



European Heritage Label Evaluation

**Summary of the responses of the
Open Public Consultation**

Brussels, July 2018

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate Culture and Creativity
Unit D2

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1. Introduction

The European Commission's open public consultation (OPC) on the evaluation of the European Heritage Label (EHL) action was launched on 1 March 2018 and closed after 12 weeks on 28 May 2018. The questionnaire was made available online in three EU languages (English, French and German).

The consultation aimed to contribute to the evaluation by gathering the views of all interested citizens and organisations on the role that cultural heritage can play in bringing European citizens closer to the Union, specifically through the European Heritage Label action. A second aim was to receive additional information about the operation and results of the action during the first six years since its creation (2011-2017), which could not be gathered through desk research.

The evaluation of the European Heritage Label action sets out to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the action. Results of the evaluation are expected at the end of 2018.

2. The Questionnaire

The public consultation questionnaire contained 15 questions and was divided into two parts. The first part (questions 1-7) was designed for the general public and did not require extensive knowledge or experience of the EHL action. The second part (questions 8-15) was targeted at respondents who have a role to play in the action and, thus, required some understanding of the action and its implementation. Both parts focused on the five evaluation criteria mentioned above.

The questionnaire included 14 closed multiple-choice questions (1-14) and one open-ended question (15). Question 15 asked the respondents to express their ideas on how performance of the action could be improved. In addition, an extra space was given to the participants to provide comments on any issues that they wanted to expand upon. The respondents also had an opportunity to upload a concise document, such as a position paper.

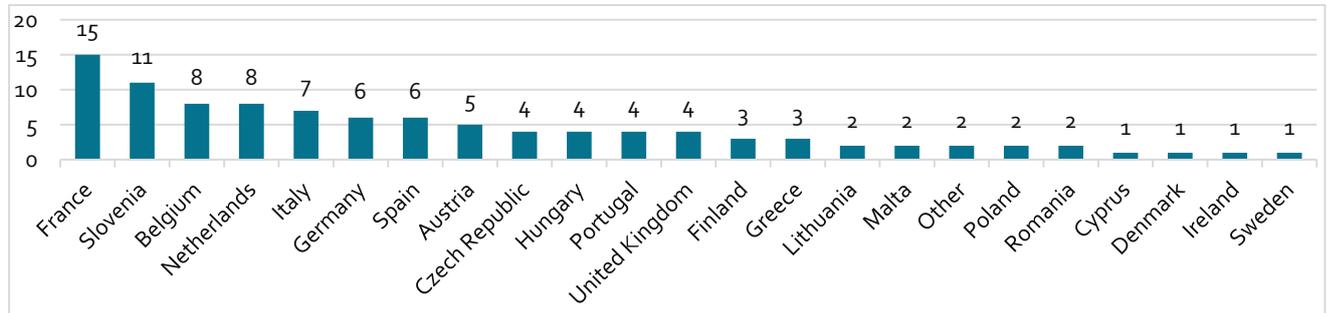
3. Overview of the participation

The OPC received 103 replies (one reply was not valid). Of all respondents, 75% answered only Part I of the questionnaire (77 replies), and 25% answered both Part I and Part II (25 replies).

Distribution by country

The consultation respondents originated from 22 different EU Member States, with most coming from France (N=15), Slovenia (N=11), Belgium (N=8) and the Netherlands (N=8). Two respondents indicated that they responded from outside the EU, namely from Madagascar and Serbia (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Respondents' country of residence (N)

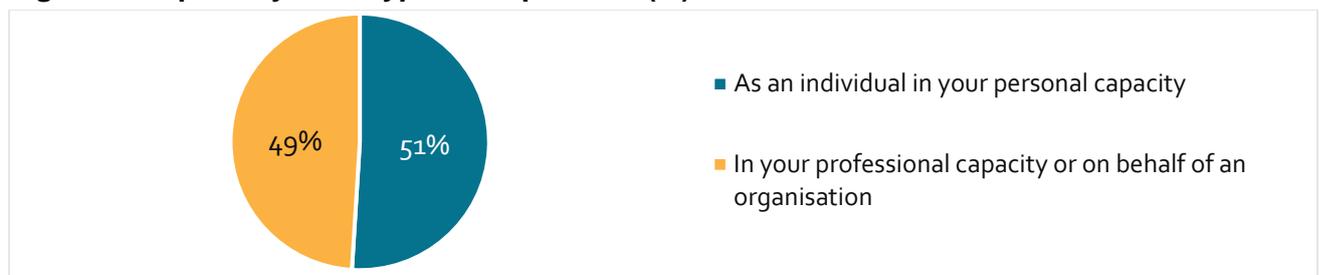


N=102

Distribution by type of respondent

The public consultation gathered a balanced type of respondents. Most of them were individuals in their personal capacity (51%, N=52) and slightly less (49%, N=50) responded in their professional capacity or on behalf of an organization (Figure 2).

