



Annual report **2015**

FRH is an independent, Brussels based, non-faith, not for profit organisation that promotes the protection and use of religious buildings and their contents.

FRH provides a forum for all concerned by the future of Europe's Religious Heritage to meet and to exchange ideas.

FRH sets out to understand the challenges facing the sector, to identify positive vectors for change and to promote their implementation.

FRH underlines the preeminent place of religious patrimony in Europe's cultural heritage and encourages the EU to develop a positive policy for its support.

FRH works with its members to develop cross-border projects. It helps raise EU and other European funding for their realisation.

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Photographers: Thomas Coomans, Lilian Grootswagers, Miquel de Arriba, Joop Koopmanschap, Arjan Bronkhorst (p. 14)

Chairman's Report

Throughout Europe religious buildings are closing

In the Netherlands, it is expected that within 10 years two-thirds of the churches will close and that the current 150 monasteries will be reduced to five. Wim Eijk, Cardinal of Utrecht, aims to reduce to 20 the 300 churches in his diocese.

The rhythm varies depending on the country, region or denomination, but the tendency is clear.

While the main underlying cause is reduced religious observance, other factors are also at work – mercantilism, which requires that decisions should be made on quantitative, measurable outcomes; pressures on government spending; urban development and insensitive planning decisions; the need to raise money to pay off debts; the reluctance of church tax payers to sign up, as their parents did, to a lifetime's allegiance....

More fundamental trends are also at work: a decline in the value of 'things beautiful'; Europe's reluctance to look to its historic roots; a breakdown in local communities; reduced commitment to public space; a loss of interest in history, a dismissal of all that is not immediate...

What is to be done?

Religious buildings are materially in better condition than they have been for over a century. However, as case studies in business management, they suffer from conflicting objectives and management that is often under-resourced and ill trained to respond with energy to the challenges of the 21st century.

The changes that are urgently required do not clearly fall within the remit of any of the main stakeholders - the religious bodies themselves whose principal objectives lie with the spiritual needs of their flocks rather than in the upkeep of historic buildings; governments trying to cut spending; regional

authorities arbitrating insufficient resources; historic monument bodies having to allocate meagre funding to the preservation of precious fabric?

While multiple closures appear inevitable, care needs to be taken to ensure that there is proper and full consultation of all parties including the non-church going public before any decision is taken. All alternatives need to be examined including the sale of part of the building, extending its use, sharing with other denominations...

Buildings of outstanding architectural or historic interest cannot be closed, however, and suitable management structures need to be developed to ensure their future long-term well-being.

The sector's enormous tourism potential is already demonstrated by the success of sites such as Notre-Dame, the Acropolis, Westminster Abbey, the Jewish Synagogue in Amsterdam or by the millions of pilgrims making their way to St Jacques de Compostelle. Here, the challenge is not only how to increase numbers – the Mont St Michel has had more visitors in the past five years than in the whole of the Middle Ages – but how to divert tourists to smaller, less well known heritage where the difficulties of keeping buildings welcoming, informative and open, combined with a lack of an effective charging model mean that Europe's wider religious heritage is seriously under-represented in tourist offices.

Attitudes towards the use of religious buildings for activities other than worship vary around Europe, but to many it would appear that, as congregations decline, extending the use of the building to appropriate non-worship activities such as concerts is worthwhile and certainly preferable to closure.

Britain, whose places of worship receive no state funding, provide many interesting examples such as the tiny St Leonard's Yarpole, which, serving a village of only 28 inhabitants, houses both a Post Office and a Health Centre while retaining its sacred space. At the other end of the scale, the huge CCT church of All



Souls, Bolton has recently reopened as a mixed-use community centre filled with innovative 'pods' to provide the necessary floor space. More famous is London's St Martin-in-the-Fields, which following a £ 36 million renovation scheme, employs 200 in a variety of social outreach programmes. The National Churches Trust / McKinsey survey calculated at 1.6 million the number of volunteers in 2010 engaged in non-religious activities in British churches, far outweighing any other volunteer group in the country.

