Future for Religious Heritage

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.

FRH is one of the 28 EU networks supported by the Creative Europe Network funding.

FRH was a stakeholder in the structured dialogue between the European Commission and the European cultural sector during the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH 2018).

FRH contributed to developing the 2018 Leeuwarden Declaration on Adaptive Re Use.

FRH works closely with other European cultural partners and is a member of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3.
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All images used in this annual report come from the Photo Competition Summer 2018. We thank all participants for their contribution.
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.

On 11 and 12 October 2018, 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 preparation for this conference and as part of the EYCH2018 celebrations, FRH organised the ‘Torch for Heritage and Culture’ initiative aimed at raising awareness of the importance of Europe’s religious heritage using the ideal of the Olympic torch travelling across Europe as a symbol of unity and shared heritage. The ‘Torch’ visited 11 different cities and at each collected personal letters and testimonies from prominent personalities and citizens alike, containing stories and memories linked with religious heritage.

To mark the conference FRH, with the active participation of its members and main stakeholders, prepared an Open Letter to Commissioner Navracsics, - see page 27.

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 one of the keys to the future.

The letter contains a number of annexes analysing the issues facing the sector under the EYCH2018 headings of Engagement, Sustainability, Protection and Innovation. It discusses what a European policy in favour of religious heritage should contain, proposes sector guidelines and ends with a number of comments and questions.

The letter also sets out FRH’s aims, which are to:

- Promote the importance of the sector – by far the largest historic category within Europe’s cultural heritage and one with enormous potential as symbol of European identity, focus for local culture and community outreach and source of tourism revenues. It merits as much EU, state and regional support as other categories of cultural heritage.
- Develop a better understanding of the sector including cross-border comparison of the variety of ways in which the sector is organised in different countries and in different faiths.
- Work actively with its members to build an effective network to communicate to the EU and other European institutions the rightful place of Europe’s religious heritage and to propose actions in its favour.
- Identify best practices that harmonise the often-conflicting objectives of the sector’s multiple stakeholders, encourage the greater use and understanding of buildings and their contents and combine the structured involvement of volunteers with modern professional management.
- Develop cross-border projects with its members in subjects ranging from the global promotion of European religious tourism, the development of historic pilgrimage routes, the better recovery of stolen artefacts or cross border tax deductibility for donations…
A subsequent letter to Commissioner Navracsics (page 29) dated 4th February 2019 provides detail of FRH’s ambition to develop its two key projects: FRH Inform - a European study of the sector –and Religiana - an online information database to promote tourism, events, and better management.

Since 2017, FRH has received funding from the EU under the Creative Europe programme, a total of € 1 million over four years on condition that FRH raises matched funding of € 250,000.

This has permitted FRH to strengthen its office team, to grow its network of members, to develop projects, and to reinforce its relationship with European Institutions notably the Commission.

Named European Year of Cultural Heritage, 2018 was a particular busy year, and, as a selected stakeholder, FRH played an active role, not only with the initiation of the 'Torch', but also in the Leeuwarden Declaration (18 May 2018) and other cross-sectoral cooperation such as that with ICOMOS on Industrial Heritage and Landscape and Effects concerning Fortified Heritage.

During 2018, Europetour in which FRH is an active partner presented its conclusions as to how to remedy the skills shortage in rural cultural tourism. A new project – SKIVRE - with many of the same members is now investigating the marketing of monastic products.

FRH does not work only with the EU.

FRH has developed a Factsheet with the Council of Europe, showcasing the needs of the religious
heritage sector and highlighting in a set of practical recommendations the links between FRH’s position and the Council of Europe’s strategy 21 guidelines (see page 30).

As part of EYCH2018, on 29-30 November 2018 the Vatican organised an important conference in Rome on the future of church buildings entitled “Doesn’t God dwell here anymore? Decommissioning places of worship and integrated management of ecclesiastical cultural heritage”.

This was widely attended with a number of FRH’s council members participating. The Pope issued a letter on the subject and a book summarising the findings of the conference will be published in 2019.

FRH is encouraged to note an increasing awareness of the importance and urgency of the subject both by individuals and by institutions.

