009: 13), the '[p]articipants recognized that heritage could be misused as a way to promote nationalism'. The solution to this misuse was found in the Europeanization of heritage:

[s]ituating heritage into a common European history was one way of addressing this problem, while the concerns of art history were also helpful. For example, it was often more meaningful to explore movements such as gothic or art



nouveau as international phenomena instead of within the context of national identity. (Matarasso 2009: 13)

The policy rhetoric in the data repeatedly refers to the 'European history and culture' in a singular form thus surpassing the national and regional cultural diversity and interpretations of the past. History and heritage, as well as the present and the future, of the EU citizens are discussed as 'ours' and shared, as the rhetoric in the web site of the EC (2013) indicates: 'Cultural heritage is our reference point to the past. It helps us to understand our histories and the ancestry that binds us together. But our heritage is also an integral part of our present, and of our future'.

According to the data, the fundamental strategy of the politics of integration is to assimilate the heritage politics with identity politics. By promoting heritage the EU aims to increase the cultural and social cohesion in the EU, to create the feeling of belonging to a common European community, and to strengthen the European identity that would surpass or even replace the national identities. As the preparatory document of the EHL (EC 2010a: 27) envisions: 'The ultimate goal of the EHL is to change individual attitudes, and not just in terms of a person's view on this or that subject, but at a very deep-rooted level, namely their identity'.

#### 4.2. Politics of image-making

For the EU heritage serves as a practical instrument to rethink and develop its public image, which was e.g., in the preparatory documents of the EHL considered to be very poor and having worsened at the end of the last decade (EC 2010a: 16–17). Heritage as physical well-known tourist sites potentially invokes familiarity and positive associations among people. Thus, the politics of image-making in the EU heritage politics aims to take advantage of the positive associations of heritage sites in order to uplift the image of the EU as a cultural rather than bureaucratic political community.

An important strategy in the politics of image-making is to increase the visibility of the EU in heritage sites and heritage activities in Europe. The awarded EHL sites have to e.g., implement a 'comprehensive communication strategy highlighting the European significance of the site', install a plaque bearing the logo of the EHL at the entrance of the site, and use the EHL logo for all its communication and promotion activities (EC 2011a: 17). Similarly, the sites and organizations participating to the EHD are expected to use the logos of the CoE and the EU in their promotional material and obey the following common principles:

(–) the title ‘European Heritage Days’ is compulsory for all countries or organizations wishing to be associated with the event; European Heritage Days logo must be included in all promotional documents published for the event; the slogan ‘Europe, a common heritage’ must be shared by all the countries; the flag bearing the European Heritage Days logo is supposed to be flown on all buildings or sites associated with the event. (–) Compliance with [the principles] in future will help reinforce the international dimension of the event as well as every participant’s feeling of belonging (beyond his or her specific personal traits) to a single community of values and destiny called Europe. (Kneubühler 2009: 11)

The strategy of visibility is a tool in the use of power. Through it the EU aims not only to influence its public image but to mark the ‘ownership’ of the heritage sites, manifest its unity, and indicate the reach of the EU governance into all societal domains.

An important strategy in the politics of image-making in the data is ‘placing heritage’ – i.e., emphasizing or producing physical sites to which the common heritage is considered as anchored. Even though, the EHL can be applied for the intangible heritage, ‘they must be attached to a clearly identifiable physical space in which the information and educational activities will be carried out’, as the guide for the EHL candidate sites (EC 2011a: 5) emphasizes. Through physical places the heritage becomes concrete and visible – and manageable and controllable.

The politics of image-making is also promoted in the data in the strategy of branding. The emphasis on brand-thinking penetrates all the EU heritage initiatives. Through heritage brands the EU aims to increase its visibility, positive images, and compatibility with other international – but also national – heritage agents. Strong and competed-for the heritage brands are also strategic tools in the attempts to create bottom-up integration in the EU. As in the case of the EHL, the sites are expected to compete for the label and produce the common European heritage on their own initiative.

#### 4.3. Politics of education

One of the core goals of the EU’s heritage politics is to educate the EU citizens as ‘Europeans’ in a cultural sense. Education related to the common European history and shared culture is an efficient tool for socialization, i.e., the process whereby norms and standards of a community are passed on to the new generations. Moreover, heritage education is an efficient tool of legitimation: through it powerful political ideologies and agents can justify their dominance by appealing to the continuity of the past to the present (Ashworth 1994: 14). According to the data, one of the core strategies of the politics of education is to repeatedly emphasize

the significance of young people as the target audience of heritage initiatives. By focusing on young people, the EU aims to socialize its ideologies for the future generations and build up a more coherent, politically as well as culturally, integrated union.