Raising funding to maintain and repair buildings that are locked and unused is not the solution

Efforts should rather be concentrated on discussing the potential use for buildings, on 'marketing' them to the worshipping and the non-worshipping public and on implementing the organisational and physical changes required.

There is no single recipe, but the work of FRH members already provides many useful pointers as to the actions that need to be taken.

A number of FRH members manage portfolios of religious buildings that would otherwise have had to close. Many do not have access to government funding and have developed successful mixed professional and volunteer management teams that promote the use of their buildings for non-faith activities as well as keeping them open for worship. As potential sustainable long-term managers of important parts of Europe's cultural heritage these different business models merit serious comparative study.

One FRH member concentrates its energies in encouraging 'its' churches to remain open and welcoming and to provide accessible information to visitors. Its 300 members each subscribes to a 'charter' and in return benefits from joint marketing initiatives. That churches can be 'marketed' is demonstrated by another association that in three

years increased visitor numbers to 'its' 153 places of worship from 25,000 to 95,000 before government funding was withdrawn. Interestingly most of these visitors were local... There are further examples of visitors being encouraged to purchase single tickets giving access to a number of churches thus diversifying their interest, a model that only suits, however, the larger tourist destinations.

Approaches such as these require a clear sense of objective and buy-in from stakeholders. One FRH member has obtained regional funding to enable it to help local churches to prepare business plans, to forecast future use and revenues and to plan resource needs and spending on repairs, another has started to provide grants for the preparation of such plans.

Maintenance is a chronic problem in religious buildings where, often, major repairs could have been avoided if suitable protection, particularly from water ingress, had been provided earlier. Several FRH members are promoting training in maintenance, the formalisation of maintenance plans and collective maintenance agreements with a single supplier covering a portfolio of buildings.

Other FRH members are active in the preparation of inventories of contents. There are various schools of thought as to the best way to protect artefacts from theft and the other source of loss, perhaps more important, that can best be described as 'benign neglect'. At one extreme is the view that churches should be proud of their possessions, put them on display and keep churches open. This view maintains that a determined thief will cause more damage by breaking into a locked building and that the risk of a visitor entering is in itself a deterrent. At the other extreme are those who believe that artefacts should best be locked up and that inventories should be kept secret as otherwise they provide a 'thief's shopping list'.

Some FRH members have developed methodologies whereby artefacts and vestments are grouped within a single place of worship, thus ensuring that they are both satisfactorily maintained, protected and on

exhibition to visitors, but available for return to their church of origin for use for services. Further FRH members have staged large national exhibitions of church artefacts demonstrating to the general public the astonishing workmanship of articles 'hidden' within religious buildings. The protection and promotion of artefacts represents as big a challenge to the sector as the maintenance of the buildings themselves.

One interesting project developed by an FRH member under the banner 'Europe's Biggest Museum' is to raise financing for university students to compete in the search for the most interesting religious artefacts in their region. The sponsor's prize money is used to restore the winning artefact. It may prove possible to extend this project, which brings much useful publicity to the sector, both across borders and also to a wider public for example via the social outreach programmes of commercial companies.

Money is a chronic issue in the sector. The amount provided by grant-making FRH members is necessarily modest but does provide much needed encouragement to recipients and often helps to provoke further funding. It also targets areas where funding is not readily available elsewhere such as in preparing business plans, installation of WCs and kitchen facilities or the repair of buildings that, although unlisted, are of value.

An interesting initiative in the UK is the annual bicycle ride round local churches that, by encouraging individual sponsorship, raises an annual € 2 million for church repairs. Prizes are also given by some FRH members to reward worthwhile adaptations of religious buildings or successful restoration of artefacts.

What can FRH itself do to help?

In view of the size of the challenge, the resources of FRH and its members are woefully inadequate. They do provide, however, much useful material on which to develop future policies in support of Europe's religious heritage.

