



PRESS RELEASE

Belgium: Conversion of De Hoorn brewery into a creative hub celebrated

Leuven, 11 September 2016 - The presentation ceremony of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Award 2016, Europe's highest honour in the field, to the Conversion of De Hoorn brewery into a creative hub, took place on the afternoon of 11 September 2016 at its premises in Leuven. Around 70 people – including officials, heritage and culture experts, and the general public – gathered in the majestic Brew Hall in between the restored brewing kettles to celebrate this outstanding heritage achievement from Belgium. **Karel Bartak**, Head of Unit of the EU Creative Europe programme, **Piet Jaspert**, Vice-President of Europa Nostra, and **Louis Tobback**, Mayor of Leuven, unanimously praised the exemplary rehabilitation of this 1923 industrial heritage pearl, where the very first Stella Artois beer was brewed, and stressed the example function of De Hoorn in the conservation of our European heritage.

In his address, **Karel Bartak**, Head of Unit of the EU Creative Europe programme, stated: “There are three outstanding reasons for me being happy to be with you here today. Firstly, it gives me the opportunity to celebrate the **European Heritage Days** in Flanders, which is just a tiny part of a pan-European happening involving thousands of monuments and millions of people. Isn't it wonderful that we are, without any legislation, without any heavy administrative procedures and political decisions, able to offer this fantastic wealth of our common past to the widest public? It is great that the De Hoorn brewery is a part of this wonderful mosaic.”

“Secondly, De Hoorn is celebrated today because it has received the European Heritage Award, the most prestigious prize in this field and in a category where the competition is the greatest – in conservation. Every year Europa Nostra, the most influential European NGO in the heritage field, together with the European Commission, select the winners of these awards, mapping thus little by little the excellence in heritage protection, conservation, research and education across Europe,” noted Karel Bartak.

“My third reason for happiness here today is that I can announce to the distinguished audience that we will soon have the opportunity to bring all the activities we are developing at the European level in favour of heritage to a qualitatively new level with the **European Year of Cultural Heritage**. Yes, the year **2018** will carry this name, thanks also to perseverance and effort of organisations like Europa Nostra. Let us then enjoy the unique experience of this brewery, having in mind that it is a part of a much wider picture which will become even brighter and more visible in two years' time,” highlighted the Head of Unit of the EU Creative Europe programme.

After the unveiling of the commemorative plaque in the majestic Brew Hall, the participants were given a guided tour of the renovated building by **Michiel Van Balen**, Project Manager of De Hoorn, and **Said El Khadraoui**, one of the seven owners of the building.

This ceremony, which closed the **Open Monuments Day** in Leuven, marked a perfect day and location to bring together people with a passion for heritage.

The rehabilitation project of De Hoorn – together with the 27 winners of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards 2016 – were honoured at the European Heritage Awards Ceremony held on 24 May at the Zarzuela Theatre in Madrid, Spain. This major [event](#) was co-hosted by Maestro **Plácido Domingo**, President of Europa Nostra, and **Tibor Navracsics**, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

De Hoorn, from brewery to creative hub

De Hoorn is an old industrial heritage pearl and was renovated to become a new breeding place for creativity in Leuven. The building dating from 1923 was designed with much care and eye for detail, and three years later the very first Stella Artois beer was brewed. Since 2013 the former brewery happily marries its long history with the freshness of young and creative minds. Today one can find in De Hoorn offices for the creative economy, unique party halls and conference rooms (inter alia the historic Brew and Machine Hall) and the Grand Café, where one can eat well and drink a fresh pint of beer.

Further ambitions and extensions

Before long, the second phase will commence: De Hoorn expects to double the current successful mix of offices, events and catering, and it aims to integrate a creative residence. This way De Hoorn can grow into an innovative creative hub which matches international trendsetters.

"In 2012 De Hoorn opened its doors, and today it has been fully rented out. The original plans of 360 architects provided for a tower building of ten stories at the west side, which would sort of embrace the monument. For financial reasons the development of De Hoorn was split into two phases. Considering that De Hoorn has proved to be a great success, recently the decision was taken also to start the second phase. By end of 2018 the building should be ready", explained **Lucie Rullaud**, Communications Manager of De Hoorn.

Extensions in a nutshell

In the first place, about half of the surface of the future new-building will be earmarked as offices for the 'creative economy'. Apart from a number of permanent offices, especially more flexible co-working space will be added. This way De Hoorn intends to prepare for international trends focusing on memberships and flexible working. The expansion of services and the stimulation of cross-pollination within the network thus created will be the starting point.

Secondly, a major aim is to further transform De Hoorn from events location into congress location. Top-down information transfer is history. In the tower building flexible distinctive break-out rooms for some 150 persons will be incorporated, with the effect that during congresses next to plenary sessions and receptions also spaces for workshops and brainstorming sessions will be available.

Thirdly, it will be examined to what extent part of the accommodation may be integrated: a residence on the highest floors, offering accommodation for (semi-)brief stays of people, who also can profit from the co-working spaces and services on offer, thus generating added value to De Hoorn as one solid creative community.

Photos in high resolution of the Ceremony can be downloaded [here](#)

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Background

The [European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards](#) was launched by the European Commission in 2002 and has been run by Europa Nostra ever since. It celebrates and promotes best practices related to heritage conservation, research, management, voluntarism, education and communication. In this way, it contributes to a stronger public recognition of cultural heritage as a strategic resource for Europe's economy and society. The Prize is supported by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

Since 2002, independent expert juries have selected **426 award-winning projects** from **34 countries**. A total of **95 Grand Prix** of €10,000 have been presented to outstanding heritage initiatives, selected from among the award-winning projects.

[Applications](#) for the 2017 edition of the Awards can be submitted by **1 October 2016**.

[Europa Nostra](#) is the pan-European federation of heritage NGOs which is also supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals. Covering 40 countries in Europe, the organisation is the voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural and natural heritage. Founded in 1963, it is today recognised as the most representative heritage network in Europe. **Plácido Domingo**, the world-renowned opera singer and conductor, is the President of the organisation. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered monuments, sites and landscapes, in particular through 'The 7 Most Endangered' programme. It celebrates excellence through the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. It also contributes to the formulation and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage, through a structured dialogue with European Institutions and the coordination of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3.

[Creative Europe](#) is the new EU programme to support the cultural and creative sectors, enabling them to increase their contribution to jobs and growth. With a budget of €1.46 billion for 2014-2020, it supports organisations in the fields of heritage, performing arts, fine arts, interdisciplinary arts, publishing, film, TV, music, and video games as well as tens of thousands of artists, cultural and audiovisual professionals. The funding allows them to operate across Europe, to reach new audiences and to develop the skills required in the digital age.