

Vatra Dornei, Romania  
25-26-27 September 2018

### Vatra Dornei Declaration:

**“Cultural heritage: an asset rooted in the territory synonymous with attractiveness and the future for our mountains!”**

We, representatives of Euromontana, assembled here in Vatra Dornei on the 27th September 2018, do declare:

*Cultural heritage consists of cultural and creative resources of a tangible or intangible nature, with a value for society that has been publicly recognised in order to preserve it for future generations. It includes natural, built and archaeological sites, museums, monuments, artworks, historic cities, agronomic, forestry and food practices, literary, musical, audio-visual and digital works, and the knowledge, practices and traditions of European citizens. The cultural heritage is particularly rich and diversified in mountain areas. This **cultural richness** is an integral part of the **identity and pride of mountain people**.*

*Mountain areas also have a very rich natural heritage. Many natural sites have cultural aspects, and physical, biological or geological characteristics have influenced the lives of mountain people. For instance, pastoralism is a typical farming activity that influences the natural aspects of the mountain and which contributes to the biodiversity of mountain ecosystems. Cultural and natural heritage in mountain areas are thus intrinsically linked.*

*In the face of today's globalisation, cultural and natural heritage is one of the few resources with the potential for **socio-economic development directly linked to mountain areas, their inhabitants and their way of life**. It is therefore a major **strategic resource for the future**, which can offer many social, environmental and economic benefits, provided it is properly and sustainably exploited and developed.*

*This rich natural and cultural mountain heritage also has a very **strong potential for innovation** that can revitalise mountain areas, encourage the development of new entrepreneurial ideas and also **strengthen the attractiveness of mountains areas** as a whole.*

*Faced with declining public funding, the challenges of globalisation and urbanisation, climate change and increasing environmental and physical pressures on heritage sites, sometimes due to poor tourism management, heritage preservation can be threatened. Therefore, **better preservation and valorisation** is possible and necessary in order to strengthen employment opportunities linked to the attractiveness of our mountains and all the technological potential must be exploited in order to achieve this.*



**To better preserve and valorise the mountain cultural heritage and make it an engine for future development, we call on the European, national and regional institutions to:**

- Better recognise in this European Year of Culture and Heritage not only the intrinsic value of mountain areas, as well as rural areas more widely, but also their socio-economic contribution to the well-being of all citizens.
- Better support collective mountain projects linked to the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage (e.g. mountain products) in order to strengthen the structure of resilient supply chains.
- Better recognise the intrinsic links between cultural and natural heritage in mountains (e.g. through recognition such as designation of Biosphere Reserves by UNESCO) and that Europe's cultural landscapes have been shaped by human activity, in particular agriculture and livestock farming. The return of some mountains to a state of wilderness would lead to the disappearance of this heritage and significant changes in the landscape.
- Maintain an adequate level of funding to help preserve and better develop this place-specific resource and thus create jobs, including in remote mountains. Rural proof these funds to ensure that a portion is dedicated to cultural heritage in rural and mountain areas. In addition, access to these funds must be simplified so that they can be acquired even by small structures (municipalities, associations, etc.).
- Strengthen the links between actors in research and innovation and stakeholders on the ground, so that innovations can be directly implemented to better preserve and valorise the cultural heritage.
- Better share technological innovations, such as 3D visualisations or 3D impressions, and make them more accessible, including for small entrepreneurial structures.
- Use cultural heritage as a factor that emphasises integration and attractiveness, to welcome new inhabitants, especially in depopulated mountains.
- Bring people living in urban and rural areas closer together through better knowledge and sharing of mountain cultural heritage, to better recognise the value of mountain cultural heritage for society as a whole.
- Promote the transmission and the revitalisation of cultural heritage through intergenerational dialogue and exchange programmes between young and old, and between inhabitants of large urban areas and small villages.



**Finally, we, Euromontana, undertake to contribute with our activities to better preserve and valorise the cultural and natural heritage of Europe's mountains in order to make it a sustainable driving force for the future development of living mountains in Europe through:**

- Recognition of the role of cultural heritage in the identity of mountain people and in the identity of countries and territories, as well as its specificities and the values it brings.
- The sharing of good practices on modern and innovative management (including with new technologies) of the natural and cultural heritage in the mountains.
- Encouraging EU institutions to ensure that European policies dedicate an appropriate share of cultural funding to mountain areas and encouraging them to maintain a European policy of compensation for natural constraints that is up to the challenges at stake to maintain dynamic mountains.
- Encouraging local and regional authorities to better consider cultural heritage in local development plans and programmes, through participatory processes, integrating the vision and perceptions of mountain communities, specially in the most remote areas
- The development of European projects on the theme of cultural and/or natural heritage.
- The most effective communication and transmission to society of our love and active commitment for mountains and the values they bring to everyone, whether at European, national, regional or local level, through the promotion of mountain specificities in relation to other territories.