One of FRH's role is to bring members together, to help them to understand their underlying complementarities despite differences of language, region and culture and assist them, as appropriate, to work together to develop cross-border projects.

FRH also works to ensure that the cause of religious heritage is better known.

The EU has, historically, placed little weight on the place of culture as a binding force in the European ideal. Happily, this situation is beginning to change. FRH welcomes the stimulus that will be provided by 2018 being designated the 'European Year of Cultural Heritage' and the decision, in the EU's foreign policy, that one of its three focus areas is 'reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage'.

What is regrettable, however, is the systematic secular bias given to discussion about culture.

Europe's Religious Heritage – the 500,000 buildings themselves, churches, chapels, synagogues, mosques, cathedrals, monasteries, convents: their contents, furnishings, monuments, sculptures, paintings, frescos, silver, vestments, libraries: the architects, artists & musicians they have inspired over the centuries: their record of national, local and individual history dating back well over a 1,000 years – which represents a unique and essential part of Europe's cultural identity is largely ignored!

As part of the trend towards a greater recognition of the importance of culture, the European parliament approved, by a large majority, on 7th September 2015, a paper entitled '**Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe**'.

The initial draft of this document contained no reference to religious heritage.

FRH was pleased, therefore, following its contribution to the EU study: **Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe: Towards a European Index for Cultural Heritage** and its active intervention in the drafting



“Considers that historical religious heritage, including architecture and music, must be preserved for its cultural value, regardless of its religious origins”

of the paper that followed, that the formal resolution finally adopted by the European Parliament on 8th September 2015 included the following recommendation:

“Considers that historical religious heritage, including architecture and music, must be preserved for its cultural value, regardless of its religious origins”

If this ‘pillar’ is to be handed down intact to future generations radical action needs to be taken.

FRH was a contributor to Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe: Towards a European Index for Cultural Heritage - a two-year project funded by the EU Culture Programme (2007-2013) that aimed to raise greater awareness of the multiple benefits of cultural heritage and to present policy recommendations for tapping into heritage’s full potential.

While this report provides useful methodology for measuring, for example, tourist and social value of cultural centres, considerably more work is required to adapt its findings to Religious Heritage.

In view of the complexities of the challenges facing religious heritage, the diversity of the aims of its multiple stakeholders and the general lack of credible information on which to build a forward-looking policy for the sector, further study is required not only to underline the cultural, economic and social value of this heritage but, more importantly, to identify the changes that are needed to assist it to adapt successfully to the constraints of the 21st century.

The EU should take the lead in the development of a European policy on Religious Heritage and as a first step institute a study to identify the steps that need to be taken to ensure its future.

The biggest challenge facing the sector, if it is to develop greater use of religious buildings for non-worship activities and to promote religious heritage tourism, is one of organisation.

A particularly promising vector is the development of volunteer support groups, which not only work to preserve this heritage but also help to bring social cohesion to both rural and urban areas. All over Europe, associations are being set up usually in support of single buildings. Such associations often benefit from the unpaid enthusiasm of determined individuals, not always worshippers, for whom their religious building represents an important repository of local or family history and a centre of community value.

If the sector is to build on this volunteer effort, it will have to find ways to provide training and some modest funding for such associations and more importantly a way to federate them so that each does not have to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

FRH is already working to provide active help for the development of such ‘networks’ through the cross-border sharing of experience and the provision of useful international electronic support tools.

Religiana, developed by FRH, is one such tool.

The Internet contains an ever-increasing wealth of information about individual churches and their contents. Religiana sets out to link this into a simplified structured format that will allow travellers to see at a glance the religious heritage present within a locality, to help them search by specific interest, to see when buildings are open and to obtain feedback from other visitors. They can also use the site either to follow one of the many pilgrimage routes that cross Europe or to develop their own itinerary. The site provides a platform to publicise events in religious buildings and allows managers of associations to maintain a virtual database of their members.