The popular response to the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral has provided overwhelming proof of the importance in which religious buildings are held and confirmed the findings of the survey carried out by FRH in 2014, which demonstrated, in all of the eight countries analysed, a strong attachment to local places of worship.

Meanwhile the nomination of 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage and the increase in spending on Culture in the draft EU budget for 2021-2027 provides a reflection of this trend at a European level.

FRH is particularly grateful to the EU for providing funding under the Creative Europe programme and looks forward to continue to work closely with the Commission in developing a European policy in favour of religious heritage. The elections to the European Parliament are accompanied by changes within the Commission including that of the Commissioner himself.

FRH looks forward to meeting the new team and building relationships of the same quality that it has enjoyed in the past.

Olivier de Rohan
Chairman

Photo by Valentina De Santis

Photo by Leily Nekookar

Photo by Valentina De Santis

Photo by Leily Nekookar
Sector guidelines

Developed by FRH in consultation with its members

- Places of worship should be kept open and welcoming.
- Interesting content, history, art and architecture both tangible and intangible should be catalogued, secured and actively promoted to all sectors of the population.
- Opening hours should be publicised.
- Local secular tourist organisations should be encouraged to promote religious heritage and visitors encouraged to search out the less well-known buildings.
- Managers of religious heritage sites should promote their spiritual and community value.
- Visitor comments should be publicised.
- Complementary compatible uses should be sought for buildings that are insufficiently used.
- Buildings and contents should be properly maintained and adapted to current use without harming their atmosphere.
- Artefacts should, where possible, be kept in situ.
- Financial needs should be articulated.
- Financial sustainability should be sought through the encouragement of on-line tax efficient donations and commercial use of buildings where appropriate.
- Local volunteer support should be sought, structured and trained with particular emphasis on management of buildings taken over by volunteer groups.
- Formalisation of the roles of managers of religious buildings and provision of resources to prepare development plans, statements of cultural significance, maintenance schedules, inventories, records of work on the building and its contents...
- School curricula should include education about religious heritage.
- Closure should only be envisaged after full consultation of all stakeholders.
- Future public use and not financial gain should be the criterion for deciding the fate of buildings no longer required.
The 2018 FRH Biennial Conference, titled “Religious Heritage – Europe’s legacy for the future”, was held at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 11th-13th October.

The conference was held under the patronage of: the Ministry of Culture of France; the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Places of Religion and Ritual (PRERICO); la Fondation La Sauvegarde de l’Art Français; the Belgian French speaking and German speaking Commission for UNESCO; and the Flemish Commission for UNESCO. The conference welcomed more than 200 participants from 64 organisations and 24 countries, bringing together experts from the field of religious and cultural heritage, academics, representatives from EU institutions, and representatives from public and private institutions.

The general themes for presentations and panel discussions included the unprecedented threats facing religious heritage due to changing patterns of society, worship and population; the cultural, community, economic and environmental importance of Europe’s religious heritage; the role of NGOs in conservation, management, re-use and promotion of places of worship; measures for European institutions, national governments and politicians; and examples of good practices throughout Europe.

Besides presentations and panel discussions, the Torch of Heritage and Culture initiative and the FRH Photo Competition held their closing ceremonies. The conference featured an opening concert at the Notre Dame Cathedral and a closing concert at la Madeleine Church, followed by study visits to interesting Parisian churches the following day.

The FRH Torch is a memory treasure box, containing personal letters from both prominent members of the international community and from European citizens themselves. As an initiative within the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, the FRH Torch reaches out to citizens across Europe, through ‘Torch ceremonies’ held at events linked to the EYCH, each collecting numerous letters describing personal memories and stories linked to religious heritage.

The ‘Torch’ started in Leeuwarden (the Netherlands), followed by Aschaffenburg (Germany), Potes (Spain) Lund (Sweden), Mont-devant-Sassey (France), Berlin (Germany), Krakow (Poland), Budapest (Hungary), Bucharest (Romania), and Skopje (Northern Macedonia). It ended its journey with a closing ceremony at the FRH Conference in Paris. The FRH Torch also participated in numerous events and set up contribution boxes across Europe for citizens to share their stories.

