



Cultural Heritage Agency  
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

*Faro Convention Meeting:*

# Heritage as a means for societal challenges



Live Magazines

May 16 Lumière Maastricht - May 17 Schunck Heerlen

# Colophon

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Live Magazines of Faro Convention Meeting:  
Heritage as a means for societal challenges.

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Council of Europe, Municipality Maastricht, Municipality Heerlen, Lumière Cinema, Schunck, De Bisschopsmolen, Koos Konsten, Gilbert Soeters, Vasken Sarkis, Servé Minis, Carlos Aspers, Toon Hofstede, Jacques van den Boogaart, Sjoerd Aarts, Barbera Wolfensberger, Erminia Sciacchitano, Francesc Pla, Prosper Wanner, Ulla Salmela, Tim van Wanroij, Eric Wetzels, Mathea Severeijns, Jordy Clemens, Frank Strolenberg, Milena Mulders, Michel Lemaire, Nina Willems, Terje Birkrem Hovland, Nina Mekacher, Simona Pinton, Femke Paap, Carla Jansen, Wim Touber, Noa Huitema, Gabor Kozijn

## About the Faro Convention Meeting

**The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands organized the Faro Convention Meeting in close collaboration with the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is the international driver of the Faro Convention.**

**The European Commission and the Council of Europe have launched a joint project: “The Faro Way: enhanced participation in cultural heritage” to promote the adoption of the Faro Convention among national authorities.**

**The program of the two-day conference in Maastricht and Heerlen has been prepared with the support of the municipality of both cities.**

**Within the framework of the Faro Program, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands will continue to host regional meetings in the Netherlands to which everyone involved in heritage and participation is welcome.**

[www.cultureelerfgoed.nl/faro](http://www.cultureelerfgoed.nl/faro)



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A photograph of Barbera Wolfensberger, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black top with a vibrant orange and red floral pattern. She is standing at a podium with a microphone, smiling and clapping her hands. The background is a dark red wall.

# Our joint future

*Barbera Wolfensberger, Director-General of Culture and Media, Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Netherlands*

# of the past begins today

**Shared responsibility for cultural heritage is a uniquely powerful force for good. It can boost social cohesion, as an array of heritage projects and community initiatives have ably demonstrated since the early 20th century. Whether it concerns the Fort WKU near Utrecht, which provides opportunities for a connection to a working community for those hoping to enter the world of work, or the meeting and listening to migration stories during meals in the Verhalenhuis Belvédère, heritage has the power to connect people, helping us to reach social goals such as liveability and a reduction in loneliness and social polarisation.** MARK SMITH



our valuable heritage and make it accessible to future generations. The heritage community—the people and their own wishes—are what is central here, rather than the specific castle, the fort, the fragments of pottery or the paintings. Cultural heritage should be considered a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Learning by doing: that's the motto of the Faro Programme of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. Our aim is to ensure that ten years from now, community initiatives and participation will be self-evident in the heritage practice. To achieve this, we will join with partners in pilot projects, and establish a network of experts and communities.

With learning objectives at the heart of our activities, we will address questions such as: 'What problems can heritage organisations encounter when they make community participation central to their work?' and 'How can these problems be solved?' And how can heritage and heritage professionals cater to the wishes and needs of communities.

Together we will develop ways of working, methods and instruments that will equip government, heritage organisations and heritage communities to join forces to put people at the heart of heritage.

In the true spirit of Faro, our joint future of the past begins today. ♦

**T**he value of heritage for society and the participation of society in cultural heritage activities are the two foundations of the Faro Convention. Monuments and historic buildings, the human environment, customs and traditions all have meaning for the future of different communities, their identity and for the search for what binds citizens together.

Some background. Over the course of the 20th century, heritage conservation underwent professionalisation. Although this led to improved maintenance of monuments

Fortunately, we have as allies the volunteers who have been active in heritage conservation all along. We are grateful to them for their dedication to heritage activities. Without their selfless, well-informed work for heritage preservation and presentation, many churches here in the province of Limburg would vanish. And old miners' stories about their migration history could not be recorded and shared, as the pop-up Migration Museum in the municipality of Heerlen is doing.

This kind of community participation in the world of heritage is our common goal. We want to encourage people to help protect

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*'The heritage community—the people and their own wishes—are what is central here'*

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and collections, it also created greater distance from ordinary people. Experts and their opinions played a more and more prominent role. Now we face the challenge of shifting focus back to the power of heritage communities. Some heritage institutions and government still need to find ways to adapt to this approach and to shift the perspective to the needs and knowledge of communities. Looking to the future, the Convention encourages us to recognise that objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. Rather, they are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent.







# *Understanding the Faro Way*

**The ‘Faro Way’ means encouraging the idea that objects and locations are not the most important aspect of cultural heritage, but rather the meanings and values people attach to them.** TRACY BROWN

**T**he Faro Convention, according to Francesc Pla of the Cultural Heritage Division of the Council of Europe, ‘promotes a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities and society’. It puts people at the centre of heritage protection and development.

In contrast to earlier heritage conventions—architectural heritage (Granada, 1985) and archeological heritage (Valletta, 1992)—Faro focuses not on *how* to protect cultural heritage but on *why* we should do so.