The politics of education is promoted in the data by a strategy that could be described as 'past presencing'. Sharon MacDonald (2012) has used this concept to draw attention to the multiple ways in which the past is and is made to be 'present'. The EU expects the sites involved in its heritage initiatives to organize various activities in which the history, memory, and heritage are intertwined with the present day. As the preparatory document of the EHL (EC 2010a: 30) states: 'It is important that the culture and heritage of EHL sites do not ossify and that their relevance to contemporary life is demonstrated through links to contemporary cultural activities and creativity'. In the EU's heritage politics, the idea of the common past and shared heritage is intertwined with the emphasis on the common present day and the shared contemporary experiences of the Europeans.

The general strategy of the politics of education is to get the EU citizens to participate in the common initiatives and thus include them in the production of the communality of the union. As in the case of the EHD, the success of the initiative has been evaluated in terms of the 'stimulating of civil society's participation' and 'promoting the core principles of intercultural dialogue, partnership and civic responsibility' (CoE 2012). The active civil participation is considered in the policy rhetoric as a sign of democracy and support for the EU action and agencies.

#### 4.4. Politics of governmentality

Through the heritage initiatives the EU broadens its governance into the realm of preservation and meaning-making of collective memories and the narration of history. The heritage politics in the EU's heritage initiatives is thus fundamentally intertwined with the politics of governmentality: the initiatives are the EU's technologies of power. Approaching heritage as governmentality includes, however, diverse challenges: heritage is an affective phenomenon which is not easily governed 'from above' (see e.g., Smith 2004; Silva 2011). The fail of the EHL as an intergovernmental initiative indicates these difficulties. A more clearly organized, regulated, and controlled initiative was considered necessary in order to govern the heritage politics in the EU.

One of the major strategies of the politics of governmentality in the data is the rhetoric and practice through which the EU's top-down policies are made to look as bottom-up attempts. This form of governance is used in

other EU actions and programs as well (Sassatelli 2006: 30). Through this kind of principle of governance the local agents are committed to building a common European identity and the EU as a cultural project. The study on the implementation of the EHL scheme indicates that the narrative modes of defining 'European' and 'European identity' that are emphasized and promoted in the EU policy rhetoric are often repeated by the local, regional, and national heritage agents. It signifies the powerful position of the EU's heritage policy rhetoric in the European identity project (Lähdesmäki forthcoming 2014).

In all three EU's heritage initiatives, the agents at the local level are made to implement the set heritage schemes and obey their criteria and rules. In the case of the EHL and the EU prize the agents are put to apply for the awards and compete against each other in order to obtain them. The task of representing and narrating the Europeanness of the sites is left to the local agents, as the following advice for the EHL candidates indicates:

They must therefore demonstrate one or more of the following: i) their cross-border or pan-European nature; how their past and present influence and attraction go beyond the national borders of a Member State; ii) their place and role in the European history and European integration, and their links with key European events, personalities or movements; iii) their place and role in the development and promotion of the common values that underpin European integration. (Decision 1194/2011EU)

In the application forms for the EHL and EU Prize, applicants are directly asked to narrate the Europeanness or the European added value of the sites. Through this strategy the local agents are seemingly transformed as initiators in the strivings for fostering the common cultural past of the EU citizens and strengthening the cultural integration in the EU. In addition, the local agents are committed to the EU's heritage politics through their willingness to invest in the common European heritage. The EU does not allocate any direct funds for the heritage sites through heritage initiatives. Only in the EU Prize up to six entries of a total of up to 25 receive the Grand Prix, which includes a monetary award of 10,000 euros.

The heritage politics enables the EU to address issues not only in the realm of culture but on a broader societal scale. Multisectionality can be perceived as the key strategy in the politics of governmentality, according to the data. By governing heritage the EU aims simultaneously to address various social and economic questions in Europe. For example, the declared aims of the EHD are to 'combat racism and xenophobia, encourage greater tolerance in Europe across national borders', and to 'encourage Europe to respond to the social, political and economic challenges it faces' (CoE 2010).

