

Selection Panel's recommendations
following the European Heritage Label first selection

In order to help future candidate sites in making strong applications for the European Heritage Label (EHL), the EHL Panel wishes to stress some important elements about the general scope of this new initiative, on the basis of the experience of the first selection.

The EHL is aimed at sites which hold European significance: candidate sites for the Label must have a symbolic European value and must have played a significant role in the history and culture of Europe and/or the building of the Union.

Awarded EHL sites thus should become 'gate ways' for citizens to explore and increase their understanding of Europe:

The awarded EHL sites should explain and interpret their European dimension;

The awarded EHL sites should promote better understanding of Europe in its unity and diversity;

The awarded EHL sites should invite the citizens to think about Europe, what Europe stands for and what its core values are;

The awarded EHL sites should be made accessible to all European citizens by appropriate means, especially through multilingualism and the web;

The awarded EHL sites should connect the citizens with other awarded EHL sites, and even future EHL sites of the same category.

Ultimately the awarded EHL sites should cover various aspects of European history and culture and/or the European integration, including economic and social aspects. Even sites testifying about the dark hours of European history can be awarded the label, the message being that one can learn from past mistakes.

In contrast to other international programmes, the number of sites that will be awarded the EHL will be a measure of success of the programme.

The added value to be gained by the sites through the EHL label includes:

The development of a project on the site's European dimension;

A strengthened visibility at European scale (the European Commission will provide the labelled sites with some communication tools designed by an independent communication firm)

The site become part of a network of 'gate ways' facilitating access to 'European history & culture' and 'European integration';

The site can reinforce cooperation with other sites awarded the EHL sites especially those sites which are within similar categories.

To be awarded the EHL, candidate sites need to have a strong European dimension, be well managed and present a good project on the European dimension:

The European dimension without a good project and good management is not enough;

A good project and good management without the European dimension is not enough either.

Candidate sites should present the project they intend to develop within the framework of the EHL. The project should focus on communicating the European significance of the site (mainly through information and educational activities) to European audiences. This is critical: if the European significance is not communicated at the European level, there is no reason to award the site the EHL. Some candidate sites have already numerous activities to communicate their European significance: for them the challenge will be to add a new dimension to their work thanks to the EHL.

The applicants need to describe their project in precise terms and should demonstrate that they have the organisational capacity to implement and manage it.

The organisational capacity should be demonstrated by information provided under the section 'work plan' of the application form. Candidate sites should demonstrate that there is a stable, professional and viable structure, ensuring the functioning of the site and capable of managing the project.

The Panel noted that some candidate sites belonged to existing networks or have received other forms of recognition and awards. These have different objectives than the EHL, and therefore the Panel suggests that the sites be asked upfront how they would manage such dual recognition.

Momentum will be created by awarding the label, but the overall intention of the EHL initiative is its lasting effects. The Panel therefore considered what future monitoring would entail. A first conclusion was that the sites themselves should set indicators for the proposed project so that they can measure success and progress themselves. A tool has been developed for integration in the revised application form to assist applicants.