Amersfoort Agenda – Setting the agenda for the future of archaeological heritage management in Europe

The 15th annual symposium of the European Archaeological Council (EAC), hosted by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), took place in Amersfoort on 20–21 March 2014. This year's challenging theme was *Setting the Agenda: Giving new meaning to the European archaeological heritage.*

The EAC and RCE welcomed over 90 participants from 25 different countries, including archaeological heritage managers, several key players from the Dutch archaeological world and archaeology students from four Dutch universities. The central aim of the symposium was to formulate a strategic agenda to meet the current challenges facing archaeological heritage management in Europe.

By organising the symposium, the EAC has provided a strong foundation for this new strategic agenda. All participants in the symposium worked in groups to formulate agenda subjects during break-out sessions, which focused on three contemporary themes:

1. The spirit of the Faro Convention: embedding archaeology in society
2. Dare to choose
3. Managing the sources of European history

In each session the participants wrote down their statements about subjects for the future agenda. This input constituted the basis for preparing the agenda. The session reports, including lists of participants' statements, are published in this volume and can be accessed through the EAC website.

As a follow-up to the symposium, this document presents the themes and items for the strategic agenda. For each of the three main themes there are three agenda items that serve as inspiration for the future of archaeological heritage management in Europe. Each theme is introduced by a word cloud showing the most important keywords at a glance. Following a brief explanation of the links between the items, a table presents an overview of subthemes and an impression of participant input during the break-out sessions.

This agenda is a vision document with a focus on specific subjects to move from 'Valletta' to 'Faro'. It's good to have an agenda that can provide guidance to the central aim of 'giving new meaning to the European archaeological heritage'. But is also important to undertake appropriate actions to ensure that the aspirations take shape in practice. The EAC will therefore seek cooperation with relevant European projects and partners and will promote the agenda and its principles as a focus alongside its existing interests and activities. The members of the EAC are also cordially invited to take actions on national level to support the further implementation of the agenda. This agenda is a resource for members to be used as much as they can and want.

Disclaimer: The impressions (in italics) are a selection from the input; statements have been conflated and adapted to increase readability. They are individual opinions and therefore do not represent a common vision of the EAC and/or representatives of state archaeological services.

Theme 1 The spirit of the Faro Convention: embedding archaeology in society

accessible active approach attitude awareness benefits better build
change community connection developers economic
education embedding excavations future
general heritage history important information interact
interest investment involved knowledge
local media open participation past people
planning present preservation professional promote
public research results school scientific
social society standards think
understand value work

Agenda items

· **Stimulate and facilitate society's involvement in archaeology, while at the same time encouraging archaeology's involvement in society by linking it to other policy domains and the societal challenges of today's world**
· **Know the public: analyse the wants, interests and expectations of stakeholders in society regarding their involvement in archaeology, preferably through interaction with those stakeholders**
· **Integrate archaeology into education for children and young people**

Explanation

The theme of this session was 'The spirit of the Faro Convention: embedding archaeology in society'. One of the agenda items for this theme was the desire within the discipline to encourage and facilitate the participation of society in archaeology. However, it is important to be aware of different motivations and forms of participation, and to be realistic. The idea that we need to 'educate' society should be complemented by bottom-up participation and more horizontal relationships between archaeologists and other stakeholders.

One of the main outcomes of the session was that we should not only encourage the involvement of society in archaeology, but also specifically put effort into embedding archaeology in society. This means monitoring changing trends and then forging connections with other policy domains, such as education, the economy, the environment and social challenges, especially with a view to sustainable development. For both these aspirations we need to know who we mean by 'society' or the 'public' and what they want and expect in relation to participation in archaeology. If we want answers to these questions, we will need to engage in dialogue with the different stakeholders.

Another agenda item was the need to integrate archaeology into education for children and young people. Archaeology could be embedded in school curricula by exploring and modifying the concept of history. If history is the school subject where you learn how to interact with place and the past, this would automatically bring archaeology to the forefront. By embedding archaeology in education, the discipline can encourage interest in the past and the environment at a young age, which may provide multiple benefits for both archaeological heritage management and society. As most threats to archaeological heritage are caused by a lack of awareness about the values of archaeological remains to society as a whole, it would seem beneficial to invest in integrating archaeology into education at an early stage. Ultimately, efforts in

the field of education are also essential for maintaining public support for archaeology.