#### **The Convention methodology**

The Convention methodology is a four-point



*Francesc Pla, Cultural Heritage Division of the Council of Europe*

one: it all starts with sharing stories and with the acknowledgment and understanding of the existence of diverse narratives. Diversity is a key aspect of the Faro way. Then the process moves on to finding common ground, shared interests and ultimately common action.

The priorities of the Convention, according to Pla, revolve around the concepts of stories. Maintaining an openness to diversity and various interpretations and the means of mediating among parties is of prime importance. Another priority is the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use. The Convention recognises both individual and collective responsibility in heritage protection.

The Faro Convention Action Plan is designed to translate the Faro Convention principles into practice. The Plan involves actions that are people- and heritage driven, and treats heritage as a resource that acknowledges diversity in societies, encourages stories that can aid in conflict resolution. All of this is reflected in the Faro Convention Action Plan motto: 'Peoples, Places and Stories'.

### **A process of the feet as well as the mind**

Ulla Salmela of the Finnish Heritage Agency provides some examples of what Pla describes. Volunteers working on projects organised as an initiative of the Faro Convention are helping preserve and promote the cultural heritage of Finland. Salmela shares ways in which the Convention has been employed in Finland, through projects

ranging from volunteer working as shepherds to protecting land and relics with cultural significance.

The benefits of Faro are many, according to Salmela, who calls it a framework for heritage policy that is adaptable to current changes in societies and policies. In addition, it emphasises participation and inclusion of individuals in a community.

The future vision for Faro in Finland, according to Salmela, is that cultural heritage work is recognised and participatory, with individuals and communities appreciating and protecting their own cultural heritage and that of others. It is also the aim to ensure wider access



*Ulla Salmela, Cultural Heritage Agency, Finland*



*Prosper Wanner, Faro Convention Network*

to cultural heritage in Finland through digital media such as online heritage communities, crowdsourcing and Wiki inventories.

This is not limited to Finland, of course. Prosper Wanner of the Faro Convention Network has been working on various Faro-related projects in metropolitan areas and rural villages in Italy, Romania, and France. Among the cases Wanner describes is that of the Hotel du Nord in the French city of Marseille, now a residents' co-operative offering hosting and touristic opportunities through emphasising local cultural heritage.



*Erminia Sciacchitano, European Commission*

Wanner stresses the Faro Way as a process of the feet as well as the mind, requiring an understanding of culture. 'It's not enough just to listen, he says. 'You have to go to a place, to smell it, to hear it, to understand the points of view of others and share stories.'

### **Why we protect**

The Faro Convention is an initiative focused on the ties between heritage and communities and society as a whole. The Convention aims to encourage sustainable development, and peaceful and inclusive societies with heritage considered a social, political and economic resource. A key concept of the Faro approach is that cultural heritage is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2005, the Convention was opened for signature to member States in Faro, Portugal, the same year. Since then, eighteen member States of the Council of Europe have ratified the Convention and five have signed it.

Addressing the Faro Convention Meeting in Maastricht, Erminia Sciacchitano—Chief Scientific Advisor, European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, explained the 'Faro Way' as a new European approach to cultural heritage based on people and communities, participation and shared responsibilities that encourage people to recognise, appreciate and take care of their cultural heritage and that of others. 'We need to think of cultural heritage as a resource,' she says. 'To renew commitments to these values that we share and want to protect in Europe. To put culture at the heart of our commitment.' ♦

# The local implementation of the Faro way, in Maastricht and Heerlen

Three speakers shared their differing insights in the practical application of the Faro principles and their implementation on a local and regional level. MARK SMITH



Tim van Wanroij, Maastricht-LAB

## True colours

**Tim van Wanroij detailed a colour-coded system that he and colleagues from the Maastricht-LAB, developed to bring clarity to projects that connect ‘old’ city makers—namely housing corporations, project developers—with cultural institutions, local citizens and NGOs.**

According to Van Wanroij, the challenge is to create a common language between stakeholders. The goal is to make conscious decisions about the way of working and manage expectations regarding outcomes.

In the blue way of working, the ownership of the project lies with local government, either in a proactive (strategic director) or reactive (‘careful examiner’) capacity.

In the green way of working, ownership lies within a coalition, for example a public-private partnership. The municipality can be the coalition builder or the reliable partner.

The newest way of working is yellow, whereby the municipality has a role in realising projects, but the responsibility lies outside of government. Again, the municipality can occupy the proactive or reactive (facilitating) role. This is the most Faro-like way of working, where a community takes the lead and the municipality facilitates.

## A participatory paradox

**In his presentation on how to better disclose and use the heritage collections of Maastricht, specific policy officer at the Municipality of Maastricht Eric Wetzels described his ‘Maastricht heritage paradox’.**

Although residents of Maastricht are fiercely proud of their city, they appear to be overwhelmingly oblivious or indifferent to what Wetzels calls ‘the huge reservoir of heritage’ at their disposal. Cultural attractions are typically visited on three occasions at three life stages: childhood, parenthood and grandparenthood.

A peculiarity of Maastricht is that, despite rich resources including 5,000 monuments, 10 museums, 17 heritage institutions and large archaeological collections, the city does not have one central cultural institution to call its own.

In 2004, the city chose to enact a cultural biography: a website that ran alongside temporary exhibitions. Underfinanced, the cultural biography collapsed in 2015.

Wetzel’s prescription for Maastricht—to increase the level of marketing and communications for the existing heritage offering and to try to establish a fixed museum that can be the jewel in the crown—can perhaps be supplemented by engaging communities in order to gauge their ideas and encourage their involvement.



