



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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The European Union gives new impulsion to the European Heritage Label

The Council reached political agreement today on a decision establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label, which is granted to sites with a strong symbolic - and not only esthetical - value in terms of European history and heritage (such as monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes and objects). It is also aimed at promoting the democratic values and human rights that underpin European integration and at strengthening European citizens' sense of belonging to Europe, especially among young people.

The current decision builds upon an intergovernmental initiative launched in 2006, under which 68 sites from 18 member states have already been labelled. In order to improve its quality and efficiency and ensure its long-term success, the initiative will be transformed into a formal action of the European Union. Under the new action, each Member State will have a possibility to pre-select up to two sites every 2 years and a panel of independent experts will choose a maximum of one site per country to receive the label.

The focus will not be on conservation of the sites - which should be guaranteed by existing protection regimes -, but on the promotion and access to them, which implies clear explanations on their European significance and organisation of educational activities. The European Heritage Label is also meant to contribute to the economic and sustainable development of regions, in particular through cultural tourism.

P R E S S

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The Commission presented its proposal ([7094/10](#)) in March 2010 and the text has been examined under the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies. The European Parliament adopted its first reading position in December 2010 and following two informal trilogues that took place in March and in April 2011, the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council reached an agreement on the text which is now presented to the Council for a political agreement. The Parliament is expected to adopt in its second reading the Council's text without amendments.