The ‘Torch Public Campaign’, open to all European citizens, continued until the conclusion of the EYCH, on the 31st of December 2018.

The Torch attracted substantial local and national publicity and FRH is producing a publication on the initiative featuring events attended, letters received and individuals participating. This follow-up initiative is aimed at raising awareness and engaging with younger generations.

< Photos by Joop Koopmanschap and Kees Grootswagers
Core Activities

**RELIGIANA**

www.frh-europe.org/projects/religiana/

This online platform aims to become a reference site, showcasing religious heritage sites throughout Europe, and providing visitors with accurate information on opening hours, contact details and historical information.

Managers of religious buildings are encouraged to provide information to a standard template. As it develops, Religiana aims to offer site managers the opportunity to reach wider audiences, to promote events, to accept donations and to raise crowdfunding, as well as engaging with local volunteer organisations.

Religiana is easy and fast to use, is presented to a common standard across Europe, will provide access to an audience of potential visitors, provides translations and has the potential to attract donations to NGOs or associations working to preserve religious heritage sites.

**FRH INFORM**

www.frh-europe.org/projects/frh-inform/

This project aims at mapping the state of religious heritage in Europe, by providing concrete data for each European country regarding the number of buildings, type, ownership, management practices, national funding mechanisms and closures with a particular accent on recent management initiatives.

The objective is to offer an overview of the current situation, thus allowing the data to be used for informative, research and advocacy purposes.

FRH draws expertise from its members and network, specifically researchers and university departments and also aims to build an online library of relevant publications to which all are encouraged to participate.

As factsheets on Europe, individual countries or subjects as varied as support organisations, re-use, pilgrimage routes or structured maintenance are developed, these will be made available for the general public on the FRH website.
Core Activities

FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

These meetings offer the opportunity for members to meet each other, discuss projects and initiatives and share best practices. They are held in cooperation with a local member on site and the format includes presentations by local stakeholders and members, a general presentation on FRH, and study visits to interesting religious heritage sites, usually accompanied by an expert. Each meeting seeks to centre on a theme of particular interest.

Recent meetings have been held in Suceava (Romania), Girona (Spain), Bergen (Norway) and Asti (Italy). Meetings dedicated to FRH Inform and Religiana have also been held in Paris, Brussels and London. These meetings not only allow members to obtain a better understanding of the work of others and to contribute to FRH projects but also provide FRH with useful insights of what members require of FRH.

FRH encourages all members, especially new ones, to attend and participate in upcoming Face-to-Face meetings.

FRH PHOTO COMPETITION

www.frh-europe.org/events/2018-paris/summer-photo-competition/

The FRH 2018 religious heritage photo competition began with the ‘Photowalk’ activity held simultaneously in three European cities (Asti, Middelburg, Paris) with participants strolling through their city on a pre-defined route, taking photographs of religious heritage along the way. After that, the competition was opened to the general public during the summer.

The results of the competition were spectacular with hundreds of photographs received from more than 50 countries highlighting the beauty of Europe’s religious heritage, and the photography skills of participants.

Mrs Silvia Costa, Member of the European Parliament and S&D Group Coordinator, Committee on Culture and Education, presented the awards on 11th October during the Paris Conference which included the presentation of the finalists, along with the three winning photographs.

Besides an FRH Award Certificate, winners were granted a Piql Award Certificate, and their photos are stored in the Arctic World Archive, which also hosts scanned documents from the Vatican library in a unique underground storage facility in a remote Norwegian arctic island, designed to ensure the preservation of data storage for hundreds of years.
JEOWI IAURBAN HERITAGE CONFERENCE

FRH participated in the Jewish Urban Heritage Conference held in Krakow, Poland in September 2018, in the form of a panel presentation which included a Torch Initiative ceremony at the end of the conference. The conference led to a successful funding application for a ‘Europe for Citizens programme’. FRH is delighted to have helped set the first steps for the ‘City to City Network of Jewish Heritage’.