*Eric Wetzels, Municipality of Maastricht*



*Mathea Severeijns, IBA Parkstad*

## IBA fever

**Managing director Mathea Severeijns described the IBA Parkstad programme in the Meuse-Rhine Euroregion.**

This German architectural and development tool has become a useful quality assurance marker across seven municipalities and Limburg since the 2010 economic crisis. ‘Clever heritage’ is an important element of the IBA approach.

Once dependent on mining, the region has endured economic and social problems since the pit closures of the 1970s. ‘We want to have more pride and positivity in the region,’ said Severeijns.

An open call for project ideas resulted in 300 applications. Of these, 50 projects were selected and €45m was put aside to complete them before the expo year 2020-21.

Vacant churches are a growing problem. Severeijns described an IBA project whereby stakeholders including congregants, the municipality and a private developer are working to transform Our Lady of Kunrade into a homecare facility of ‘irreplaceable’ architectural and human value, even though demolition would have been cheaper. It was the conviction and the tenacity of a small group of people that led to this success.

Another ambitious project submitted by the municipality concerns the regeneration of the Roman Quarter in Heerlen, due for completion this year. A ‘lobby’ concept invited members of the public to engage with the proposal via a giant maquette displayed on site at the region’s biggest culture festival—a new process termed urban prototyping. ‘All the people involved in the history could tell us how they *feel* about their past and how they would like us to make our plans. We didn’t just make a spatial plan, we got feedback before we even started building. We wanted to make history tangible,’ noted Severeijns. ◆

# *Field visits encourage participation and interaction*

As part of the Faro Convention meeting, participants were invited to experience first-hand examples of Maastricht's cultural heritage, and the people behind it, in a variety of ways via selected excursions in the city.

Participation was the key word, during the tours and in connection to the heritage, as each attendee was encouraged to engage with guides to explore the possibilities of heritage preservation, community building and economic development.



## Volunteers and curators: network no hierarchy

**Saint Servatius has always played an important role in the city of Maastricht. In times of distress, his reliquary shrine was carried around the city, which ultimately led to the famous Pilgrimage of the Relics. Every seven years, this large procession (*Heiligdomsvaart*) attracts thousands of visitors. However, if it weren't for hundreds of volunteers, the *Heiligdomsvaart* wouldn't be what it is today.** LINDA ROOS

'We call ourselves the 'Servatius family'. People who somehow feel religiously or culturally connected to a history dating back to 1600,' explains Sjoerd Aarts, our tour guide. He leads us to the Basilica of Saint Servatius, the beautiful Roman Catholic Church dedicated to the saint. There, we meet only a few members of the Servatius family: six dedicated volunteers that each passionately tell us more about the *Heiligdomsvaart* and the role it plays in society today.

We start off at the Treasury, where the portrait bust of Saint Servatius immediately catches your eye. From the four *stadsdevoties* that each have their own statue, the bust of Saint Servatius is the only original one that is still carried during the *Heiligdomsvaart*. One of the volunteers—a dedicated *Maastrichtenaar*—explains: 'It is in our Maastricht blood. Saint Servatius has an enormous appeal; he was the first bishop of our city. I'm proud of that, and it makes me want to be a part of it.'

Together with the reliquary shrine, the religious artifacts weigh about 350 kilos. A group of sixteen carriers carry the artifacts during the pilgrimage. Another volunteer

adds that, 'if you would ask me what it means to be a carrier, I wouldn't know what to tell you. I can't describe what or how I'm feeling when it's happening, except that I strongly feel that I want to do it again.' Volunteers who aren't able to carry the artifacts still participate by walking during the Pilgrimage of the Relics.

And what about the relationship between the volunteers and the curators? The volun-

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*'These relationships are always tricky. But there is absolutely no hierarchical structure'*

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teers laugh. 'No complaints here,' they say. Then, more seriously, 'These relationships are always tricky. But there is absolutely no hierarchical structure. Instead, there is a network structure, in which we can openly connect and cooperate. We work together very well.'



## Not quite there yet: The Via Belgica

**Communities in the Southern Netherlands could be brought together by the Via Belgica, an ancient Roman road running through the region.** KEITH FERNANDEZ

Toos Hofstede sabres a bottle of sparkling wine on a sunny May afternoon in the municipality of Meerssen, her rapier drawing an imaginary line from Roman times to the present—via Napoleon. Sure, Dionysus could have been kinder, but quibbles aside, this is a friendly, earthy beverage—typically Dutch, you could say. In a few years' time, vintner Ralph Huydts, who quit his day job in IT last week to focus on the nine-year-old vineyard, may even win a wine award for Holland. And to think it all began with the Romans. 'The Romans first brought wine to the Netherlands, followed by grapes. By 600BC, we have written evidence of vineyards here in Limburg,' Huydts tells a group of historians, cultural scientists and heritage management experts.

We've gathered at a Chardonnay field a few meters off the Via Belgica, an old Roman road that ran from Boulogne-sur-Mer via Tongeren and Maastricht to Cologne. Hofstede and her branding organization, ViaStory, have been tasked by the province of Limburg and nine municipalities to bring that rather patchy saga to life. Two days a week, she works to unite entrepreneurs, museums and volunteers—a diverse group of 480 Friends of Via Belgica—in a collaborative project that regional residents and

visitors can connect with via monuments, mobile apps, printed books, events, virtual reality experiences and chats with local experts. From catacombs and garden routes to restaurants serving Roman food, there are six access points, including art, design, innovation and sustainability.

