

Seven Most Endangered Sites and Monuments in Europe

Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage, along with European Investment Bank Institute has identified seven of Europe's most endangered landmarks for 2013 out of 50 nominations that were received.

According to Europa Nostra's findings, some of the natural and cultural heritage sites are in danger because of a dearth of expertise or funds, whereas some others are facing a threat because of neglect, inadequate planning, political conflicts or natural disasters.

Their program "The 7 Most Endangered" was launched in January last year, inspired by the success of America's National Trust for Historic Preservation in restoring historical landmarks. Nominations for the next year can be submitted till November 1, 2013.

Europa Nostra identified these seven landmarks not only on the basis of the fascinating story they tell about Europe's shared past, but also because of the value attached to the sites by the local communities that are working hard to save them.



According to Plácido Domingo, Europa Nostra's president, it is possible to revitalize the areas or cities economically and socially by rescuing these European landmarks. Europa Nostra called upon private as well as public partners at local, national as well as European levels to join hands with them in order to restore the heritage sites. The rescue missions are expected to be undertaken after the summer and the initial action plans are scheduled to be presented in Brussels at the conference on European heritage policy on December 5, 2013.

Here is the list of the most endangered monuments around Europe.

Roman Amphitheatre, Durrës, Albania

The world came to know the Roman amphitheater from 2nd century AD only in the 1960s. Referred to as Epidamnos or Dyrrachium in ancient times, it has the capacity to seat as many as 15,000 to 20,000 spectators. Located in the second largest city in Albania, the structure has deteriorated because of

chaotic urban planning, natural causes, neglect and a dearth of financial resources for carrying out restoration work.

Nicosia Buffer Zone, Cyprus

Nicosia buffer zone created following the Cyprus dispute in 1974 cuts across the historic center and hampered the city's cohesion for nearly 40 years. Decades of neglect has had a devastating effect on the medieval as well as neo classical monuments in terms of architectural value and has contributed to the deterioration in the living conditions and quality of environment in Nicosia. The lifeless 1.5 km stretch in heart of Nicosia was the focal point for trade and craft in the past.

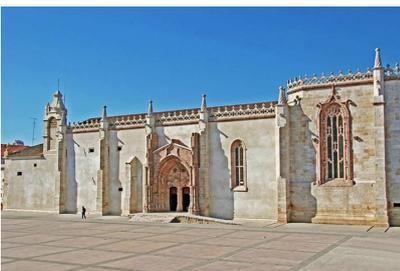


Vauban's Fortifications, Briançon, France

Briançon is a spectacular fortified city in France. Sébastien de Vauban, military engineer during King Louis XIV's reign, designed the mountain fortifications consisting of urban walls that spread over about three kilometers. The masterpiece is under threat because of severe frost, degradation of rocky foundations, and lack of maintenance.

Renaissance Monastery, San Benedetto Po, Italy

San Benedetto Po's artistic, religious and historical reputation can be attributed to the abbey complex of the same name in the city. The origin of the abbey complex can be traced to the 11th century. The main buildings were designed in the 16th century by Giulio Romano, an Italian architect. He authored Palazzo Te in Mantova and is the only artist from the Renaissance period to have his name mentioned in the works of Shakespeare. During the past decade the monument was restored to its original splendor, but two earthquakes that rocked the city in May 2012 have completely devastated the monastery.



Monastery in Setúbal, Portugal

This Monastery of Jesus completed in 1494 is among the first instances of Manueline, the Late Gothic

style of the Portuguese. It not only incorporates maritime elements, but also depicts Portuguese discoverers' pioneering voyages. Recognized as a historic relic of Europe's shared history, it helped Europe expand into the Americas and the Far East. The European Commission conferred the European Heritage label to the monument in 2011. The monument is in a dilapidated condition and has been closed down for over 20 years now.

Historic Mining Landscape, Rosia Montana, Romania

Mining activities carried out in Rosia Montana for over three millennia has transformed its landscape a great deal. This subterranean heritage comprises of an extensive gallery network, equipment and artifacts. The leftovers of surface habitation include edifices and roads, Roman funerary sites and medieval as well as modern areas. The mining landscape is under serious threat because of the envisaged gold mining project.

St. George Church, Mardin, Turkey

The St. George Church served as the Armenian community's spiritual home for 15 centuries. The historical building founded in 420 AD was being used till 1915. However, it fell into disuse after the Armenian population left the city. Currently, the monument is in a state of dilapidation.

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