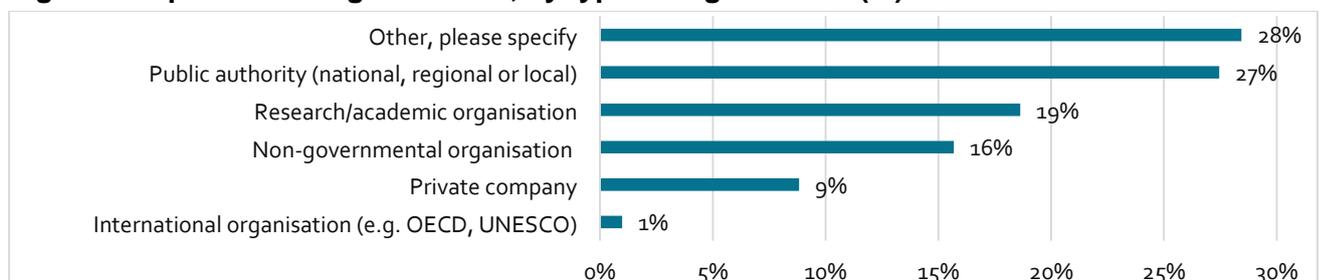
Figure 2. Replies by main type of respondent (%)



N=102

Among professional respondents, the largest group represented public authorities (at national, regional or local level: N=28) and the second largest group represented research/academic organisations (N=19). Contributions from private companies were relatively scarce (N=9), as well as responses from international organisations (N=1). A large share of respondents indicated that they belong to other type of organisation (N=29). Among these, most of respondents were either from museums, libraries, student associations or a political party (Figure 3).

Figure 3. replies from organisations, by type of organisation (%)



N=102

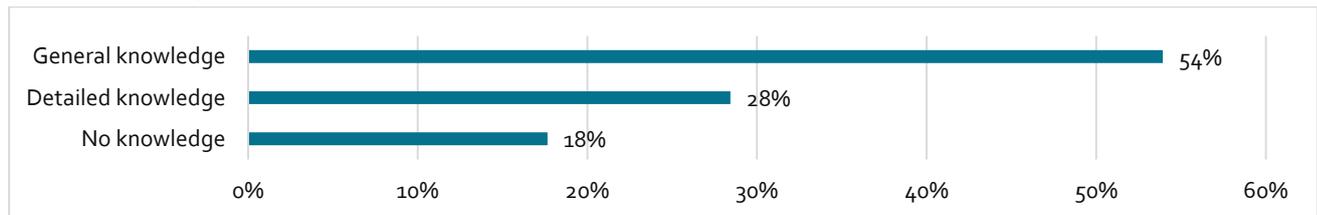
Among those respondents who replied in their professional capacity, most were part of micro (N=16) and small (N=10) companies, while large corporations were least represented (N=8). In terms of the age, the consultation respondents were mostly 35-44 years-old (N=27) or 55-

64 years-old (N=22). The least represented age groups in the OPC were respondents aged 65 or above (N=8) and youth aged 24 or under (N=8).

Distribution by involvement in the action

The level of knowledge of the EHL action differed among the respondents. Most of OPC respondents (N=55) stated that they had general knowledge of the EHL action. Less than a third of respondents (N=29) had detailed knowledge of the action. Almost one out of five (N=18) respondents had no knowledge of the action (Figure 4).

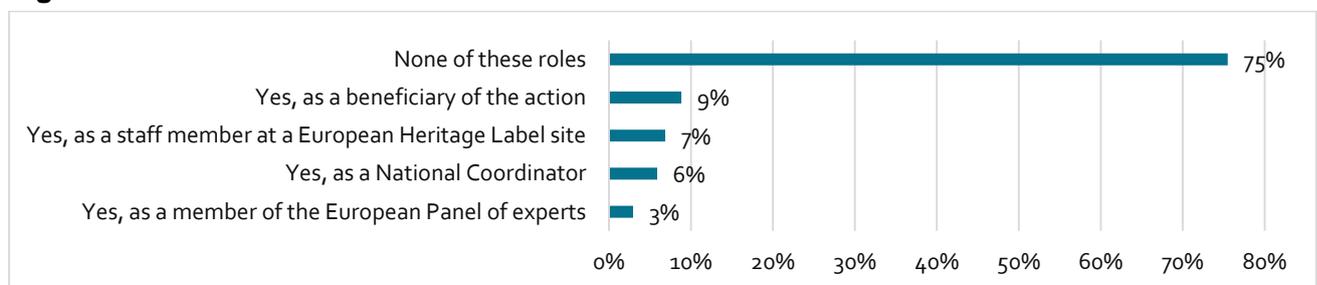
Figure 4. Respondents' FAMILIARITY WITH THE EHL (%)



N=102

The OPC respondents' answers to the question regarding the knowledge of the EHL closely reflect the answers to the questions regarding the involvement with the action. A quarter of respondents (N=25) stated being involved in the action, which corresponds to the share of respondents, who reported having detailed knowledge of the action. Among the respondents that reported involvement within the scheme, most of them were beneficiaries of the action (N=9), staff members at the EHL sites (N=7) or National Coordinators (N=6). Yet, three quarters of all OPC respondents (N=77) were not involved in the EHL.