Those involved benefit directly, in terms of financial rewards through tourist products, or in more intangible ways. 'Some people are really interested in the theme and in the history of this region, but other people want to develop themselves and learn something, and join forces with others in the area,' Hofstede says.

Hetty Laverman-Berbée, a representative of the AWN, a national organization of archaeology volunteers, says it comes down to a sense of pride in their identity. 'An involvement with your heritage reinforces a sense of social security.'

Yet much remains to be done if the Via Belgica is to really achieve its noble goals—not least, in terms of marketing, advocacy and programmes for public involvement. Nevertheless, at least it's a sparkling start.

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*'Some people are really interested in the theme and in the history of this region, but other people want to develop themselves and learn something'*

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## First steps towards a radically new sense of community in post-war neighbourhoods

**A short ten-minute drive by bus from the Medieval centre of Maastricht brings us to the neighbourhood of Pottenberg. Built in the post-war years under the auspices of urban planner and architect Frans Dingemans, the neighbourhood is one of three so-called parish-districts.** MARTINE CROLL

Carlos Apers, urban planner for the city of Maastricht, talks us through the history of—and current challenges faced by—these parish districts. ‘The three neighbourhoods were originally designed to provide a true sense of community for an influx of workers coming to Maastricht in the post-war years,’ Apers says. ‘Every neighbourhood was intended to be a not-too-large, self-sufficient community, with a church, a school and shops in the middle. The centre was surrounded by streets with housing built for the different social classes.’

Carlos explains that it is not only the community-centred design that makes the urban planning unique, it is also the fact that it fits in perfectly with the surrounding, undulating landscape.

We ask him what the biggest challenges currently are for these neighbourhoods. ‘Basically, there are three impacting factors: high unemployment, an ageing population and a lack of funding for the upkeep of public areas,’ he says. ‘It’s these public areas and green landscaping that are so characteristic. So, what we see

happening is not only social impoverishment, but also a loss of the neighbourhoods’ true identity.’

Apers believe that by restoring the public and green areas, we can regain part of that identity. ‘And, in doing so,’ he continues, ‘make it a more appealing place to live. Key to our plans is the participation of both the housing corporations and neighbourhood residents. A first step in that direction is to start a dialogue with these stakeholders and make them aware of the unique aspects of the neighbourhoods. In

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*‘We intend to use cultural heritage as a source of renewal and inspiration’*

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this way, we intend to use cultural heritage as a source of renewal and inspiration. It’s a first step on a long but hopefully shared road to a radically new sense of community.’



## Tasty tradition: A Limburgian *vlaai*

**A Limburgian *vlaai*—a type of sweet pie famously hailing from the province—is a truly regional product, made with local ingredients in a traditional style that has been passed down for generations. Visitors to the Bisschopsmolen bakery in Maastricht had an opportunity to learn about the history of the pie while baking one of their own.** TRACY BROWN

*Vlaai*, which actually has its roots in the south of Germany near the Austrian border, became its own Limburgian specialty, parting ways with its predecessor to define itself in its own terms. To be a true Limburgian *vlaai*, for example, local

ingredients—including cherries, apples and other fruits as well as pudding—must be used, and the dessert must be baked in itself entirety, with the filling already within. Other specifications include a specific size and weight.

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*‘This product benefits the region because it is based on locally grown fruits and can be the basis of a community involving people.’*

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A prime example of intangible heritage, the knowledge and skills of baking a *vlaai*. This product benefits the region because it is based on locally grown fruits and can be the basis of a community involving people. People who feel attached to its tradition of baking and its cultural history. The dessert has a special place in the hearts of Limburgers, many of whom learned their recipe from their ancestors going back generations.

Our guest bakers were shown how to bake a traditional Limburgian *vlaai* at the Bisschopsmolen. This mill—the oldest operating mill of its kind in the Netherlands—is itself rich in heritage, having been built in the 7th century. Although the mill is still operational, the bakery to which it is attached produces far too many baked goods to rely on it for ample supply of grain. The mill and the building in which it resides were fully renovated in 2004.

Following careful instructions in the historic surroundings, participants rolled the dough, filled their pie with a local filling and carefully crafted a traditional diamond-shape top crust before baking their creation and taking it home.




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*'it's ugly and should be torn down'*

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## Adaptive re-use

**The vicinity of the conference venue is a microcosm of Maastricht's municipal heritage—and of some of the opportunities and challenges involved in its adaptive reuse, according to Gilbert Soeters, city archaeologist.**

MARK SMITH

Starting at the harbour where the industrial revolution spread to the Netherlands from Liège, Soeters pointed to the cautionary tale of industrial buildings that had recently become luxury apartments. Arguably this development represents a loss for those who would have preferred a more egalitarian repurposing.

A consultation is now underway to determine the future of the historic Sappi paper mill nearby, with one potential use a Maastricht city museum. Past consultations demonstrate that citizens' perceptions on post-industrial buildings in Maastricht, particularly those solicited via social media (effectively, 'it's ugly and should be torn down') contrast markedly with the enthusiastic response when such buildings are

repurposed and put to imaginative use. It is acknowledged that such resistance can be dispiriting when attempting to engage the community.