SKIVRE
www.frh-europe.org/projects/skivre/

SKIVRE – ‘Skills Development for the Valorisation of European Religious Heritage’ was launched in September 2018. This project, co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ Programme, includes six partners with media k GmbH in Germany as the coordinator and with FRH in Belgium, GUNET in Greece, INI-Novation in Bulgaria, the Bronnbach Monastery in Germany, and the Wissenschaftsinitiative Niederösterreich in Austria.

The project, which has a duration of 24 months, aims at providing capacity-building to the workforce (staff, monks and nuns) of European monasteries and monastery shops in order to support the development and sales of high-quality monastic products.

Two meetings have been held since the start of the project; the first in Bronnbach, Germany in November 2018 and the second in Bankya, Bulgaria in May 2019. A Europe-wide survey has been circulated to better understand the competence needs. The training modules are currently in development.
The EUROPETOUR project, which started in December 2015, was carried out in a partnership between FRH and 15 European experts. Its mission was to empower rural areas to harvest the potential of cultural tourism, by developing a modular training programme for cultural and touristic actors and institutions in rural areas.

The project concluded on the 31st of August 2018 with nine training modules, available to the public free of charge and translated in English, German, Spanish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Italian and Polish. The focus of the modules is destination characterisation, development and positioning of touristic products and services, marketing strategy and planning, distribution and sales channels, communication strategy and planning, networking and cooperation, financial planning, and the development of a business plan. The modules are already being used for training in eight European regions, and were awarded the European Cultural Heritage Year label.

As part of its FRH Inform project, FRH is building an on-line library of publications relating to religious heritage with a particular accent on research into the changes that the sector is currently undergoing. Council members Thomas Coomans and Lilian Grootswagers have published useful articles on the subject.

FRH is also producing a book to celebrate the Torch project.

Meanwhile, 2018 has seen a welcome increase in press interest thanks in part to the Torch and Photowalk initiatives. Some examples can be found at www.frh-europe.org/category/press-releases/
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 federation of like-minded organisations.
- Provide a source of volunteer support.
- Attract donations and introduce FRH to major donors.

Friends are invited to join FRH events, to meet its members, to explore the different issues facing the sector and to enjoy examples of Europe’s glorious religious heritage.

PARK ABBEY – LEUVEN – 26TH OCTOBER 2017
FRH’s 2017 AGM was held in the 900-year-old Parkabdij (Park Abbey) in Leuven, Belgium. Recently converted into a public space, a music centre, a museum and a research centre for organic farming while, at the same time, retaining its fine church and historic accommodation for its monks, this is a remarkable example of how fine historic religious heritage can be transformed and made relevant to the needs of the 21st century.

NORTHERN HOLLAND – JANUARY 2018
The Friends saw several examples of fine C17th Dutch churches and participated at Leeuwarden in the launch of the ‘Torch initiative’ – FRH’s contribution to the 2018 Year of Cultural Heritage. Two regional associations - Alde Fryske Tsjerken and Oude Groninger Kerken - presented their management models. Between them, they own, maintain to a high standard and have developed mixed secular and religious use for around 130 religious buildings many of which would otherwise be closed.

LIÈGE – BELGIUM – FEBRUARY 2018
Stéphane Colin presented the town’s rich ecclesiastic history and brought to life its remarkable buildings, the artefacts in the Cathedral and the magnificent Mosan bronze font in St Bartholomew’s. Friends visited the vast collegiate church of St-Croix dating from the C13th, but closed to the public since 2005. They complimented Jean-Pierre Verdière and his Association on their persistence, which has at last been rewarded by the voting of a comprehensive restoration programme. Lunch was held in the salons of the historic Cercle Littéraire.

SUCCEAVA – ROMANIA – MARCH 2018
The Friends joined the FRH study visit to Romania, a country that has enjoyed success in restoring its rich religious heritage following the fall of communism, much of it financed by EU grants. Local FRH members pointed out the challenges still facing the sector to the Friends, who then continued for a few days to enjoy an inspiring programme of visits to local painted churches and monasteries. A stay in a traditional Romanian house and lunch each day with a different host including the prioress of Voronet monastery gave the Friends a good insight into local culture and history.