Lastly, we may want to add a note concerning the Faro Convention of the Council of Europe (2005) on the value of cultural heritage for society. As archaeological heritage management practices and mentalities are changing, perhaps the time is right to reconsider the spirit of the Faro Convention and embrace innovative views, as expressed for example in the recent conclusions on cultural heritage adopted by the Council of the European Union (2014) and a Communication adopted by the European Commission (2014). The zeitgeist calls for an acknowledgement of the multiple values of archaeological heritage for society and recognises the potential role of archaeological heritage in sustainable development.

Subthemes and impression of break-out session input
Stimulate and facilitate society's involvement in archaeology, while at the same time encouraging archaeology's involvement in society by linking it to other policy domains and the societal challenges of today's world

The involvement of society in archaeology needs to be stimulated and facilitated	· *Discuss and define fields and activities in which voluntary archaeologists can operate and those which are reserved for professionals.* · *Encourage participatory knowledge creation.* · *Explore different forms of participation, also by learning from others' best practices.* · *Devise practical instructions or tools to support participation.* · *Stimulate different forms of participation by different groups: local history societies, local inhabitants, children, etc.* · *Create a climate in which bottom-up participation is both possible and appealing.* · *Promote a better understanding of archaeology through participation.* · *Encourage greater public participation in decisions about preserving archaeological sites.* · *Encourage open access to archaeological sites and data.* · *Discuss roles and responsibilities (government, contractors, heritage organisations, etc.) in facilitating participation.* · *Explain archaeology and its potential benefits in a way that is easy to understand.*
Explore and use modern methods to involve society	· *Learn about crowdsourcing as a way for citizens to actively work with archaeologists.* · *Make visualisations of archaeological knowledge so that the public can connect with archaeology.* · *Better storytelling: we archaeologists are often poor storytellers – we place too much emphasis on scientific stories.* · *Use digital (social) media to disseminate ideas, research and stories, and also for interaction.* · *Collaborate with creative industries.* · *Learn the language of 'non-archaeologists' and adapt our own language for better comprehension.* · *Invest in syntheses and explore new dissemination and interaction methods.*
Archaeology needs to be mainstreamed into other policy domains and linked to society's challenges	· *The archaeological discipline should search for connections with current societal challenges (e.g. spatial, environmental, social, economic) in order to realise the benefits for society.* · *Archaeologists need to be aware of, and act upon, societal developments.* · *Archaeology could have a role in other policy domains and challenges, such as integration and socialisation.* · *We need to get better at discussing, formulating and realising the values and benefits of archaeology for society.* · *Connecting the past with the present: archaeology can challenge current ways of thinking and living.*

Know the public: analyse the wants, interests and expectations of stakeholders in society regarding their involvement in archaeology, preferably through interaction with those stakeholders	
Increase understanding of the public: get to know their demands, interests and expectations through dialogue	· *Research the effects of public participation.* · *Find out what the public wants to know.* · *Analyse why the public is or should be interested in archaeology.* · *Investigate how the public wants to get involved or acquire knowledge.* · *Understand what the public wants and values, and be willing to accept this.* · *Develop instruments to survey the wants and effects of public participation.*
Discuss who we view as the target public. Who do we want to share knowledge with? Who do we want to participate in archaeology?	· *Discuss whether we only want to involve members of the public who are already interested.* · *Define different target audiences.*
Integrate archaeology into education for children and young people	
Integrate archaeology into school curricula, preferably through its links with the subject of history	· *Promote the integration of archaeology into curricula at primary and secondary school.* · *Explore the links with history education in schools.* · *Encourage interest in the past at a young age by involving children in archaeology and local history in both the field and the classroom.*

Theme 2 Dare to choose

academic benefit best **choices**
choose commercial community context
criteria cultural dare data decision define developers
different education european **excavate**
future generations heritage **important**
include interest knowledge local making method
monuments national plan possible potential preservation
process proper public quality questions rescue
research science scientific
selection site situ society standards

Agenda items

- **Be conscious, explicit and above all transparent about the choices being made and the consequences of selection in the archaeological heritage management process**
- **Develop a sound infrastructure to support the making of informed choices: identify research frameworks and criteria, and enable access to current archaeological knowledge and data**
- **Adopt a broader perspective when making choices: open up boundaries within the discipline and involve other stakeholders (and their interests) in the process**

Explanation

The theme of this session was 'Dare to choose'. The archaeological discipline puts effort into achieving the greatest possible scientific added value and supporting the potential values of archaeological heritage for society. Both of these aspirations can result in choices being made at different stages and levels of the archaeological heritage management process. Although visions of and approaches to making choices vary widely, some common aims can be observed.