The adjacent canal was built by King William I of the Netherlands, creating an alternative trade route that accelerated the city's evolution. Studies at the University of Maastricht have recently resuscitated interest in the canal's rich heritage, but the wider public remains largely in the dark. Apps bringing the area to life are used by a relatively small sector of the population (around six per cent) but they are used intensely by those who download them. Guided tours are therefore thought to play a key role in the future of this area going forward.

The Cokesfabriek is a monumental former coking plant from 1912 whose innovative concrete structure by Jan Wiebenga has seen better days. Although the private sector has breathed new life into adjacent buildings (there's an escape room and a climbing facility), the Cokesfabriek is thought to require €21m to make it safe. Local furniture maker Valentin Loellmann has unveiled an ambitious plan for an atelier surrounded by a 'winter garden'.

Making a little go a long way, the community-run Stichting Maastricht Vestingstad leads tours of the vast underground network of military defence tunnels under the Hoge Fronten. Rather than subsidies, the volunteer-led organisation relies on entrance fees; consequently it remains largely unexplored by schoolchildren, even in the schools closest to this extraordinary attraction.

Still, like the musketeers who used to be stationed here, the volunteers are shooting for the stars with new initiatives: an operation is underway to catalogue the 'graffiti' carved into the sandstone ramparts by the soldiers of yesteryear. ♦



Jordy Clemens, Alderman Municipality of Heerlen

# Giving the future a past

**We are gathered in Schunck, a cultural meeting place that houses, among other things, an art collection and a public library. Known locally as the Glass Palace, it was built as a department store in the 1930s and heralded as an example of modernism in architecture. The structure faced demolition in the 1980s and 90s, but has now been preserved as a national monument.** TRACY BROWN

It's an appropriate setting for today's meeting, which focuses on the issues of how heritage workers can join forces with local communities to preserve not just building and places of significance but the stories of the people who bring that value to these heritage-rich sites.

## Find the stories

Jordy Clemens, alderman of Education, Youth, Culture, Heritage and Housing with the Municipality of Heerlen, discovered such stories in the form of a small box he found hidden in the fireplace of his home in the city. It was full of documents that tell

the story of many generations of previous inhabitants—their fear of communism, their involvement in the Resistance as well as stories of people and shops and buildings that no longer exist.

The personal glimpses bring to life the history of Heerlen, once an important Roman city turned 'boom town' at the peak of the mining industry in the region. But when the mines were closed, the story of the city changed, impacting the identity and pride of Heerlen, according to Clemens. 'The city needed economic and social recovery,' he says, 'and a new story.'

Clemens encourages all of us to try and find hidden boxes of our own, to find the



Frank Strolenberg, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

stories, because the bigger stories all begin with the small ones.

### Returning pride

Frank Strolenberg, Programme Leader, Religious Heritage at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, recalls shopping with his mother in Schunck during its heyday as a department store. 'As a shop, it was the top in Heerlen. People left the shop filled with pride because of their new stylish wardrobes' he says, 'and now as the Glass Palace it is returning pride to them once again.'

Strolenberg presents three main questions to the attendees. The first is how heritage professionals can know what the public values in order to better work together. Going

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*'Almost 80 per cent of the population is interested in heritage, and 25 per cent are actually active in the field.'*

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deeper, what knowledge do heritage workers need to involve the public more in preserving the heritage of a region or community. And finally, what must heritage workers let go of in order for the public to play a bigger role in heritage conservation.

Also budget cuts at local government and new complex spatial planning urge heritage professionals to work with the public. According to a survey presented by Strolenberg, almost 80 per cent of the

population is interested in heritage, and 25 per cent are actually active in the field. That is a fantastic starting point to work with the public. But, as Strolenberg puts it, the public nowadays is more and more organized as a wild 'flock of birds' in a temporary cooperation, and not sitting on a stick within a bird cage. So how do we reach the public? ♦

Inclusion of multiple perspectives, stories and identities

# *A visit to the Pop-up Migrant Museum, Heerlen*

Delegates enjoyed a trip to the pop-up Migrant Museum, whose motto '*niet bang zijn*' ('don't be afraid'), displayed in pink neon across the back wall, is open to multiple interpretations.





Milena Mulders, Pop-up Migrant Museum Heerlen

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*‘We noticed how few projects put the multicultural past of the region in the spotlight.’*

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**T**he temporary museum, located on the ground floor of a new mixed-use development next to the railway station, is the brainchild of Amsterdam-based Milena Mulders, who grew up here in Heerlen as the descendent of a Slovenian miner.

Mulders was curious to know more about her own family’s story and how it corresponded to the wider context of migration into the region as it transformed from an agricultural area to an industrial area and experienced the subsequent post-industrial decline.

As well as on her background as a journalist, Mulders drew on her own experiences of working in the heritage management field. The year 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of the closure of the mines, with a memorial calendar packed with activities. As a project employee, Mulder assessed the request for activities together with a team of heritage professionals.

‘We noticed how few projects put the multicultural past of the region in the spotlight. Either people had forgotten about it, or they had come to take it for granted,’ Mulders notes. Still, the statistics were remarkable. For example, the population of the mining region had grown from 70,000 in 1900 to 230,000 in 1930. The city of Heerlen itself grew from 6,000 in 1900 to 50,000 in 1935—a year in which nearly 12,000 foreigners were working in the mines. After two subsequent

recruitment booms, migrant workers were invariably over-represented when the time came for redundancies.