ST OMER – FRANCE – APRIL 2018
A town whose riches were built on the wool trade with Britain possesses many fine buildings. Friends saw the ruins of St Bertin, whose collapsed tower is a good example of post-war municipal neglect, attended a concert in the newly restored Jesuit chapel, examined the town’s remarkable medieval religious manuscripts and witnessed the damage suffered by the abandoned but magnificent church of St Denis, recently closed as being unsafe for use. They were generously received by the Mayor and the town council and appreciated the remarkable efforts they and the Capso are making to restore the town’s religious heritage, to find new uses and to fund current maintenance. Notre-Dame, despite its magnificence and name is not officially a cathedral and thus has to be funded locally.

GIRONA – SPAIN – MAY 2018
The University of Girona is particularly active in the field of religious heritage and as a result, there is a marked increase in interest in local churches and, through the students studying the subject, a better understanding of the value of their cultural heritage. A wide choice of visits is now proposed by local tourist associations and Catalonia Sacra. A particular treat was the visit to the spectacular Benedictine Abbey of Montserrat still run by the monks through a structured 200-person secular organisation. The substantial positive cash flow generated from the 2 million visitors are re-invested in the Abbey.
BERGEN – NORWAY – APRIL 2019

The Lutheran Church of Norway has recently followed Sweden, which ‘privatised’ its Church in 2000. The exact details of the Church’s new organisation are gradually appearing.

The University Museum in Bergen contains a quite remarkable collection of pre-1350 religious art of quality second only to the Marès museum in Barcelona. Neither museum is as well known as it should be and one of the challenges facing FRH is how to improve publicity at European level for such collections.

ASTI – ITALY – MAY 2019

Churches abound in Asti. Visits were made to the Cathedral and the C13th San Secundo church as well as to the C17th Jewish synagogue and the fine collection of religious manuscripts held in the Seminary. Meetings were held in Spazio Kor in the church of San Giuseppe - an FRH member - now converted to a theatre and in the diocesan museum of San Giovanni.

For further information on the Friends please contact FRH’s office: info@frh-europe.org, 0032 (0) 2400 7703.

Photo by Diana Nieuwold

“Religious heritage can act as a bridge between Europe of the present and Europe of the past.”
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.

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, a 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 uses beyond worship attract the non-church-going public and contribute 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 worshipping and non-worshipping public.

Proper study of alternatives such as gifting to congregations, use by other Churches, extending use beyond that of worship....
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
www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/join-us/full-member/

Associate members
Other organisations and individuals
www.frh-europe.org/get-involved/join-us/associate-member/

FRH currently has 72 Full members and 100 Associate members in 38 countries.

COUNCIL
President
Olivier de Rohan, French, Chairman of the Sauvegarde de l’Art Française.

Secretary
Lilian Grootswagers, Dutch, Vice-Chairman of the Task Force Toekomst Kerkgebouwen.

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

Pilar Bahamonde, Spanish, Director of Liébana Centre for Studies and Infantado Tower Museum, Potes.

Robert Chatin, French, Industrialist and banker

Giannalia Cogliandro Beyens, Italian, Secretary General of ENCATC.

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


Angus Fowler, Scottish, Chair of Förderkreises Alte Kirchen Berlin-Brandenburg and Förderkreises Alte Kirchen Marburg. Angus passed away in December 2017.

STAFF
Jordi Mallarach Parés, Spanish, Deputy Executive Officer.
FRH currently employs three full-time staff aided by interns and volunteers see www.frh-europe.org/about-frh/organization/staff/.
Potential candidates for both paid and unpaid work should write to info@frh-europe.org.

REGISTERED OFFICE
67 Rue de Trèves, 1040 Bruxelles, Belgium.
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HERITAGE CIRCLE
The Heritage Circle sets out to honour all those who have made a special contribution to FRH’s development.

Luc Noppen, Belgian, Professor at University of Quebec, Montreal.

Oddbjørn Sørmoen, Norwegian, Director Department for Church Buildings and Heritage Administration, Norwegian Association for Church Employers.

Cripin Truman, English, former CEO of the Churches Conservation Trust.

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Governance

COUNCIL
The Council, elected by its members, is responsible for FRH’s governance. Council members also play a role as ambassadors for the association.