Figure 5. RESPONDENTS' ROLE OR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE EHL



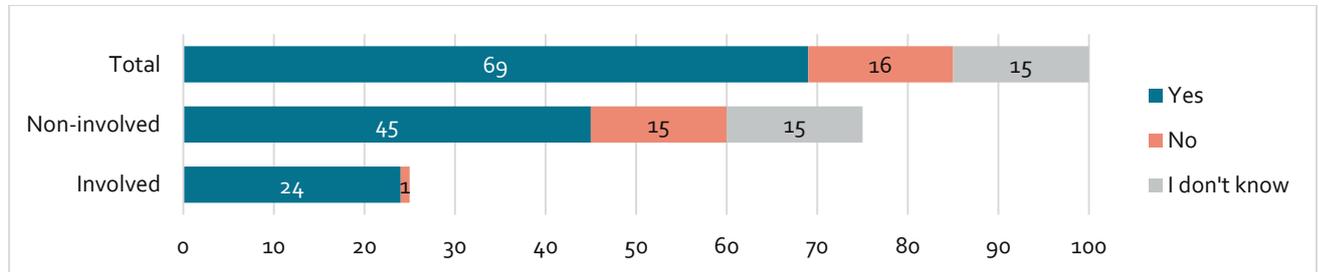
N=102

Questions on familiarity with the EHL

Respondents' familiarity with the EHL was evaluated by two closed questions (Q1-2). The aim of these questions was twofold: to understand if the respondents or organisations they represent play a role in the EHL action and to gather information on what EHL sites are known to respondents.

The OPC respondents' familiarity with the EHL sites is quite diverse. Although more than half of the total number of respondents have visited an EHL site directly or online (N=69), those who reported to be non-involved in the action had least exposure to the EHL sites, with 15 of them reporting that they have not visited an EHL site and other 15 not being aware of whether they have visited it (Figure 6).

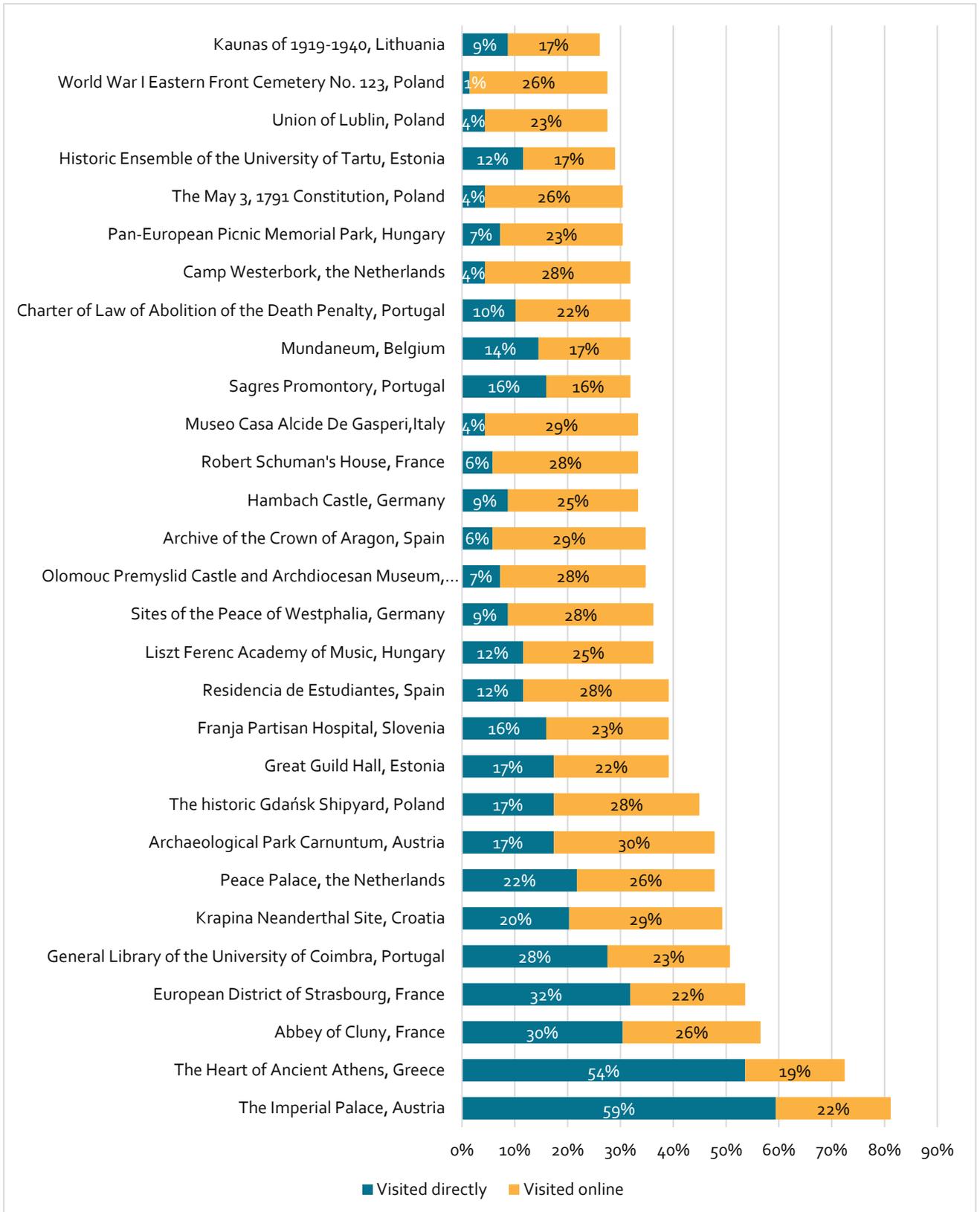
Figure 6. Have you visited directly or online any of the sites that were awarded the European Heritage Label? (N)



All respondents, N=100; non-involved, N=75; involved=25.