Having uncovered the rich and nuanced history of migration in mine-workers from countries including Poland, Italy, Morocco, Spain and Slovenia, Mulders successfully applied to the municipality for funding and enlisted 12 volunteers to help pay tribute to and mainstream narratives, as well as experts from her journalistic and academic network.

When Mulders and colleagues opened the museum in November 2018, they deliberately left space available so that visitors could contribute their own mementos and thoughts and photographs. The intention was to look beyond mainstream narratives.

Exhibits on the theme of ‘migration then and now’ range from the menu cards of snack bars serving Balkan culinary specialities to original documents of arrival and departure.

To date, the museum has welcomed 3,000 participants and due to its popularity, the original run has been extended by a further three months. ◆





# A new wave in intangible heritage

Michel Lemaire, during the Adaptive re-use field visit

## A presentation from city historian Michel Lemaire explored recent efforts to explore and commemorate Heerlen's creative and non-conformist musical subcultures, specifically its early punk and wave scenes.

Whereas the 'flower power' generation is well documented, Lemaire observed that the subsequent urban music scenes had largely vanished from view in Heerlen, with the exception of the odd remaining record shop or Mohawk hairstyle.

By way of a reminder, Lemaire showed the video to the track *Anti Town* by the Heerlen hardcore band Born From Pain. The film is drenched in the symbolism of mining, referencing the American military base and the city's heroin epidemic.

Indeed, the title for the track is derived from the book *Antistad*, by Maurice Hermans, which describes recent history of Heerlen as a town that's been in freefall since the 1970s, complete with brain drain and mass unemployment. But Hermans also touches on how a town can reinvent itself.

Looking at other post-industrial cities such as Eindhoven and Rotterdam, Lemaire noticed a strong underground subculture and his thesis was there may be a connection. 'The idea was born to start a project on subcultures in youth and pop culture,' he said, noting that other surveys of cultural heritage in Heerlen tended to concentrate on the mining industry.

The project had two goals: an exhibition at the Schunck arts centre and the creation of a new archive for future generations. 'The subcultures form the new intangible heritage of urban cultures – 'urban folklore you could say,' posited Lemaire.

Since there was no archival material in existence, the materials were entirely crowdsourced. An appeal was launched soliciting stories, pictures and artefacts from the public.

After a slow start, the project was eventually 'overwhelmed with the most beautiful pictures and small archives that people collected themselves as well as lots of stories,' said Lemaire.

The resulting exhibition, *The Post Industrials* became 'the talk of the town,' according to Lemaire, with associated activities ranging from the screening of a rediscovered short film to a hairdressing demonstration.

A photography book on the topic is currently in progress. Lemaire shared evocative images from squats and the infamous bar Le Bar Rock, which school pupils were warned against visiting.

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*'We gave a voice to a group of people that wasn't heard before.'*

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'It gives you an idea of how rich this cultural heritage is,' he said in conclusion. 'I think we gave a voice to a group of people that wasn't heard before, [namely] the thousands of young people who tried to make the best of things and their town. In doing so, they played an important role in creating the vibrant cultural landscape that we have today.' ♦

From shame to compassion:

# *Nina Willems reflects on Heerlen's past and future*

**Nina Willems explores her feelings about the cultural heritage of the city of Heerlen through theatre.**

**P**laywright Nina Willems moved to the Zeswegen district of Heerlen in 1989. She lived in an area built on a man-made hill formed by stone and sand dug up from the district's coal mines. It was twenty-five years after Dutch government announced the end of mining in the region, but the impact of the closures was still evident. After the mines closed, Heerlen

sunk into what Willem's refers to as a time of crisis.

#### **Hard times**

The crumbling economy had made way for poverty, drug abuse and prostitution in the city. 'My parents would warn me to watch out for syringes when I played outside,' Willems says. 'I had some negative

experiences in Heerlen, and they started to really define my view of it as gray, negative and depressing, and I felt shame.'

#### **Return**

Nina left Heerlen to attend theatre school, but returned in 2015 to perform her play, *Doorgaan*, at a festival marking the 50th anniversary of the mine closures. 'It was time

to revisit not just the city but my idea of it,' she says, 'and also to reflect on the image I had of the place and what it was based on.'

Willems' play explores the impact the mine closures had on the city and the future of the area. In doing her research, she spoke with a lot of community members about their impressions and memories of Heerlen.

Her research had a deep impact on her feelings about the narratives and history of Heerlen. 'The biggest change,' she says, 'was my emotional relationship to the stories I was hearing. I shifted from feelings of shame to compassion. It was still a critical compassion, but definitely compassion.'

### **Bigger conversation**

For Willems, talking with the audience after any performance is important. 'I don't make theatre for applause, but for the conversation after,' she says. 'To see how I and the audience can connect and have another kind of conversation about the stories being told.'

Willems also performs for young people growing up in Heerlen. They are experiencing the city in a post-mining and post-crisis period, yet many still take a negative view. 'I want to discuss with them where their ideas of the city come from,' she says. 'Not to stamp them with a fixed history. I don't think history or heritage is fixed. At least I don't think the way we reflect on it should be.'