More ambitiously, Religiana also sets out to provide a payment portal for visitors wishing to make donations to churches they visit. The transfer of tax credits on such donations between European member states is not yet possible, but finding ways of achieving such transfers between selective countries is one of FRH’s objectives.

Longer term, it is hoped that Religiana will provide the underlying quantitative information necessary to contribute to a convincing case for religious heritage.

Religiana is now fully functional but its development is hampered by lack of resources.

The future of Europe’s Religious Heritage is a subject that is complex, not open to simple solutions and urgent. Its sheer scale is daunting.

There is much that can be done - but this requires considerably more resources than are currently available either to FRH or to its members.

Please help us ensure that our generation rises to the challenge!



Olivier de Rohan





Projects

Religiana

Religiana is a smartphone, tablet and PC site that sets out to:

- **Provide the general public with on-line multilingual information about:**
Churches and other religious buildings – their history, architecture and contents.
Details of events and activities taking place within them.
Opening times.
Religious building trails and pilgrimages.
- **Help managers of such buildings and their support associations to:**
Promote the interest or activities of the building and support organisation.
Build virtual communities of interested individuals.
Receive on-line donations / Manage tax credits.
- **Develop a single source of accurate up to date information about Europe's religious heritage to:**
Permit its systematic promotion to visitors via e.g. tour operators or guidebooks.
Provide factual evidence of the sector's economic and social value.

Religiana.mobi is currently being trialled in four countries. Development requires substantial funding.



FRHInform

The ways religious heritage is financed and run are often opaque and difficult to understand. Furthermore, substantial changes are required if Europe's religious patrimony is to adapt successfully to the challenges of the 21st century.

If FRH is to make a substantive contribution to the debate as to how this patrimony is to be transferred intact to future generations it needs to obtain a clearer picture of the situation than can be obtained by simple aggregation of information obtained from its members.

FRHInform sets out to prepare a structured analysis of the sector including its short-term outlook if current trends continue, to study the various initiatives for organisational change already taken by FRH members and others and to propose the support measures that could be contained in a European policy in favour of religious heritage.

The aspect of particular interest to FRH is how to encourage and bring greater professionalism to volunteer support organisations and how to favour effective working relationships between such organisations and existing sector stakeholders.

A trial was carried out during 2015 with the Junior Consulting arm of Sciences Po.

The Biggest Museum of Europe

FRH is currently exploring ways in which the non-worshipping public can be encouraged to appreciate the interest of the artefacts to be found in its local churches.

In its current form, 'Le Plus Grand Musée' developed by la Sauvegarde de l'Art Français, students from the International school, Sciences Po compete to identify the artefact most meriting restoration in each of the six campus regions. Following decision by a committee of experts, money raised from sponsors is then applied



to return the object to its original glory. This project, which started as an initiative of the Ecole du Louvre, has recently attracted the patronage of France's President. It promotes both the interest of religious heritage within schools and provides much valuable cross community interaction. A key to its success is the building of a motivated management team supervising each of its various aspects.

FRH is investigating how this project can be turned into The Biggest Museum of Europe, through giving it an international dimension and extend it to other special interest groups such as works committees.

ALTERheritage

FRH was the co-ordinating partner in this project making material for vocational learning on religious heritage conservation and management more widely known. The project was grant aided by the European Commission under the Leonardo programme and was completed during 2015.

The other active partners were Media k GmbH, Germany; University of Leuven - Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation, Belgium; Churches Conservation Trust, UK; Sociedad Regional de Cultura y Deporte, S. L., Spain and Museum Catharijneconvent, the Netherlands. Passive partners were Centrum voor Religieuze Kunst en Cultuur vzw (CRKC), Belgium; ICOMOS International Training Committee; ICCROM; Svenska kyrkan / Church of Sweden; Protestant church of Hessen, Nassau, Germany; Parish of Dittelsheim, Germany; Parish of Alsheim, Germany; Monastery of the Dominicans in Worms, Germany; Parish of the Herrgottskirche in Creglingen, Germany; KADOC, Documentation and Research on Religious Culture and Society, Belgium; De Monumentenwacht, the Netherlands and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. The final report is available at www.frh-europe.org/projects/alterheritage

Europetour

EUROPETOUR is a study to identify the skills needs of those active in rural cultural tourism across Europe, to identify shortfalls and to recommend suitable remedial actions such as training schemes.