Among the 69 respondents, who visited an EHL site either online or directly, the top five most visited sites were: *The Imperial Palace, Austria* (59% directly and 22% online); *The Heart of Ancient Athens, Greece* (54% directly and 19% online); *The Abbey of Cluny, France* (30% directly and 26% online); *The European District of Strasbourg, France* (32% directly and 22% online) and *The General Library of the University of Coimbra, Portugal* (28% directly and 23% online). The five least visited sites were: *Kaunas of 1919-1940, Lithuania* (9% directly and 17% online); *World War I Eastern Front Cemetery No. 123, Poland* (1% directly and 26% online); *The Union of Lublin, Poland* (4% directly and 23% online); *The Historic Ensemble of the University of Tartu, Estonia* (12% directly and 17% online) and *The May 3, 1791 Constitution* (4% directly and 26% online) (Figure 7).

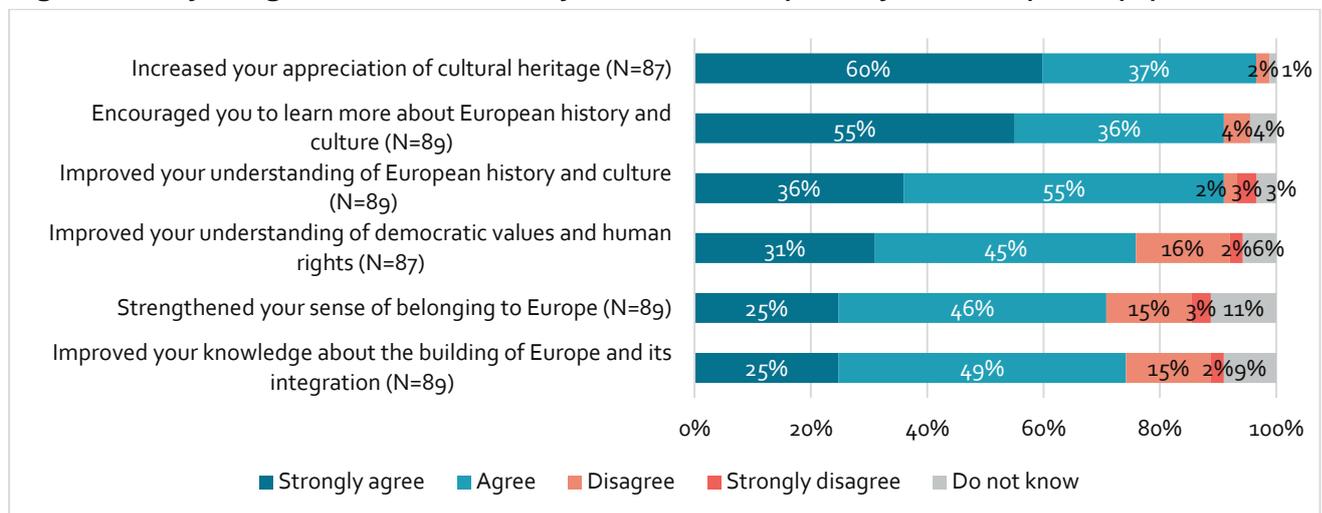
Figure 7. Please, mark the sites that you have visited directly or online: (%)



N=69

The OPC aimed at collecting respondents' opinions about the effectiveness of the EHL (achievement of objectives of the action and of the sites). Some questions on effectiveness were presented to all respondents in Part I and were based on respondents' personal experience (Q3-5). Additional questions aimed at gathering more-specific and informed opinions were presented in Part II to respondents involved in the action (Q8-9). Among all respondents, a visit to an EHL site (either directly or online) was perceived to have increased their appreciation of cultural heritage (60% strongly agreed and 37% agreed) and encouraged them to learn more about European history and culture (55% strongly agreed and 36% agreed). Meanwhile, respondents most disagreed with the statements that a visit to an EHL site improved their understanding of democratic values and human rights (16% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed), improved their knowledge about the building of Europe and its integration (15% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed) and strengthened their sense of belonging to Europe (15% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed). No particular differences were observed between the opinions of involved and non-involved respondents (Figure 8).

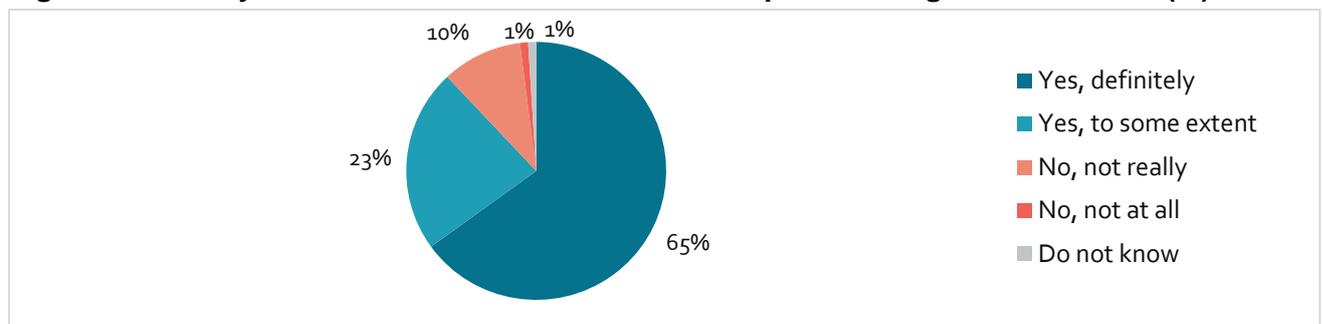
Figure 8. Do you agree that a visit to any of these sites (directly or online) has: (%)



N – presented in the figure for each statement

Most of respondents expressed willingness to know more about the EHL, with 65% reporting that they would be definitely and 23% to some extent interested in gaining more information about the scheme (Figure 9). The involved stakeholders were slightly more interested to learn about the EHL, with 75% (N=18) of them reporting that they would be definitely interested, compared to 62% (N=47) of the non-involved respondents.