### **Heritage lives in the mind**

Many of the buildings and sites reaching back to Heerlen's mining past have been destroyed. But Willems doesn't think this necessarily erases the heritage of the city. 'Someone once asked if I wished Heerlen had kept those mining sites,' she says. 'But for me, the most important thing about heritage is in our minds. We can still tell stories about mines that are no longer there.' ♦



# Pitches for moving forward and the Norwegian experience

Wrapping up the two-day conference, we hear from stakeholders and communities, and news from how it's working in Norway. TRACY BROWN & MARK SMITH



*Nina Mekacher, Swiss Federal Office of Culture*

## Stakeholders

### **Nina Mekacher of the Swiss Federal Office of Culture on the construction of a reactive instrument.**

During the adoption process of the Faro convention in Switzerland, Nina Mekacher and colleagues decided to experiment a little on Faro principles.

Together with heritage non-profit organisations and in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, they tried three routes. One was the communication campaign for the heritage year, another was a seminar for professionals in which the Faro principles were discussed. The third was an experiment crowdsourcing for ideas and projects. This third route led to engagement from much younger audiences than might usually be expected: 44 per cent of the users were under 40, whereas usually 80 per cent are over 60.

According to Mekacher, there were several reasons for this success. The team activating the engagement worked hard tailoring their language, and targeted universities and online magazines. Although it was assumed that using crowdsourcing platforms in this way would require near constant monitoring for defamatory comments, in reality little intervention was required and the quality of submissions was high.

'The very best thing about this platform were the discussions it prompted,' notes Mekacher. 'There were real gems.'

## Communities

### **Simona Pinton from Ca' Foscari University introduces the idea of relationships as foundational to the creation of heritage communities.**

Research fellow and lawyer Simona Pinton shared thoughts about the notion of heritage communities as defined by article 2b of the Faro Convention: a heritage community consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations.

Drawing on her practical and legal experience, Pinton proposes an 'enhanced' vision of the remit of the term heritage community, namely as a self-organised, self-managed group of individuals who are interested in progressive social transformation including people, places and stories. She posits that heritage communities should be considered to comprise not just the makers and guardians of cultural heritage but anyone who is interested and wants to share in the heritage.

As a further exercise she considered what she calls the 'provocation' of considering heritage communities as transcending questions of social class, religion and even nationality. 'There is an idea of indeterminacy that is permeating this notion of heritage communities,' she says.

In focussing on the positive aspects of heritage communities, Pinton is keen not to disregard what she calls the 'shadows and the negatives involved' and the reluctance on the part of some states to ratify the convention, plus the need for domestic legislation in order for some of its provisions to be enacted.



*Simona Pinton, Ca' Foscari University*



*Terje Birkrem Hovland, Ministry of Climate and Environment Norway*

### **Faro Convention ratification: The Norway case**

#### **Terje Birkrem Hovland shares his insights on the ratification process of Faro in Norway, and why it was so unproblematic.**

The 2008 Faro Convention ratification process in Norway was a smooth one, because the country already had a tradition of so-called 'Faro thinking'. So says Terje Birkrem Hovland of the Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment and the project manager for a new white paper about the Norwegian cultural heritage policy, which is to be presented to Parliament in March, 2020.

'The process was hassle-free, mainly because the essence and main objectives of the Convention are very much in line with the established management models and way of thinking within Norwegian heritage management,' he says. 'It was a logical development.'

Examples of strategies in place before 2008 include The Sámi Parliament, which was established in 1989, giving the Sámi indigenous people of Norway strong influence over their own heritage. In 1994, the Norwegian Federation of Cultural Heritage Organisations was founded, an umbrella organization with the goal to encourage and give financial support to NGOs within the heritage field. Today has 24 member organisations.

Moving forward, there are other planned initiatives, such as the Cultural Heritage Search Service, a digital infrastructure for documenting, mapping and sharing local heritage. 'At the core is the ambition to enable local participation and democratic involvement through the use of low-cost, user-friendly technology,' Hovland says.

He also draws a connection between cultural heritage and the UN sustainable development goals. 'I think the main overall challenges for the future are identified within the sustainable development goals,' he says, 'and cultural heritage plays quite an important role in tackling these future challenges. I would argue the Faro Convention plays an important role in this context.' ♦

Breakout session:

# Approaches to *interacting with the public*



In the course of the three pitches from international delegates, a breakout session was arranged during which three groups of delegates considered the following questions:

1. What do we heritage professionals have to 'let go' in order to involve the public?
2. What kind of practical knowledge and tools do we heritage professionals need to develop in order to involve the public?
3. How do we as heritage professionals know what the public values and how do we proceed to a more integral way of working?



There followed a wide-ranging discussion during which delegates considered the merits of different ways of interacting with the public.

Members of the academic and curatorial communities were keen to avoid the suggestion that concern for their expertise should be eroded in the process of enacting the Faro way.

Restrictive budgets are also a challenge. Practical solutions for public engagement included Erminia Schiaccitano's example from New York's Museum of Modern Art, whereby senior curators spend a day each month working on the information desk, or considering the contents of the visitor suggestion box.

Furthermore, experimentation with the Faro principles can be performed on a gradual 'staircase' (i.e. step-by-step) basis rather than a straight-to-the-top 'elevator' model.

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*'You shouldn't have to understand the framework in order to be able to make a suggestion.'*

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Interaction with the public may also lead to conflicting views. Several participants shared their experiences regarding contested heritage or even racism.

