

## Interdisciplinarity Through the Europa Nostra Institution for Awarding Cultural Heritage Awards: Experimental Approach

*Athanasia Micha*

*(University of West Attica, Greece)*

**Abstract:** Europa Nostra as a non-profit organization based in The Hague. It leverages European programs and awards cultural heritage awards to participating EU countries. The awards promote best practices in heritage conservation, management, research and education. My project has the basic idea of “Interdisciplinarity through the Europa Nostra institution for the award of cultural heritage awards as I experienced it from personal experience”. Greece participated in 2017 with two monuments from the island of Kea and Rhodes. In the project I follow an experiential and anthropocentric approach. The interaction of scientists from different countries is a demanding one. The contribution of the Project is great. It takes place in a European context and connects Europe with the concepts of communication, collaboration between different scientific disciplines to promote art and culture.

**Keywords:** Europa Nostra, Greece, cooperation, promotion, culture

### 1. Introduction

Europa Nostra is today recognized as the most representative cultural heritage organization in Europe with members from more than 40 countries. The mission of Europa Nostra is:

- Give shape and voice to an ever-growing political movement to support cultural and natural heritage across Europe.
- Strong support for the economy society, culture and the environment — to policy makers at all levels of government: local, regional, national, European and world-wide.
- The campaign to conserve Europe’s most endangered cultural heritage sites and support actions for our members.
- Promoting best practices in the field of cultural heritage across Europe — from research to maintenance, from education, training and awareness to the dedicated service of professionals and volunteers.

Values for Europa Nostra:

- Cultural heritage is essential for a prosperous, unified and stable Europe.
- Cultural heritage must be respected in urban and rural development.
- Cultural heritage is not a relic of the past. is an important, useful and accessible part of today and tomorrow.

---

Athanasia Micha, Postgraduate Student, University of West Attica; research areas: preschool education and care. E-mail: [nassioulini@gmail.com](mailto:nassioulini@gmail.com).

- The cultural heritage is complex and multi-layered and therefore does not belong to a cultural group or nation, but belongs to all Europeans.
- Cultural heritage is borrowed from future generations and the present management of the present is therefore the responsibility of everyone living in Europe.

The aim of Europa Nostra is:

To bring all members of Europe culture and cultural heritage to the core of the European project through the interdisciplinarity that is evident at the Europa Nostra Institution for the award of cultural heritage. So how can different disciplines coexist harmoniously and create an aesthetic result? This question is called upon to answer this research with research data. The purpose of the work is therefore to inform first about the institution of Europa Nostra and its role in the countries of Europe and then to “communicate” my personal experience of traveling to Finland and the interaction of different scientific objects in the institution conducted there.

## **2. Main Part**

Europa Nostra conducts an institution each year. It is hosted in a different country each time and runs a global competition between all the countries of the European Union. Each participating country highlights a historical monument, an innovation in education or culture and even a remarkable research result. Europa Nostra leverages European programs and awards cultural heritage awards to European Union countries participating either by awarding them honorary plaques or giving them 10,000 euros. Only the top 7 countries in the public vote can win the 10,000-euro prize. In this way, through this institution, we contribute to the international recognition of cultural heritage as a major source for Europe’s economy and society. The awards are supported by the European Union’s Creative Europe Program and promote best practices in heritage conservation, management, research and education. Europa Nostra is characterized as the “voice” of Europe’s cultural heritage. It leads members of Europe with diverse scientific backgrounds to coexist, communicate and be vigilant in order to preserve and highlight their country’s cultural findings.

### **2.1 Research Method**

Research is essentially qualitative with a primarily experiential but also anthropocentric approach. However, I am quoting a table created by the percentages Europa Nostra itself announced during the awards ceremony to illustrate the importance of this institution both to the interdisciplinary community and to the cooperation of States Table 1 shows the proportion of awarded project countries participating in the awards.

**Table 1 Years of Winning Projects Great Winners Over the Past 15 Years 455 34 95**

Years	Award winning project	Countries	Grand Prix
In the past 15 years	455	34	95

The internet has been instrumental in the dissemination of information. Through the internet, and more specifically through a notification from the local authority of Keas Island where I came from social media, I entered the world of this institution. I got to know the institution, visited websites with great interest to find out more, and of course I voted online at the ancient Carthage theater with Kea taking part in the awards and some other highly educated countries would say innovations. On my own initiative, I wrote in English as part of a competition that said comments, a few words about me, about my education as a preschool teacher and my love of transmitting culture to the next generation. In addition, I wrote a few words about the culture of Kea I come from,