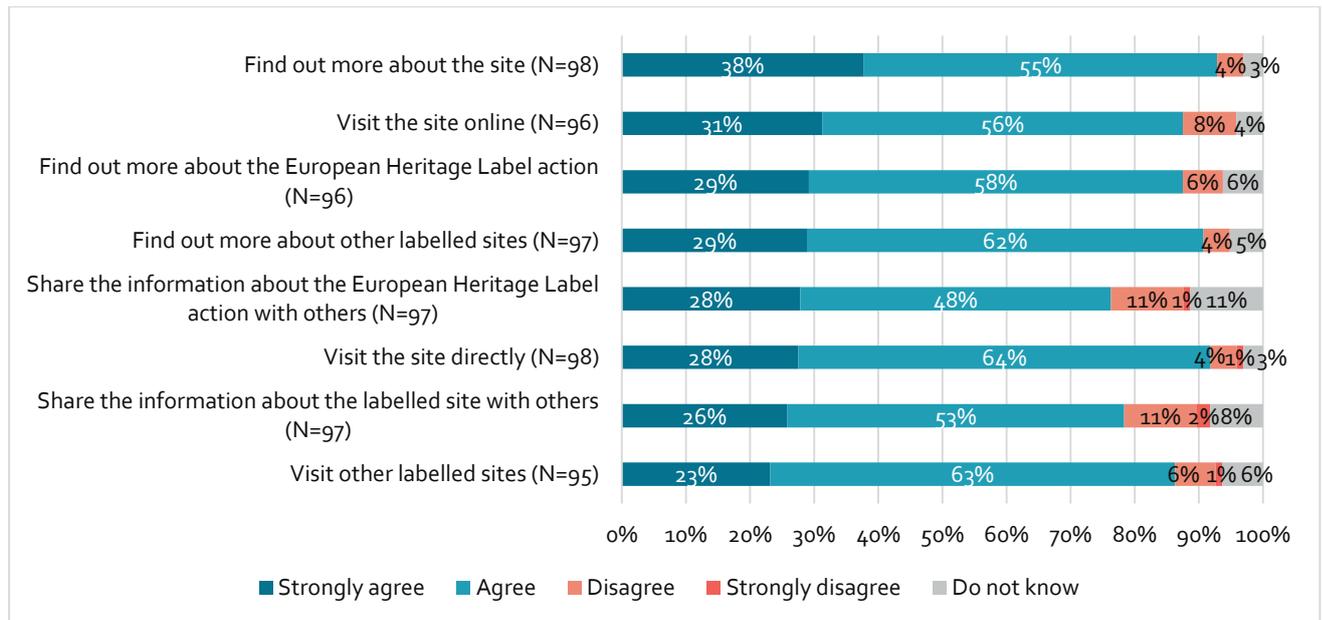
Figure 9. Would you like to know more about the European Heritage Label action? (%)



N=100

Most of respondents stated that knowing that a specific site bears the EHL would encourage them to find out more about the site (38% strongly agreed and 55% agreed), visit the site online (31% strongly agreed and 56% agreed), find out more about the EHL action (29% strongly agreed and 58% agreed) and the labelled sites (29% strongly agreed and 62% agreed) (Figure 10). In respect to opinions of the involved and non-involved respondents, respondents involved in the action were more likely to agree with the statements given in this question.

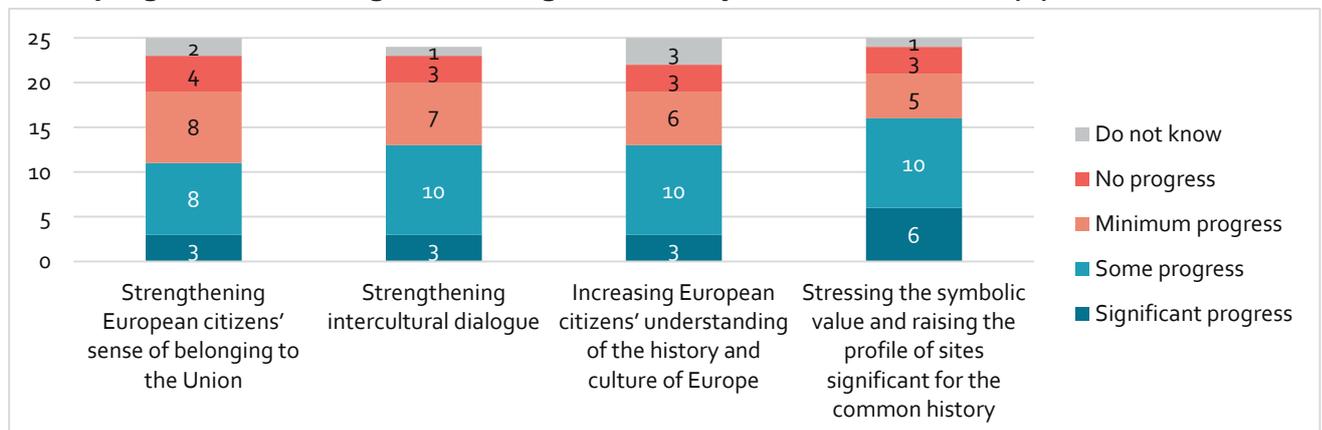
Figure 10. Knowing that a specific site bears the European Heritage Label would encourage you to: (%)