A recurring idea within this theme was the desire to be transparent and explicit about the choices being made in the archaeological heritage management process. It is important to communicate and explain these choices not only to archaeological colleagues, but also to other stakeholders in society. The break-out sessions also highlighted the need to be conscious of the long-term impact of choices in archaeological heritage management.

A second agenda item was the ability to make informed choices. To do so, we need to develop sound infrastructures that afford access to current archaeological knowledge. It is essential that we identify research frameworks and criteria because we need a good understanding of the basic point of departure. It would be invaluable to develop common ideas about which information we should base choices on in the archaeological heritage management process.

Another agenda item highlighted in this session was the desire to adopt a broader perspective when making choices in archaeology. First of all, this means improving cooperation between all professional archaeological stakeholders (local and regional heritage management authorities, companies, universities). The discipline could encourage the development of local and regional networks as well as participation in European programmes. Adopting a broader perspective also means involving, and recognising the interests of, other stakeholders of archaeological heritage in the valuation and decision-making process. We therefore need to discuss the question of who should choose, and to explore ways to balance the different interests involved.

Subthemes and impression of break-out session input
Be conscious, explicit and above all transparent about the choices being made and the consequences of selection in the archaeological heritage management process

Be conscious, explicit and transparent about the choices being made	· *Not everything is excavated, recorded or researched with the same intensity; we need to acknowledge that choices are always being made.* · *We need to be cautious about dismissing material as not significant. Being cautious and conservative is sometimes the brave thing to do.* · *Choice is obligatory in all research, including archaeological research. Make conscious choices. Reflect on what to do and what not to do.* · *Research the long-term consequences of choices on archaeology and take them into consideration when making choices.* · *Many excavations produce unexpected results which are of value for research and lead to interesting data and finds. We need to remain flexible in the face of surprises.* · *If archaeologists do not make choices, choices will be made for them.*

Develop a sound infrastructure to support the making of informed choices: identify research frameworks and criteria, and enable access to current archaeological knowledge and data

Know your basic point of departure: identify research frameworks to be able to make informed choices	· *Choices depend on current states of knowledge about the past, so there is a need for a good overview of archaeological knowledge (gaps) and archaeological potential.* · *Take into account the limitations of existing knowledge.* · *A clear view of research questions and goals is needed at all stages of the archaeological heritage management process.*
Develop criteria and standards in the decision-making process	· *Criteria for assessing significance of sites need to be developed.* · *Selection criteria should not be solely academic; we also need to take into account the values of the other users and stakeholders, the context and current political/economic/social realities.* · *There are always possibilities for choice – not only in relation to which sites to rescue, but also which analytical methods to apply to the data.*

Adopt a broader perspective when making choices: open up boundaries within the discipline and involve other stakeholders (and their interests) in the process

Adopt a broader perspective and explore ways to involve others in making choices	· *Involve other stakeholders in society in the valuation and decision-making process.* · *Discuss the possible roles of other groups in society in making choices and explore ways to involve them in that process.*
Negotiate criteria and balance interests and values with other stakeholders	· *Combine academic questions with social benefits and needs; assess the best method to balance societal (and developer) interests against quality of archaeological investigation.* · *Keep in mind all users and stakeholders of archaeological heritage and make choices on the basis of all these values.* · *Society needs delivery: return content to society and developers through proper dissemination.*
Improve collaboration within the discipline and heritage sector by developing networks	· *Encourage cooperation between all archaeological stakeholders (authorities, commercial archaeologists, academics) by developing networks at local or regional level.* · *Encourage European cooperation: build a European knowledge base.*

Theme 3 Managing the sources of European history

access agenda approach archive available books
collaboration connect create data database
datasets deposit different digital eu
european excavations forget give heritage
history important information integrated
interpretation knowledge level
management material means museum
needs networking possible preservation produce project
public reports research resource share
society sources standards synthesis
together value work

Agenda items

- **Use emerging digital technologies to share, connect and provide access to archaeological information; this will require improved collaboration and the development of (and participation in) European networks**
- **Encourage cooperation with other disciplines and share data in order to create a shared benefit**
- **Aim for the greatest possible access to digital archaeological resources for various user groups and exploit digital databases to their full potential, including uses for the greater public**

Explanation

The theme of this session, 'Managing the sources of European history', is very relevant today because of the rapidly growing quantity of archaeological research, and hence data. There is a need within archaeology for effective management of new and existing digital data; emerging digital technologies may offer many opportunities in this respect. If we don't want to miss the boat, we will need to promote and encourage these opportunities.