FRH is one of the nine partner organisations. The lead partner is Kultur und Arbeit e.V. in Germany. Funding, spread over three years, has been obtained under the European ERASMUS+ programme and the project is expected to be completed by 2018.

Inception

INCEPTION is a research project within EU's Horizon2020 reflective framework programme. It uses 3D modelling of artefacts and built and social environments to demonstrate how Europe's cultural heritage has evolved over long periods. See www.inception-project.eu.

Partners are University of Ferrara-Teknehub (IT), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), National Technical University Athens (Greece), Cyprus University of Technology (Cyprus), University of Zagreb (Croatia), CARTIF (Spain), DEMO Consultants (the Netherlands), 3L Architects (Germany), Nemoris (Italy), RDF (Bulgaria), 13bisConsulting (France), Zoller + Fröhlich (Germany), Vision Business Consultants (Greece). FRH is invited as a stakeholder in the project.

HORIZON2020 COOP call: Religion, past, present and future

FRH is one of the partners in an experienced consortium that is currently developing a project proposal. The application for funding will be made in 2017 and, if granted, the project will start in 2018.

Statutory information

Legal identity

FRH was registered as an ASBL (Association Sans But Lucratif – a non-profit organisation) in Belgium on 29th September 2011 under number 839745430.

Statutory Aims

The aims of the Association are to “promote, encourage and support the safeguard, maintenance, conservation, restoration, accessibility and the embellishment of places of worship, their contents and their history.”
FRH's statutes specifically forbid “Religious proselytism”

Membership

FRH has two classes of membership:

- Full members – organisations that support FRH objectives
- Associate members – other organisations and individuals

FRH currently has 54 Full members and 85 Associate members in 35 countries. Details of membership are available on the FRH website.

Council

President

Olivier de Rohan, French, Chairman of the Sauvegarde de l'Art Français

Secretary

Lilian Grootswagers, Dutch, representative of the Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwen

Treasurer

Michael Hoare, English, former Chairman of the National Churches Trust

Thomas Coomans, Belgian, professor at the K.U. Leuven, representative of the Raymond Lemaire International Centre for Conservation

Giannalia Cogliandro, Italian, Secretary General of ENCATC

Crispin Truman, English, CEO of the Churches Conservation Trust

Sarah de Lencquesaing, American, Council member of French American Foundation & French Heritage Society

Marc de Beyer, Dutch, Head of the Department for Cultural Heritage in Churches and Convents at Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht

Robert Chatin, French, Industrialist and banker
Oddbjørn Sørmoen, Norwegian, Director Department for Church Buildings and Heritage Administration, Norwegian Association for Church Employers

Registered Office

67 Rue de Trèves,
1040 Bruxelles,
Belgium.

FRH currently employs three part-time staff - 1.5 full time equivalent
Potential candidates for both paid and unpaid work should consult the website.



Governance

Council

The Council, elected by its members, is responsible for FRH's governance.

FRH seeks to associate within its Council good knowledge of the sector, competency in ensuring top quality governance and specific skills such as the supervision of complex cross-border projects. It aims to include a good spread of nationality.

Committees

Members are encouraged to participate actively in Committees:

The Networking Committee brings together members, organises events, collates information about the sector and incubates cross-border projects.

The Development Committee works to ensure that FRH becomes better known and its views understood by the EU Commission and other European bodies. It helps FRH to build relationships with institutional funders, major donors and the 'Friends of FRH'.

The Operations Committee manages the office and ensures that FRH's modest resources are applied in as effective a way as possible.

The Finance Committee supervises the association's accounts and ensures financial probity.