N – presented in the figure for each statement

The EHL’s progress in reaching its overall goals and objectives, since its launch in 2011, was evaluated by respondents involved in the action. Most progress was perceived to be made in stressing the symbolic value and raising the profile of sites significant for the common history (N: 6 significant and 10 some progress). Meanwhile, least progress was perceived to be made in strengthening European citizens’ sense of belonging to the Union (N: 8 minimum progress and 4 no progress) (Figure 11).

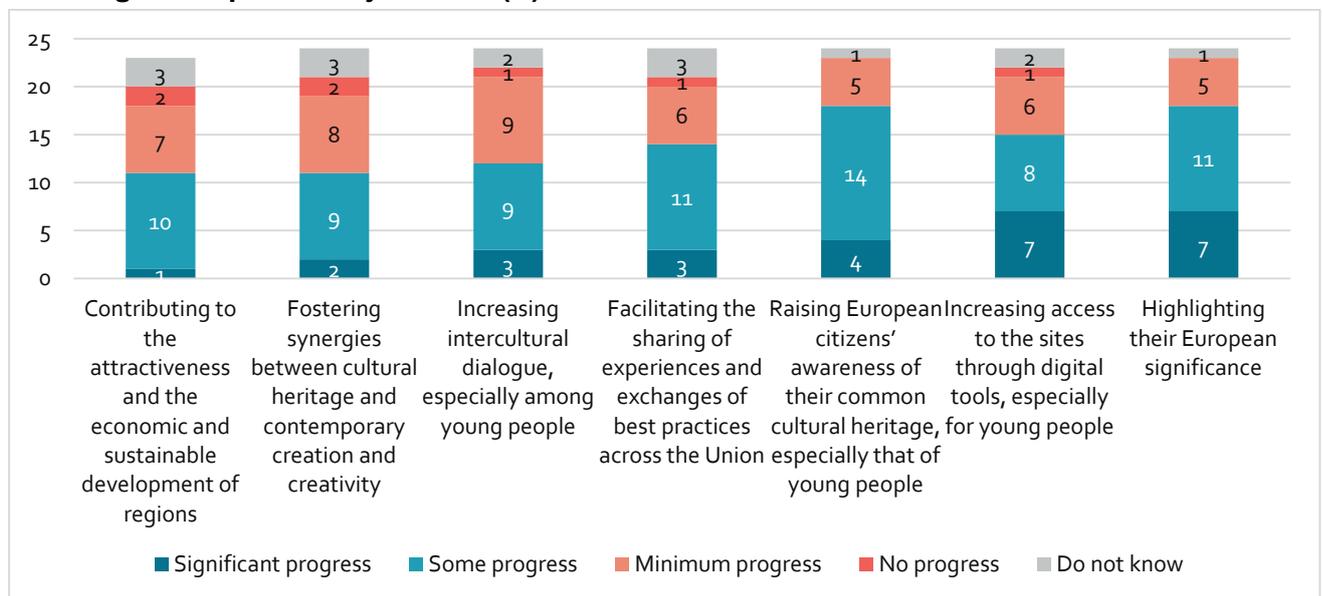
Figure 11. The European Heritage Label was launched in 2011. Do you think that it has made progress in reaching its overall goals and objectives since then? (N)



N=25

Regarding the attainment of site specific objectives, respondents involved in the action were asked to reply to this question in relation to the sites they are familiar with. Most progress was perceived to be made by the sites in highlighting their European significance (N: 7 significant and 11 some progress), increasing access to the sites through digital tools, especially for young people (N: 7 significant and 8 some progress) and raising European citizens’ awareness of their common cultural heritage (N: 4 significant and 14 some progress). Meanwhile, the respondents perceived least progress to be made in the following areas: fostering synergies between cultural heritage and contemporary creation (N: 8 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed); contributing to the attractiveness and the economic and sustainable development of regions (N: 7 disagreed and 2 strongly disagreed); and increasing intercultural dialogue (N: 9 disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed) (Figure 12).

