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Europe's endangered heritage

Reply to Recommendation¹: Recommendation 2038 (2014)

Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers has given careful consideration to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2038 (2014) on "Europe's endangered heritage". It has drawn the text to the attention of the governments of member States and forwarded it to the relevant committees² for comment.

2. It recognises the important role of cultural heritage in promoting diversity and fostering mutual knowledge and understanding. In this vein, the Committee of Ministers selected as one of the sub-themes of the Council of Europe Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue, held in Baku in September 2014, "The contribution of cultural heritage of a religious nature to intercultural dialogue and to the respect of the universal values defended by the Council of Europe".

3. The Committee of Ministers concurs with the Assembly that there should be greater coherency of action between the Council of Europe, the European Union and UNESCO at the European level. The Committee of Ministers welcomes in this respect the efforts to intensify co-operation with the Council of Europe's international partners in areas of common interest, including the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. By way of example, it refers to the joint action by the Council of Europe and the European Union to support European Heritage Days, one of whose key objectives, in addition to the promotion of cultural heritage, is to bring citizens closer together so as to achieve better mutual understanding beyond differences of culture and language.

4. The Committee of Ministers welcomes the interest shown by the Assembly in implementation of the Council of Europe conventions on cultural and natural heritage. It underlines that these also include the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage. Monitoring of these conventions and assistance to States to facilitate their implementation are part of the Organisation's Programme and Budget for 2014-2015. The latter also includes activities in the cultural, heritage and landscape field, as well as in the education field, notably on history teaching, which are consistent with the main lines of paragraph 4 of the Assembly's recommendation.

5. In conclusion, the Committee of Ministers wishes to assure the Assembly of its interest in the regional initiatives to which it refers. It welcomes the potential of these projects to foster regional dynamics and exchanges of expertise and experience between neighbouring countries faced with similar situations, particularly as regards the protection, conservation, rehabilitation and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage.

1. Adopted at the 1210th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (22 and 24 October 2014).

2. Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP), Steering Committee for Educational Policy and Practice (CDPPE) and Joint Council on Youth (CMJ).