The Governance and Nominations Committee sets the structures under which FRH operates, manages the nomination process to committees and to the Council and maintains the internal rules and policy manuals.

Projects

FRH seeks to manage each project separately. Accounts are presented on a project by project basis and it is anticipated that, as these develop, independent governance structures will be set up for each of the bigger projects.

Internal Rules

The Internal Rules of the Association are set by the Council.

They are a complement to the Statutes and, in the case of contradiction, the Statutes prevail.

The Statutes and an up to date version of the Internal Rules are posted on the website.

Members, both Full and Associate, accept these Rules by subscribing to the Association. Staff accept them by signing working, internship or volunteering contracts.

The Friends of FRH

The Friends of FRH is an independent association set up by la Fondation Roi Baudouin.

Its aims are to:

- Promote a better understanding of the sector's needs and advocate positive change.
- Promote FRH as the European federator of like minded organisations.
- Provide a source of volunteer support.
- Attract donations and introduce FRH to major donors.

Roseline de Carmoy and Philippe le Hodey are the patrons of the Friends' group in co-ordination with Sarah de Lencquesaing.

Donations to FRH

FRH relies on voluntary donations. Please give generously!

Without tax certificates

- IBAN : BE97 3631 2053 3149
- BIC : BBRUBEBB

With Belgian tax certificate

- IBAN : BE10 0000 0000 0404
- BIC : BPOTBEB1
- Reference : ***014/1360/00057***

Donors will receive a Belgian certificate of tax deductibility from la Fondation du Roi Baudouin