Michaëla Hanssen talked about the need for members of the public not to be put off by rules and regulations that seem inflexible. 'You shouldn't have to understand the framework in order to be able to make a suggestion,' she noted. 'You should make your framework fit my suggestion.'

Certainly, creative experimentation and the sharing of experiences ('learning by doing') is an approach favoured by delegates of all stripes. Moderator Frank Strolenberg concluded that, in looking for new and rewarding ways to engage the public, the motto of the Pop-up Museum of Migration in Heerlen (*'niet bang zijn'*) should apply. ♦



# ‘The principles of Faro *must be seen, heard and felt*’

Program leader Michaëla Hansen about Faro in the Netherlands

**During the two-day Faro Convention Meeting, experts shared best practices, and participants networked and gained new insights. With Faro program leader Michaëla Hansen, we look back to the conference as well as to what is to come: ‘We have to make Faro tangible.’** MIRJAM STREEFKERK

**H**ow do we know what people consider as being of value? The question was raised during one of the many discussions that took place at the Faro Convention. Hansen couldn't help but laugh at the sigh and response given by one of the attendees: ‘For God's sake! Just ask!’ Hansen: ‘Of course she was right. We have to go out there and talk with the people if we want to share the Faro principles. We can talk endlessly about theories, models, and methodologies, but ultimately, that is not what Faro is about. The principles of Faro must be seen, heard, and felt. We must make Faro tangible and let its successes in everyday practice and effects speak for themselves.’



### What does Faro mean for people who are engaged in heritage?

‘Heritage professionals often know a lot about a building or an object and its history. They work at protecting and preserving

### *‘For God’s sake! Just ask!’*

historical collections and monuments for future generations. However, the question they should be asking is: what can heritage do or contribute to society now, today and tomorrow? Focusing on the present can, of course, be scary. It means that as heritage professional, you need to relate to the environment, locals and society. But by doing so, they will be giving a new meaning

to heritage, working in close collaboration with locals and other stakeholders. And that is what Faro is all about.’

### Does this mean that the role of the heritage professional is changing?

‘Yes. The professionalization of the sector in the last century created a gap between the professionals and society at large. For example, when the coal mines in Heerlen in the south of the Netherlands were closed, everything was demolished. It caused great pain to those people whose families had worked in the mines for generations. The lesson learned from this was that it’s not the professionals or experts who should determine what heritage is, but the people who are part and parcel of that heritage.’

‘Experts need to think carefully what their responsibilities are. A good example is the Pop-Up Migration Museum in Heerlen, where the local authorities – instead of talking about rules, regulations and permits – backed the initiator by saying they were confident she would do the right thing.’

‘Knowing how to deal with stakeholders, involving them and giving them room to manoeuvre is an essential task of the modern-day heritage professional. You do not want to board up everything beforehand. It’s something that Prosper Wanner of Hotel du Nord in Marseille also pointed out. Every few months, he meets up with his stakeholders and talks about how to proceed. Startups also work in a similar way. It allows them to quickly adapt to the shifting needs of customers and changes in society.’

### This year you’ll start with the Participation - Faro program. What will you do to ensure a broader application of the Faro principles?

‘With our program, we want to show that citizens and heritage are a good starting point for realizing changes at a local level. We will, first of all, build a network and create communities of practice in which participants can share knowledge. Universities are, for example, interested in what is happening in the heritage research field concerning participation. We also want to start networking in our organization and within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science: heritage is a broad issue and is therefore also covered by other programs.’

‘It is our intention to carry out pilot projects in which we will implement the Faro philosophy. We will, of course, share knowledge gained in these projects. If people are interested in this approach and want to start a Faro project, they can contact us.’

‘We are also going to do research in order to gain an overview of what is happening in the field of heritage and the Faro principles. Which initiatives have been successful and which not? How do you ensure that not only the ‘usual suspects’ participate in heritage projects? Are some regions more active than others? Are there differences in implementing the Faro principles between domains such as archeology and monuments? All this valuable information will be brought together and made available through our so-called Development Platform. In this way, local authorities, volunteers, heritage professionals and initiators will be sufficiently equipped to work with the Faro principles themselves.’ ♦

'Stop sending. Ask what the other person needs.'

'We need to investigate the term 'heritage community'.'

'Faro aims not to activate communities as a tool to further Cultural Heritage, but rather using CH to achieve societal goals.'

'Faro is about participation which is embraced by a governmental organisation, not the other way around.'

'Experiencing heritage does not have to be a goal. It can also be a means to address other issues in society. For example, a proud community of people at a distance to the labor market. Heritage plays a facilitating role here and that is enough.'

'I'm not 'struggling' alone.'

'To search for a common language.'

'The heritage industry definitely needs a 'system reboot'.'

'The success stories of my colleagues are an inspiration.'

'Top down can be equally important as bottom up.'

# Which lessons learned do you take with you?

'I was very moved by the exposition on migration and the stories of prosperity, despair and hope.'

'High level of common understanding and harmony of viewpoint.'

'A future for the past'  
— Prosper Warner

'There are multiple and sometimes dissonant points of view on what needs to be done. But we all have the same objective, which is the best starting point for working together.'

'The Faro Convention needs to be understood not only with your head but with your feet.'

'Failure is moving forward. We need to open up, take risks, communicate and put aside shame and hesitation.'

'The tools and methods are already there, they just need to be shared and implemented.'

'To experience that we are all already 'doing Faro'. For us, it is logic. But are we doing the right thing?'