but also about the culture of Greece in order to get to know the foreigners and get to know our cultural. Three weeks later I received an email from Europa Nostra Prize Coordinator Elena Bianchi asking me in English for my phone to communicate. Excitement and curiosity prevailed. So it was in her phone call that she described her enthusiasm for listening to me and seeing me closely as I was selected as a guest speaker by a teacher from the University of The Hague among 12,000 voters worldwide, to represent Kea from where I come from and mainly Greece at the Cultural Heritage Awards where my island participated in the renovation of an ancient theater, Carthage, and I was honored to speak at the awards ceremony and give the Education Prize to the big winner. The joy was indescribable, so I drove to far-flung Finland, the historic town of Turku where the awards were given to Archangel Michael's highly imposing church. At the hotel I stayed in I met Jacobo Ibello, a University Professor in Italy and a reporter for the Heritage times website where he was scheduled by Europa Nostra to interview me as well as another Croatian journalist. We communicated, interacted and exchanged information, views and thoughts on culture (Picture 1). The first day in Finland was a grand conference that included the entire interdisciplinary team of each country and their presentation to explain and present to others their work. There I met and got in touch with the Greek mission consisting of Ms Evangelia Simantoni-Bournia, archaeologist and Ms Tania Panagou, an engineer who undertook the restoration of the ancient theater of Carthage in Kea, with Ms Aikaterine Manou Her team (Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, 2002), the promotion of the Bastion in Rhodes. We interacted, exchanged views and were particularly pleased that the winner was a Greek woman worldwide (Picture 2). I also communicated with Ms. Fani Mallouchou-Tufanu, President of Europa Nostra (Picture 3) and excellent IAK scientists during the conference. Constantinople, Mr. George Carras, Cyprus Mr. Costas Severis and other scientists from other countries. The President of Europa Nostra predicted me at the awards and stepped in to award the prize to the grand winner of the public vote (Pictures 4-6). The public voted for Mr. Zoltan Kallos, an elderly Romanian priest for the education he provides to the children of his country in order to impart to them the folk culture either in costume or in the dance of charity with great vigor, courage and love for his place and the continuation of tradition. . The awards were followed by a meeting and a symposium at the historic Turku castle where I was given the opportunity to interact with other scientists from other countries. But for personal reasons, I chose Mr. Paulo B. Lourenco, professor and program coordinator at Minho University, Portugal, where he even invites me to conferences to talk about the construction, restoration and preservation of monuments or historic buildings on the part of an educator and not architect (Picture 7). I will seize the opportunity sometime and present it to you at a future conference.



**Picture 1 Meeting at the Finnish Hotel with Journalists from Italy and Croatia**



**Picture 2** Greek delegation from Kea and Rhodes at the conference in Turku.



**Picture 3** Meeting with the President of Europa Nostra and the Awards Coordinator



**Picture 4 Awarding to Kea Island**



**Picture 5 Musical Accompaniment with Opera at the Awards**



**Picture 6 Speech on My Own and Award Prize**





**Picture 7 Meeting with Scientists from Portugal and the Netherlands**

## **2.2 Research Results**

Through this institution it is evident that different types of scientists interacted not only with each other but also with other countries. In addition, communication and cooperation were two concepts that coexisted and dominated throughout the institution but also before and after the projects. It is worth noting that Kea came out third in the world in the popular vote, a great place to conquer a small island. The ancient theater of Carthage was honored, so a few months after the institution was held, Europa Nostra President Ms Fani-Mallouchou-Tufanu visited the island in order to unveil the awards in the sanctuary. All the Greek mission was there, all those who worked behind this restoration effort, all residents and local lords attended this great for Kea island event. It was for the first time that the celebration of a festival for Carthage 2017 was established and became an institution. The ancient theater fills once a year and there are performances of Camerata, opera, etc. proving to everyone that we do not forget our culture, because our culture is our identity, it is our existence. Interdisciplinarity is therefore a necessary condition as time goes on and we must be supportive of it (Pictures 8–10).



**Picture 8 Prize Unveiling in Carthage in Kea**



**Picture 9 Meeting in Kea with Europa Nostra President**



**Picture 10 The Ancient Theater of Carthage in Kea Island**

## **5. Conclusions**

I realized all these days that I was present in Finland, through the debate and the projection of projects in different disciplines, that interdisciplinarity is paramount not only in this institution but mainly in our daily lives in order to survive and achieve the desires results in what we do. Aristotle did not say by chance “man is a social and political animal” (Floros S., 1994). But his speech emphasizes the need for co-operation, for the coexistence of many members of a group, and of course for interaction that leads to metacognition. Transnational communication in any way is necessary. That is why I believe that the contribution of the Europa Nostra Institution for the award of cultural heritage is extremely great because it links Europe to the concepts of communication, collaboration between different scientific disciplines for the promotion of art and culture. It is remarkable how children’s everyday experiences and their imaginative and creative worlds are collected, interpreted and displayed in museums and represented through objects and through a love of culture. Separate children’s experiences are often reflected in the history and heritage of children to them and our community. Children are active creators of their own culture. After all, children’s cultural heritage is rich and varied and combines the art of the past with the present through play, creativity and constructions. For this reason, the promotion and preservation of our country's culture and the need for a collaborative spirit must continue in order to impart to our future generations, children, love, respect for our country’s history and culture. We have to protect children as adults. “Because if the child is saved, there is hope.”

## **References**

- Greek Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades (2002). “Maintenance and promotion of ancient Carthage Kea”, accessed on 12-05-2017, available online at: <https://www.culture.gr/en/service/SitePages/view.aspx?iID=1410>.
- Floros S. (1994). *Aristotle: Ethics Nicomachia, Philosophical Reason*, Athens: Greek Publishing House.