FRH seeks to combine 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 Executive Committee, formed of members of Council, takes day-to-day decisions, manages the office and ensures that FRH’s resources are applied effectively.

The Members’ Committee brings together members, organises Networking Forums and other 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.

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 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.
### Revenue Account - euros

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<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus / (deficit)</strong></td>
<td><strong>35 280</strong></td>
<td><strong>-28 373</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Balance Sheet - euros

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31/12/17</th>
<th>31/12/18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>-160</td>
<td>1 710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Balances</td>
<td>154 115</td>
<td>84 579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accruals</td>
<td>13 572</td>
<td>7 305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>167 526</strong></td>
<td><strong>93 594</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors</td>
<td>-16 012</td>
<td>-8 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants received in advance</td>
<td>-80 500</td>
<td>-42 837</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>71 014</td>
<td>42 642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Europe's Religious Heritage

In 2014 the European Commission published a paper entitled 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage' which stated that: Religious heritage is one of the pillars of European culture and identity. It is the largest "museum" in Europe and covers every corner of the continent.

This paper marked a turning point in Europe's approach to culture. Since then, attitudes have continued to evolve positively. At a political level, the EYCH2018 has been launched; "Reinforcing Cooperation on Cultural Heritage" has become one of the three focus areas of European foreign policy and the provisional budget for EU Culture Programmes has been substantially increased.

These all reflect the growing awareness at a civil society level of the importance of cultural heritage both in everyday life and as a binding force to the European ideal. There is also growing awareness that religious buildings - Europe's biggest portfolio of cultural heritage and by far - are under serious threat due to change in patterns of worship, attitudes to religion and reductions in government spending. In some countries such as the Netherlands, churches and monasteries are closing at an unprecedented rate with a consequent loss of local history, social amenity and art.

The threat to many of these buildings is real and urgent. If measures are not taken quickly, the trickle of closures and destructions already witnessed across Europe risks becoming a flood.

Europe boasts some 500,000 churches, chapels, synagogues, mosques, cathedrals, monasteries and convents. Their contents: furnishings, monuments, sculptures, paintings, frescos, silver, vestments, libraries are a repository of local and national heritage. The architects, artists and musicians they have inspired over the centuries and their record of national, local and individual history dating back well over a millennium represent a unique and essential part of Europe's cultural identity.

Religious buildings bind communities together through the worship and non-worship activities that take place within them and the history they enclose. They are often the only public buildings remaining and, as government funding is reduced across Europe, offer an essential focus for sustaining local communities. Religious buildings continue to satisfy citizens' spiritual needs. They attract visitors from afar and from nearby, represent five out of ten of Europe’s most visited sites and make a major contribution to tourism GDP. Their physical presence in the cityscape or rural environment enlivens all who pass by.
The increasing numbers of pilgrims and visits to religious heritage sites demonstrates Europeans’ appreciation of their religious heritage. This is confirmed by a survey, commissioned by FRH in 2014 across eight different countries, which shows that local communities throughout Europe are firmly attached to their places of worship and would be pleased that greater uses could be found for them.

The sector’s sheer size and diversity, the differing objectives of its various stakeholders, its management structures rooted in history and the difficulties of relating to subjects of faith means that the subject is particularly challenging. These factors also perhaps explain the current absence of EU policy and central funding in its support.

Nevertheless, if the sector is to be rendered sustainable, its future needs must be properly examined and the necessary changes implemented to adapt it successfully to the challenges of the 21st century and so hand it down intact to future generations, The legitimacy of this ambition was confirmed by the European parliament in the resolution it voted by a large majority on 7th September 2015 which ‘...considers that historical religious heritage must be preserved for its cultural value, regardless of its religious origins’ – an unambiguous statement of political intent.

The Commission is looking to leave a legacy for EYCH 2018 that lasts well beyond the end of the year.

May we suggest, among the already identified key projects, that this legacy includes a proper study of how best to adapt Europe’s remarkable religious heritage to the needs of the 21st century and the sector taking its rightful place within both the New European Agenda for Culture and the relevant EU funding programmes?

