

MANIFESTO

In the framework of the 2018 European Year of European Cultural Heritage, we, European Historic Houses, would like to affirm that:

1. Cultural tourism, which represents 40% of European tourism as a whole, is a key sector with potential for growth and employment. 3.4 million tourism businesses account for 15.2 million jobs, mostly directly or indirectly linked to heritage. Privately-owned heritage houses drain a large part of the revenue generated by the tourism industry. There were an estimated 24 million visits to houses, gardens and parks in 2014 in the UK, leading to a gross visitor spend of £1billion. This financial windfall should contribute to repair and maintain historic houses if this success is to be sustained. The pressure for greater access to heritage buildings and their gardens (public and private) from an increasing number of tourists, combined with public expectations for higher standards of conservation and interpretation, augments the burden of responsibility and financial pressure on the shoulders of the owners that preserve the heritage for the benefit of all
2. Heritage sites and houses located in remote rural areas deserve a greater attention. They play an active role in regenerating and the quality of life of their surrounding territories, cultural landscapes, cities, villages, and regions that have significant cultural, social value as well as creating and supporting local jobs and growth. The post-2020 EU Multiannual Financial Framework must reflect on this and invest in financing projects to sustain the cultural and social life of the countryside.
3. Historic houses and their surrounding environment are of meaningful importance in the preservation of Europe's green heritage and its culturally-significant landscapes. Gardens and parks play a crucial role in the protection of biodiversity and preservation of ecosystems whilst giving great pleasure to those who visit them.
4. Historic houses are SMEs and need a positive financial environment, with less burdensome procedures, a better access to funds, an advantageous taxation regime, especially on death duties and more tailor-made measures to sustain their business on a long term basis.
5. Whilst the past takes care of itself, the future of heritage is always uncertain and requires active care and guardianship. The new generation of owners/entrepreneurs is ready to engage but needs support and better recognition to be able to maintain the European rich heritage sustainably.