For tax certificates in other jurisdictions please contact the FRH office

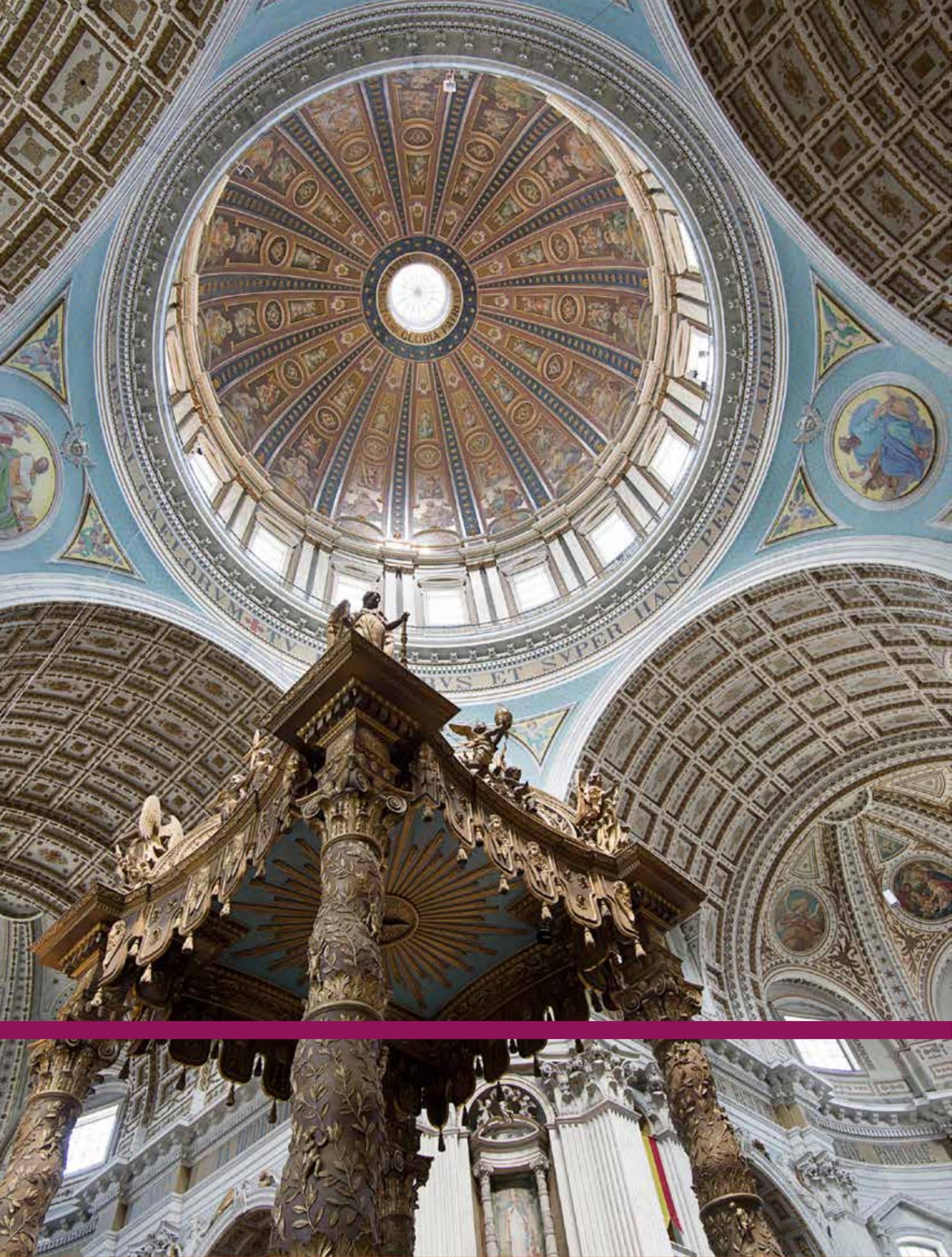
FRH's principles

Europe's sacred heritage - architectural, movable and intangible - is central to its cultural and aesthetic roots. In a constantly evolving society, religious buildings are unique repositories of art and history, resource for sustainable development and quality of life and tools for urban regeneration.

Religious heritage deserves a key position on local, national and European political agendas.

- Greater efforts should be made to maintain public understanding of religious heritage and to transmit this interest to future generations.
- Religious heritage should be shared, welcoming and open to the public.
- Extending use beyond worship attracts the non church-going public and contributes economically to the costs of upkeep.
- 'Religious tourism' should be encouraged.
- Visitors should be incited to contribute financially.
- Buildings should be properly maintained and managed.
- Volunteer groups and non-traditional funding sources should be encouraged.
- Artefacts should, where possible, be maintained in situ.
- Good artefact inventories are essential.
- Closure should only take place following: Full consultation with all stakeholders: Religious bodies, congregations, Historic Buildings Commissions, heritage and community associations and the non-worshipping public. Proper study of alternatives such as gifting to congregations, use by other Churches, extending use beyond that of worship.





Accounts

Income & expenditure*

Euros	2010-11	2012	2013	2014	2015
Income					
Founders	17.919	12.178	1.300		
Membership fees			13.680	15.291	15.557
Major donors	6.490	40.795	91.724	68.795	41.145
General				40.000	48.500
Religiana					1.500
FRHInform					
EU funding			12.000		3.000
ALTERheritage					12.792
EUROPETOUR					
Sundry income		719			128
	24.409	53.692	118.704	124.086	122.622
General expenditure					
Office costs	-29.224	-27.451	-57.382	-127.495	-98.050
Network Group			-1.511	-104	-350
Friends of FRH					-442
Public relations				-240	-732
Project expenditure					
ALTERheritage			-361	-2.383	-2.978
Religiana				-23.663	-44.338
FRHInform					-1.500
EUROPETOUR					-1.248
Net conference contribution	-3.188	6.547	-256	9.734	0
	-32.412	-20.904	-59.510	-144.151	-149.638
FRH: Cash balances	31/12/11	31/12/12	31/12/13	31/12/14	31/12/15
Euros	13.105	45.918	106.661	87.596	60.569

* FRH prepares its accounts on a cash received, cash paid basis.

www.frh-europe.org



“All over Europe, our shared culture of tangible and intangible religious heritage needs to be safeguarded for future generations to enjoy.”

Olivier de Rohan, FRH President

Future for Religious Heritage

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