#### 4.5. Politics of economy

Heritage is a huge business and an industry (see e.g., AlSaiyyad 2001; Peckham 2003) in which the past is turned into a commodity purposefully created to satisfy contemporary consumption, as Gregory J. Ashworth (1994: 16) describes it. Thus, the politics of economy is inseparably attached to the EU's heritage politics. The strategies in the politics of economy combine strivings of boosting cultural tourism, strengthening cultural industries, and enabling regional development. The benefits of the EHL are described in the decision as follows:

In addition to strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to the Union and stimulating intercultural dialogue, the action could also contribute to enhancing the value and profile of cultural heritage, to increasing the role of heritage in the economic and sustainable development of regions, in particular through cultural tourism, to fostering synergies between cultural heritage and contemporary creation and creativity and, more generally, to promoting the democratic values and human rights that underpin European integration. (Decision 1194/2011EU)

The strategies in the politics of economy are closely intertwined e.g., with the strategies of promoting participation, 'past presencing', Europeanization of regionality, etc.

Even though the economic goals of the EU's heritage initiatives are rhetorically introduced only as 'secondary' compared to the cultural and social ones, the economic points of departure generally function as the underlying principles of the EU's integration. The heritage industry as part of a more general realm of cultural industry in the EU is expected to support the creation of the common cultural markets in Europe. The current lack of common cultural markets – due to Europe's fragmentation along national and linguistic borders – is often considered a problem by the EU (e.g., EC 2011b: 4, 13–14). Through the European-wide heritage industry the EU aims to influence the production of heritage commodities for the common cultural markets within the EU.

### **5. Discussion and conclusions: the problematic of transnational heritage**

The EU's heritage politics has its ideological basis in the pan-Europeanist idea of a transnational heritage transcending the national and regional memory and history. As in the case of the UNESCO and its universalistic reading of history (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2006; Starzmann 2008; Di Cesari 2010), the rhetoric of the EU's heritage politics elevates the

categories of ownership, access, and inheritance to transnational values, while the heritage sites become a ‘common good’ belonging to all Europeans. The ideas of universality, as well as those of transnationality or pan-Europeanness, are profoundly homogenizing and, therefore, exclusive categories that erase the historical specificity (Trouillot 2003) and let only certain memories and historic events to be selected as the privileged and legitimized instances of the transnational history (Starzmann 2008: 371). The making of a transnational heritage often rely on the ‘Authorized Heritage Discourse’ which ignores the ambiguity and controversiality of the idea of heritage.

Scholars have contradicting views on whether a transnational European heritage can eventually exist and if it can, what might be its common ground (see e.g., Ashworth and Larkham 1994). The critical scholars have asked what could be the European dimension that goes beyond a mere sum of national icons, which in practice still promote the nation (Sassatelli 2006: 29), or questioned the possibility for a common European commemoration and heritage practices due to the lack of a coherent ‘European people’ – the main difference between Europe and its nations (Delanty 2009: 37). As several scholars have pointed out, instead of supplanting national or state identities the EU’s attempts for cultural Europeanization and identity-building have sometimes even mobilized domestic resistance and opposition (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009; Jones and Subotic 2011: 542).

Some scholars have found a possible common ground for the European cultural identity and transnational heritage in urbanity (Sassatelli 2009), European cities and their historical environment (Ashworth and Graham 1997), and the architectural styles and movements in Europe (Delanty and Jones 2002). This kind of urban focus is utilized in the EHL, the EHD, and the EU’s initiative on the European Capital of Culture. In addition to the (historical) urbanity, the EU aims to constitute the transnational heritage through *the idea of European unity* and *the unity of European ideas*, following the conceptualization by Gregory J. Ashworth and Brian Graham (1997: 383–384). The heritage of *the idea of European unity* is based on the narratives of building the union, its institutions, principles, and values, while the heritage of *the unity of the European ideas* comprises ideas, values, and activities that are perceived to be continental rather than ‘only’ national. The press releases and the web site of the EC used the house of Robert Schuman – ‘one of the founding fathers of the EU’ – as an example of the EHL awarded sites which is significant in the history of the EU (EC 2010c). Besides the house of Robert Schuman, the press releases and the web site of the EC mentioned as an example of the EHL awarded sites the ‘Gdansk Shipyards in Poland, birthplace of Solidarność, the first independent trade union in a Warsaw Pact country, which helped

trigger events that would finally unite the continent after the Cold War' (EC 2010c). The heritage related to the idea of the European integration is one of the key ideas promoted in the EU heritage politics.

