

POSITION PAPER

Delegation from Italy

Citizen of the Earth and Cultural Heritage in Covid -19 times

1) introduction

The term cultural heritage encompasses two main categories of cultural heritages : cultural heritage (tangible and intangible cultural heritage , movable and immovable cultural heritage and underwater cultural heritage) and natural heritage (natural sites with cultural aspects). Cultural heritage is also part of people's lives, shaped like everyone's unique fingerprint, fingerprint and DNA in memory of our own societies.

Ultimately, by their very presence, cultural monuments instill a sense of history, community, and solidarity within societies.

There are numerous risks and dangers threatening the cultural heritage, such as war and political, ethnic and religious conflict, looting, theft, illegal export and import, illicit trafficking of cultural property, deterioration, neglect, destruction of or alteration to heritage, pollution, and disappearance.

In particular over the past two decades, cultural heritage—especially in conflict zones—has been negatively impacted by terrorism, illicit trafficking, climate change, lack of funding, and even neglect. COVID-19 has had similar effects, but in an incredibly short period of time. The lesser-known effect of the pandemic though has been the heavy strain it has placed on efforts to preserve and protect cultural heritage. In response to the pandemic, governments have issued strict guidelines and restrictions to shut down theaters, museums, cultural heritage sites, [libraries](#) etc...

With no cure or vaccine on the horizon, governments are working to mitigate the damage of the [lockdowns](#) on cultural heritage sites. The significant economic impacts of the pandemic have made many countries [mobilize funds](#) to ensure that people working in the industry can financially support themselves and that the sites themselves are not permanently closed. Efforts to raise awareness of the benefits of cultural heritage sites and to ensure sites stay open are already underway. Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), convened meetings with culture ministers to “identify remedial policy measures” that can address this important issue. This includes an international social media campaign called #ShareOurHeritage which incorporates online exhibitions of cultural sites. The fact remains, however, that almost 90 percent of World Heritage sites remain [totally or partially closed](#).

2) measures of Italy

Even before the covid, the Italian institutions were committed to safeguarding the vast cultural heritage present in the area. For example, a decree law was already issued in 2014 to promote the protection of cultural heritage, the development of culture and the relaunch of tourism. In particular, in March 2020, the Italian government decided on extraordinary measures for tourism and culture in which The Council of Ministers has approved further measures to aid tourism and culture, sectors hard hit by the spread of Coronavirus and by the measures adopted to contain the contagion". Thus the minister for cultural heritage and activities and tourism, Dario Franceschini, at the end of the Council of Ministers who passed a law decree to support, among others, workers and businesses in the tourism and cultural sector.

3) possible solution

The importance of cultural heritage must not be forgotten and the workers who are employed in this field must be supported. Concrete measures should be implemented to safeguard these works threatened not only by the pandemic and environmental factors, but also by the non-respect of visitors. There is therefore talk of:

- an implementation of extraordinary allowances for tourism and culture workers;
- social protection and cushioners in support of culture;
- entertainment and tourism enterprises;
- Local cultural policies and activities constantly updated in order to adapt to citizens' needs and wishes [...] and to society changes in general (the recent lockdown period is a good example that should be kept in mind). If not, there is a big risk that local cultural programmes will only reach a small part of citizens.

The creation of an emergency fund for certain fields is a valid aid that allows at least part of the support to our cultural heritage which is so varied and important. (The Cohesion Fund has provided €5 million for the reconstruction of the Basilica of Benedict of Norcia in Italy, after an earthquake destroyed it in October 2016.) This crisis, as is continuously reiterated from all sides, will pass, but the elements of cultural heritage that have reached us, those that we were so fortunate to inherit from our ancestors, will remain there, witnesses to all that is happening, and our duty as a society is to ensure that they be preserved in the best possible conditions for a safe passage to those who will come after us.

<https://www.proculther.eu/does-covid-19-affect-cultural-heritage/>

<https://theglobalobservatory.org/2020/06/impact-covid-19-on-protection-of-cultural-heritage/>

<https://www.beniculturali.it/articolo/coronavirus-misure-per-il-turismo-e-la-cultura>

[https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/culture-background_paper_for_public_feedback -
_200716.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/culture-background_paper_for_public_feedback_-_200716.pdf)