Paris Conference

With its highly successful 2018 Paris conference, FRH can take pride that it has attained one of the objectives set at its foundation in 2011 – recognition by the EU institutions as their religious heritage partner.

Over 200 delegates from 24 countries in the UNESCO building in Paris welcomed:

- Tibor Navracsics – the European Commissioner for Culture – who added his own testimony to the Torch as it arrived from across Europe
- Silvia Costa – chair of the MEP’s Culture Committee - who invited FRH to join the select interparty parliamentary committee on Culture
- Michel Magnier – EU director of Culture - who outlined the ways that his department was already working with FRH and underlined the importance he attached to future collaboration.

In anticipation of the conference, FRH, with the active participation of its members and main stakeholders, prepared an open letter to Commissioner Navracsics.

This letter underlines the urgency of developing a policy in favour of Europe’s religious heritage and sets out FRH’s view that:

- Religious heritage is the concern of all Europeans and not only worshippers
- Interest is difficult to sustain in underused buildings. If use for worship is insufficient, other functions should be sought through tourism, community use, social outreach, alternative or extended use…
- Closure is to be avoided wherever possible. Buildings, which were often built by communities, should be kept open for public benefit.
- Innovation, particularly in adapting management to the needs of the 21st century, is key to the future.

FRH is convinced that, as a European policy in favour of religious heritage develops, the sector will increasingly benefit from its rightful share of EU funding.