Figure 12. For the site(s) you are familiar with, do you think that they have made progress in reaching their specific objectives? (N)

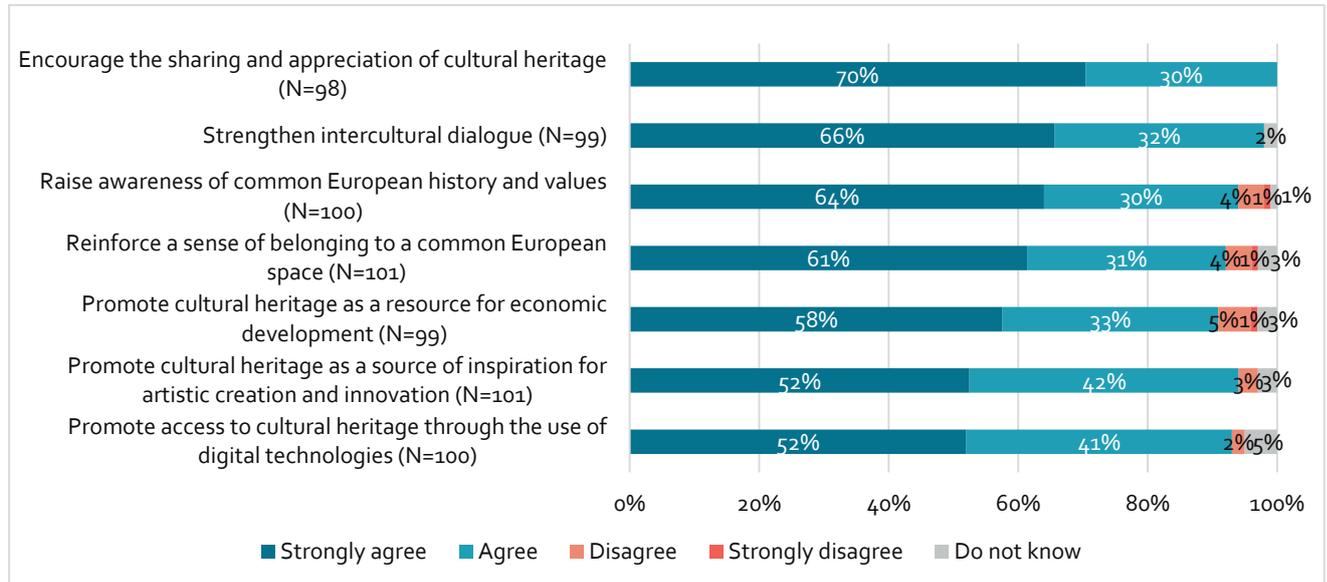


N=24

Question on relevance of the EHL

Question 6 of the consultation aimed to collect respondents’ views on the relevance of the EHL. All respondents agreed with the statement that it is important for the EU to take action in order to encourage the sharing and appreciation of cultural heritage (70% strongly agreed and 30% agreed). Other statements that were mostly agreed with were that it is important for the EU to strengthen intercultural dialogue (66% strongly agreed and 32% agreed) and to raise awareness of common European history and values (64% strongly agreed and 30% agreed) (Figure 13). Regarding the involved and non-involved respondents, both groups expressed similar agreement with these statements.

Figure 13. Do you think it is important for the EU to take action in order to: (%)



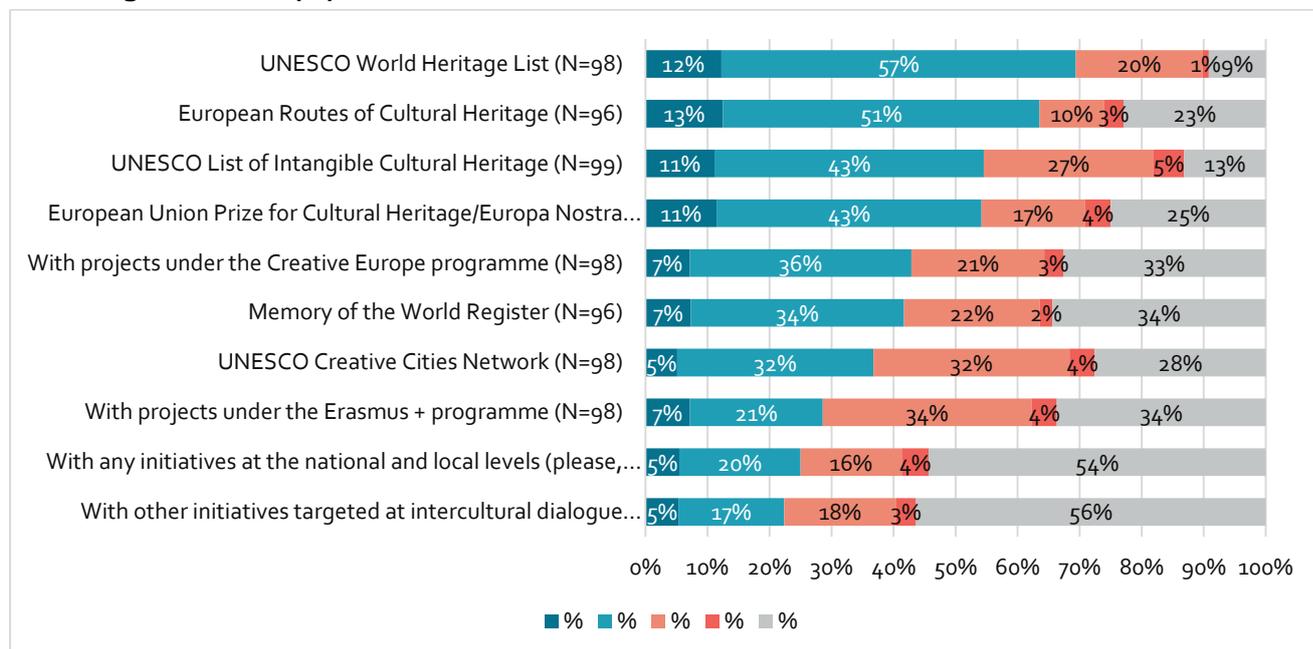
N – presented in the figure for each statement

The relevance of the EHL was also covered by some respondents in the comments section at the end of the questionnaire. One respondent noted that the attribution of the Label is perceived positively by younger participants of the guided tours at one of the EHL sites (*The Charter of Law of Abolition of the Death Penalty*, Portugal). The respondent claimed that the European project and its values deserve to be understood and experienced by all EU citizens. A few other respondents expressed that the EHL plays an important role in promoting cultural heritage, highlighting its European dimension and strengthening a sense of belonging to Europe.