The main agenda item within this theme was the need to share, connect and provide access to archaeological information with the help of digital technologies. The key to this aspiration is to improve collaboration – we need to share rather than exchange. It is essential to encourage the development of European data-sharing networks and projects in the field of archaeology. The ARIADNE project is an excellent European initiative in this regard and participation in this project should be strongly encouraged.

Improving collaboration should not be confined to within the discipline, however, as there are ample opportunities for cooperation with other disciplines, such as the environmental sector. Since ever more data is being generated on topics that could also be of value to archaeological heritage management, the second agenda item was the need for cooperation and data sharing across disciplines.

As a corollary to this ambition to share digital data, the discipline will need to discuss the potential risks and problems relating to data use and management. Firstly, it is important to realise that data is not the same as knowledge. Easy access to more standardised, interlinked data does not necessarily lead to new and different stories about the past. It is therefore important not to lose sight of the focus on interpretation and knowledge gains. A second concern is the importance of not forgetting that the original sources of knowledge are the archaeological objects and landscapes themselves. The management of digital archaeological data should not overshadow the management of actual archaeological sources, both in situ and in archives.

A third agenda item was the need to aim for the greatest possible access to digital archaeological resources for various user groups. Archaeology should embrace the trend towards open access. However, these new digital opportunities might require a reconsideration of our working ethics, including the question of what we do and do not wish to share. The development of shared digital databases offers benefits not only to the professional world; it also provides potential benefits for society. We will need to exploit digital databases to their full potential and explore the possible uses for the greater public. The discipline could also put more effort into researching existing data and facilitating syntheses.

Subthemes and impression of break-out session input
Use emerging digital technologies to share, connect and provide access to archaeological information; this will require improved collaboration and the development of (and participation in) European networks

Improve collaboration within the European archaeological sector, for example by encouraging the participation of member states in European programmes and networks (e.g. ARIADNE, LoCloud)	· *Work with each other, not alongside one another.* · *Encourage involvement in European Union projects and programmes, such as ARIADNE.* · *Establish more European programmes in archaeological data management.* · *Develop European guidelines and research agendas.* · *Create a networking platform to prepare common visions.* · *Introduce a single-host digital portal to give access to different databases.* · *Make sure the systems are user-friendly and achievable.*
Be aware of the potential risks and problems of data use and management	· *We should not forget that the original or primary sources are the monuments, landscapes and objects themselves.* · *Data is not yet knowledge: it has to be interpreted to ascertain the meaning.* · *Archaeological sources are monuments and data – they should be managed together.*

Encourage cooperation with other disciplines and share data in order to create a shared benefit

Encourage cooperation and share data with other disciplines and stakeholders	· *Actively seek connections and cooperation with other disciplines (e.g. creative industries, innovation, environment, spatial planning); share data and explore new technologies.* · *Strive towards an interdisciplinary and cross-sector approach in the process of getting from data to knowledge.* · *Data export: integrate into other disciplines and take societal needs into account.*

Aim for the greatest possible access to digital archaeological resources for various user groups and exploit digital databases to their full potential, including uses for the greater public

Strive towards free access to archaeological resources in the digital world	· *Discuss whether open access to archaeological resources and research results is desirable and possible.* · *Public access to archaeological information increases public interest (cf. 'ignorance breeds ignorance').* · *Data relating to archaeological heritage management should be accessible to academics and society.* · *List what datasets/sources should be made publically available.* · *Overcome language barriers: use a common glossary and always publish in the local language and English.* · *The rapid changes in digital technology require a reconsideration of our working ethics, including the question of what we do or do not wish to share with others.*
Exploit the full potential of digital databases, especially regarding possible uses for the public	· *Explore ways to make archaeological heritage visible to society using digital techniques (e.g. virtual museum, social media, web-based viewer, 3D scans of objects, digital repository for reports, newsletter).* · *Develop forms of interactive public participation.* · *Archaeological data needs some processing before it is useable for society.* · *Make use of emerging data technologies that facilitate the gleaning of knowledge from massive datasets.* · *Improve and facilitate the synthesis of archaeological data.*

References

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