The production of transnational heritage and the search for common histories in Europe face the complex relations of the national interpretations of the past. Topics and histories which some Europeans might consider common for the continent may be dissonant in one way or another to another group of Europeans (Ashworth and Graham 1997: 384). The different nationalities may interpret 'Europeanness' or 'European' very differently (Risse 2003: 77; Jones and Subotic 2011: 254). For some nationalities the European identity is based on civic or political understanding, while some others emphasize the cultural notion of it (Bruter 2005). Moreover, several surveys among Europeans have indicated that the definitions on national and European heritage vary considerably from one country to another (EC 2010a: 15–16; *Eurobarometer Survey on Cultural Values within Europe* 2007; Ipsos 2007).

In writing the history of 'Europe', there has been a noticeable bias in favor of Western and Southern Europe compared to Northern and Eastern Europe (Mälksoo 2009: 673). The EU's eastern enlargements in 2004 and 2007 have forced the EU to face new memory regimes which includes e.g., experiences on crimes and the restriction of freedom under the socialistic rule as a part of Europe's recent history (Onken 2007: 30). The attempts of the Eastern and Central European countries to bring their mnemonic culture into the common European historical consciousness challenge the long-term tendency of the Western core of the EU to act as a model for the whole of Europe (Mälksoo 2009: 673). According to Jones and Subotic (2011: 543), European states with uncertain or transitional identities on the European 'periphery' use performative symbols, such as festivals or cultural events, to express their fantasies about power and equality within the European system. Culture seems to have become an arena of political struggle in attempts to belong to 'Europe' (Jones and Subotic 2011: 543). Thus, it is not surprising that all Member States (except Estonia) who joined the union in 2004 and 2007 have participated to the EHL scheme already during its intergovernmental phase and thus indicated their interest in manifesting their belonging to Europe in terms of cultural heritage and history.

As Gerard Delanty (2009: 36) notices, the debate regarding European heritage is very much a question of identifying the cultural resources that might be relevant to the current challenges of European societies. Therefore, defining a transnational European heritage means taking up a position on European history that reflects the contemporary political views on Europe and its self-understanding. As Delanty points out, it is not possible to speak of a European cultural heritage without considering its

political meaning – European cultural and political heritage cannot be separated. The analysis of the policy documents of the three EU's heritage initiatives underlines how the idea of heritage is manifested as a political practice. Heritage as a concept and idea becomes operationalized in the EU's heritage initiatives through political narrativization and discursive meaning-making processes. It is easily transformed as an instrument for multisectional politics in the EU cultural policy. The main focuses of these politics were determined in the article as the politics of integration, image-building, education, governmentality, and economy. One of the fundamental strategies in the implementation of the EU's heritage politics is to mingle the top-down and bottom-up dynamics between the EU and the local agents. This is at the same time the ideological core of the EU's heritage politics: to produce self-creating and self-maintaining communality, coherency, and cultural integration in the EU.

However, the ideological and political agenda of the EU heritage politics is not utilized only at the EU level; it has taken advantage of the local, regional, and national levels to raise European or international awareness and the publicity of the heritage sites, attract domestic and international tourists, and promote the sites' possibilities to receive European and national funding, etc. The EU's heritage initiatives function at the local, regional, and national levels as an instrument in the 'politics of European significance' (Lähdesmäki forthcoming 2014). On the one hand, the EU's heritage initiatives directs and instructs the local, regional, and national level heritage agents to narrate themselves as European and thus participate in the production of the common European heritage seemingly on their 'own' initiative. On the other hand, the initiatives enable the agents to interpret the idea of Europe and Europeaness in their own way – and thus use the power to define the European identity and rethink its traditional frames.

### Funding

This work was supported by the Academy of Finland [grant number SA21000012851, ID-ECC] and the University of Jyväskylä, Finland [mobility grant]. The author conducted the research as a Visiting Fellow at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

### References

- AlSayyad, N. (2001) 'Global norms and urban forms in the age of tourism: Manufacturing heritage, consuming tradition', in N. AlSayyad (ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage. Global Norms and Urban form in the Age of Tourism*, London: Routledge, pp. 1–33.



- Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso.
- Ashworth, G. J. (1994) 'From history to heritage – from heritage to identity. In search of concepts and models', in G. J. Ashworth and P. J. Larkham (eds), *Building a New Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe*, London: Routledge, pp. 13–30.
- Ashworth, G. J. and Graham, B. J. (1997) 'Heritage, identity and Europe', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 88(4): 381–88.
- Ashworth, G. J., Graham, B. J. and Tunbridge, J. E. (2005) 'The uses and abuses of heritage', in G. Corsane (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries. An Introductory Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 26–35.
- Ashworth, G. J. and Larkham, P. J. (1994) 'A heritage for Europe. The need, the task, the contribution', in G. J. Ashworth and P. J. Larkham (eds), *Building a New Heritage. Tourism, Culture and Identity in the New Europe*, London: Routledge, pp. 1–9.
- Austin, J. L. (1982) *How to Do Things with Words. The Williams James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Breglia, L. C. (2006) *Monumental Ambivalence. The Politics of Heritage*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bruter, M. (2005) *Citizens of Europe? The Emergence of a Mass European Identity*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Checkel, J. T. and Katzenstein, P. J. (2009) 'The politicization of European identities', in J. T. Checkel and P. J. Katzenstein (eds), *European Identity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–28.
- Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label, *Official Journal of the European Union* L303/1–9, 22 Nov 2011.
- Delanty, G. (2009) 'The European heritage: History, memory, and time', in C. Rumford (ed.), *The Sage Handbook of European Studies*, London: Sage, pp. 36–51.
- Delanty, G. and Jones, P. R. (2002) 'European identity and architecture', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(4): 453–66.
- Di Cesari, C. (2010) 'World heritage and mosaic universalism. A view from Palestine', *Journal of Social Archaeology* 10(3): 299–324.
- CoE (2010) *European Heritage Days 2011. A Joint Action of the Council of Europe and the European Union*. [Brochure.] Strasbourg and Brussels: Council of Europe and European Commission.
- CoE (2012) 'History of the European Heritage Days', Official web site of the Council of Europe, [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/EHD/Historique\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/EHD/Historique_en.asp)

- EC (2009) Impact Assessment Board Opinion. Impact Assessment on: a Community action for the European Heritage Label D(2009), 30 Nov 2009. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC (2010a) Impact Assessment. Commission Staff Working Document SEC(2010) 197, 9 March 2010. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC (2010b) 'Monuments to Europe', Official web site of the European Commission, published 9 March 2010, [http://ec.europa.eu/news/culture/100309\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/news/culture/100309_en.htm)
- EC (2010c) Culture: Commission proposes EU-wide European Heritage Label, 2010. Press release by the European Commission IP/10/250, 9 Mar 2010.
- EC (2011a) *European Heritage Label. Guide for Candidate Sites*. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC (2011b) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the Creative Europe Programme, COM (2011) 785/2. Brussels: European Commission.
- EC (2013) 'Cultural Heritage', Official web site of the European Commission, [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/cultural-heritage\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/cultural-heritage_en.htm)
- Eurobarometer Survey on Cultural Values within Europe* (2007) Luxembourg: European Communities.
- Europa Nostra (2005) Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe. Position Paper of Europa Nostra, the Pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage. Adopted by the Europa Nostra Council at its meeting on 2 June 2005 in Bergen (Norway).
- Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995) *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London: Longman.
- Farr, J. (1989) 'Understanding conceptual change politically', in T. Ball, J. Farr and R. L. Hanson (eds), *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 24–49.
- Fornäs, J. (2012) *Signifying Europe*, Bristol: Intellect.
- Foucault, M. (1991) 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, pp. 87–104.
- Harrison, D. (2005) 'Introduction: Contested narratives in the domain of World Heritage', in D. Harrison and M. Hitchcock (eds), *The Politics of World Heritage. Negotiating Tourism and Conservation*, Clevedon: Channel View Publications, pp. 1–10.
- Harrison, R. (2013) 'Forgetting to remember, remembering to forget: Late modern heritage practices, sustainability and the "crisis" of