FRH looks forward to contributing in any way it can to working with your services to develop actions that contribute to placing religious heritage in the predominant position it merits.

Some initial suggestions are set out in annex.

Olivier de Rohan
Chairman
To the European Commissioner of Culture

Monday 4th February 2019

Dear Mr Navracsics,

Following the Open Letter we prepared at the time of our UNESCO conference in October 2018 (copy attached), and your suggestion that we keep you informed of the work of our association, we have pleasure in enclosing further details about our two flagship projects: FRH Inform and Religiana.

As you know from previous exchanges with you and your cabinet, we believe that for FRH to make an effective contribution to the development of a European policy in favour of religious heritage, a key first step is to create a platform of reliable information on which sound decisions can be taken by local, regional, national and European institutions. This is the aim of FRH Inform.

What is also clear is that the sector lacks an electronic platform to market European religious tourism and provide support to the increasing numbers of volunteers involved in religious heritage. This is the aim of Religiana.

Thanks to EU four year funding under the Creative Europe programme 2017-2021 (585059-CREA-1-2017-1-BE- CULT-NET), we have been able to re-launch Religiana and, with the help of selected members, have progressed in our reflection as to how best to tackle the difficult subject of FRH inform.

Both projects are now at a stage where they could usefully benefit from additional short-term funding. Both would provide a most suitable legacy for EYCH 2018.

We look forward to learning of your suggestions as to how best we should proceed.

Yours sincerely,
Olivier de Rohan
Chairman
The factsheet in English is available on: https://rm.coe.int/strategy-21-factsheet-the-future-for-religious-heritage/168093c039
Religious Heritage and Strategy 21

The Council of Europe’s European Cultural Heritage Strategy (Strategy 21) and the sector guidelines proposed in FRH’s open letter have many points in common. They both seek to address challenges facing heritage management through a participatory and holistic approach, encouraging citizen engagement and good practices including sustainability. As heritage obtains increasing recognition in the agendas of regional and international organisations, those in charge of governance can seek to incorporate valuable guidelines in order to adjust improvable policies. By considering the various strategies outlined in Strategy 21, along with sector guidelines proposed by FRH, relevant stakeholders have dual input and a wide range of tools to assist them in their everyday management challenges. In that regard, having heritage management strategies and guidelines from a European institution and from a European thematic network, interested organisations, authorities and individuals can build upon diverse perspectives, enriching the ever-evolving dialogue and debate on religious heritage management.

Social Component

- Find complementary compatible uses for buildings that are insufficiently used (Pillar 2: Strategy 21: S1, S2, S8, S9, S10)
- Establish local volunteer support groups for site management – federate volunteer efforts (Pillar 1, 2, 3, 4 Strategy 21: S1, S4, S5, S6, S8)
- Public use of sites as their primary function – develop a culture of greater public use (Pillar 1, 2 Strategy 21: S1–S5)
- Conduct inclusive stakeholder consultations before closure/abandonment of sites (Pillar 1,3 Strategy 21: S1, S5, S8, S10)

Territorial and Economic Development

- Encourage extended use of abandoned buildings in order to retain public space (Pillar 4 Strategy 21: D2, D5, D11)
- Promote religious heritage via local tourism offices, including less well-known sites (Pillar 2 Strategy 21: D2, D7, D10)
- Adopt a best practice approach to the management of religious heritage tourism (Pillar 4 Strategy 21: D1–D11)
- Seek financial sustainability through online tax efficient donations and commercial use of buildings where appropriate (Pillar 2, 3, 4 Strategy 21: D1, D11)
- Establish inventories and security methodologies in avoiding loss or theft (Pillar 3 Strategy 21: D8)

Knowledge and Education

- Catalogue and creatively promote both tangible and intangible content, history, art and architecture (Pillar 3 Strategy 21: K3, K5)
- Encourage religious heritage teaching in public education for children and young people – including art, history, symbolism, etc. (Pillar 1 Strategy 21: K1, K2)
- Promote sector-wide studies and knowledge-sharing on best practices with detailed technical briefs and templates to encourage replication (Pillar 1, 2, 3, 4 Strategy 21: K6, K9, K10)
“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