- accumulation of the past', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19(6): 579–595. doi:[10.1080/13527258.2012.678371](https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2012.678371).
- Hobsbawm, E. (1983) 'Introduction: Inventing traditions', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–14.
- Howard, P. and Ashworth, G. J. (1999) *European Heritage. Planning and Management*, Exeter: Intellect Books.
- Huyssen, A. (1993) 'Monument and memory in a postmodern age', *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 6(2): 249–61.
- Ipsos (2007) *Survey on Europeans, Heritage of Europe and the European Heritage [Enquête sur les Européens, les patrimoines de l'Europe et le patrimoine européen]*, Paris: Ipsos/Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication.
- Jones, S. and Subotic, J. (2011) 'Fantasies of power: Performing Europeanization on the European periphery', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 14(5): 542–57.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (2006) 'World heritage and cultural economics', in I. Karp, C. A. Kratz, L. Szwaja and T. Ybarra-Frausto (eds), *Museum Frictions: Public Culture/Global Transformation*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, pp. 161–202.
- Kneubühler, M. (2009) *Handbook on the European Heritage Days. A Practical Guide*, DGIV/PAT/JEP(2008)21, Strasbourg and Brussels: Council of Europe and European Commission.
- Lähdesmäki, T. (2012) 'Rhetoric of unity and cultural diversity in the making of European cultural identity', *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 18(1): 59–75.
- Lähdesmäki, T. (forthcoming 2014) 'Strategies of Narrating Cultural Heritage as European in the Intergovernmental Initiative of the European Heritage Label', *Ethnologia Europaea* 44(1).
- Lowenthal, D. (1996) *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacCoshan, A., Gluck, D., Betts, J., Clark, J., Lee, S. and Pasquier, N. (2009) *Support Services to Assist in the Preparation of the Impact Assessment and Ex-ante Evaluation of the European Heritage Label. Final Report*, Birmingham: ECOTEC.
- MacDonald, S. (2012) 'Presencing Europe's past', in U. Kockell, M. Nic Craith and J. Frykman (eds), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 233–52.
- Mälksoo, M. (2009) 'The memory politics of becoming European: The East European subalterns and the collective memory of Europe', *European Journal of International Relations* 15(4): 653–80.

- Matarasso, F. (2009) *'Open Doors and Open Minds'*, Report on the first European Heritage Forum on 'Heritage and Dialogue' held in Brussels 23–24 Oct 2008. DGIV/PAT/JEP(2008)20rev, Strasbourg and Brussels: Council of Europe and European Commission.
- Miller, R. (2012) *The Development of European Identity/Identities: Unfinished Business*, Brussels: European Commission.
- Mitchell, T. (2001) 'Making the nation: The politics of heritage in Egypt', in N. AlSayyad (ed.), *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage. Global Norms and Urban Form in the Age of Tourism*, London: Routledge, pp. 212–39.
- Näss, H. E. (2010) 'The ambiguities of intercultural dialogue: Critical perspectives on the European Union's New Agenda for Culture', *Journal of Intercultural Communication* 23, <http://www.immi.se/intercultural/>
- Onken, E.-C. (2007) 'The Baltic states and Moscow's 9 May Commemoration: Analysing memory politics in Europe', *Europe-Asia Studies* 59 (1): 23–46.
- Peckham, R. S. (2003) 'The politics of heritage and public culture', in R. S. Peckham (ed.), *Rethinking Heritage. Cultures and Politics in Europe*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 1–13.
- Risse, T. (2003) 'European identity and the heritage of national culture', in R. S. Peckham (ed.), *Rethinking Heritage. Cultures and Politics in Europe*, London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 74–89.
- Sassatelli, M. (2006) 'The logic of Europeanizing cultural policy', in U. H. Meinhof and A. Triandafyllidou (eds), *Transcultural Europe. Cultural Policy in a Changing Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 24–42.
- Sassatelli, M. (2009) *Becoming Europeans. Cultural Identity and Cultural Policies*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Silva, L. (2011) 'Beneath the surface of the heritage enterprise. Governmentality and cultural representation of rural architecture in Portugal', *Ethnologia Europaea* 41(2): 39–53.
- Silva, L. and Mota Santos, P. (2012) 'Ethnographies of heritage and power', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 18(5): 437–43.
- Shore, C. (2000) *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*, London: Routledge.
- Shore, C. (2004) 'Whither European citizenship?: Eros and civilization revisited', *European Journal of Social Theory* 7(1): 27–44.
- Smith, L. (2004) *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*, London: Routledge.
- Smith, L. (2006) *Uses of Heritage*, London: Routledge.

- Starzmann, M. T. (2008) 'Cultural imperialism and heritage politics in the event of armed conflict: Prospects for an "activist archaeology"', *Archaeologies* 4(3): 368–89.
- Stråth, B. (2002) 'A European identity: To the historical limits of a concept', *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(4): 387–401.
- Trouillot, M.-R. (2003) *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Walsh, K. (1992) *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post Modern World*, London: Routledge.

**Tuuli Lähdesmäki** is a Senior Researcher at the Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests cover identity and heritage politics, cultural policy, urban space, and discursive meaning-making processes in the contemporary culture.

**Address for correspondence:** Tuuli Lähdesmäki, University of Jyväskylä, Department of Art and Culture Studies, P.O. Box 35, 40014 Jyväskylä, Finland.  
E-mail: [tuuli.lahdesmaki@juu.fi](mailto:tuuli.lahdesmaki@juu.fi)