Question on coherence of the EHL

The consultation included one question on the coherence of the EHL action with other local, national, European and international initiatives (Q7). The respondents stated that the EHL has most overlaps with the UNESCO World Heritage List (12% strongly agreed and 57% agreed), the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (13% strongly agreed and 51% agreed), the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (11% strongly agree and 43% agreed) and the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Award (11% strongly agreed and 43% agreed). Meanwhile, least overlaps were seen between the EHL and other initiatives targeted at intercultural dialogue or any other national and local initiatives (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Do you think there are overlaps between the European Heritage Label and the following initiatives (%)



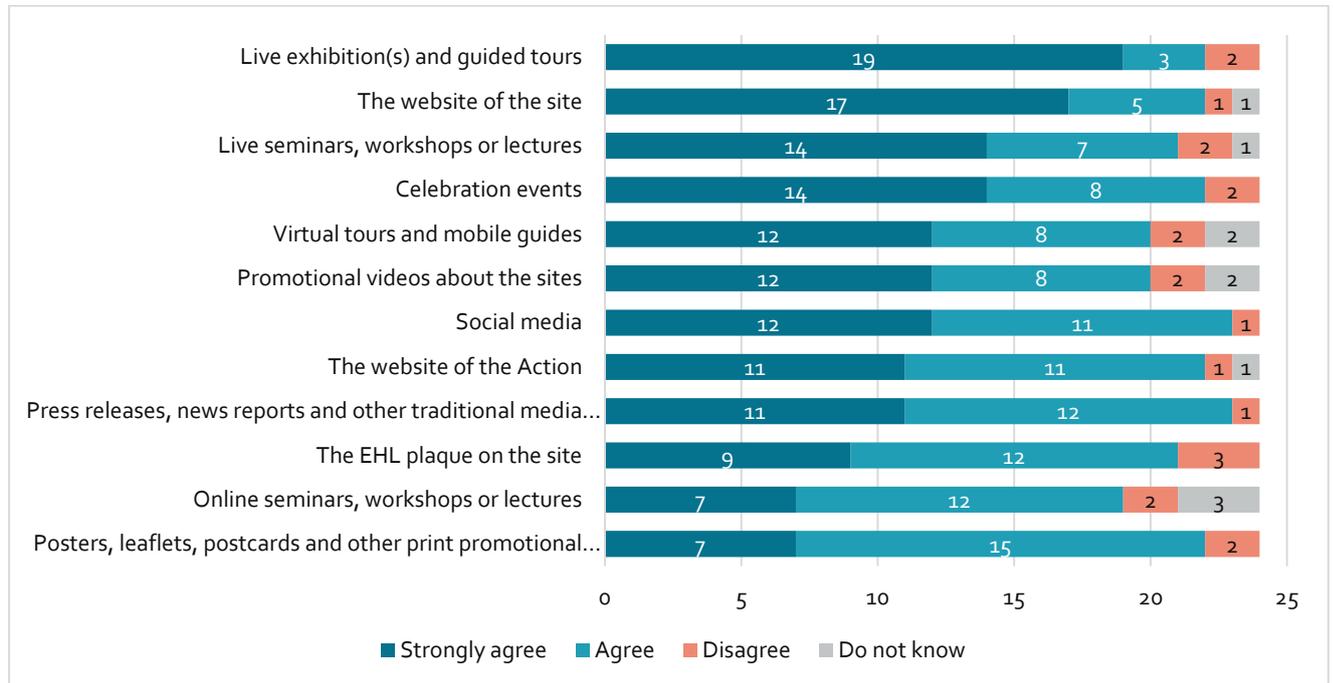
N – presented in the figure for each statement

All respondents were given an option to specify what other initiatives the EHL is similar to. Respondents indicated the following initiatives: the European Year of Cultural Heritage (N=2), the Europe for Citizens programme (N=1), the intergovernmental EHL initiative (N=1), the Carpathian Convention Working Group on Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge (N=1), the V4 Cultural Heritage Working Group (N=1), the Strategy 21 (N=1), the Faro Convention (N=1), the Hungarikum National Register (N=1) and the European Heritage Days (N=1). Some aspects of the EHL's coherence with other initiatives were also covered by respondents in the comments section provided at the end of the questionnaire. One respondent stated that the EHL is not conflicting with any other existing schemes as it is clearly defined and has a very specific purpose, while another respondent mentioned that the Label is commonly seen as a parallel to the UNESCO World Heritage List. It was also suggested that the EHL needs to strengthen its coherence with other initiatives that award labels in the cultural heritage field.

Questions on efficiency of the EHL

The consultation included two questions (Q10-11) that covered the efficiency and governance aspects of the EHL. The two closed questions were given to respondents involved in the action. The stakeholders quite favourably evaluated the efficiency of the measures and tools used in the action in reaching the target audiences and communicating European narrative of the sites. The measures, which respondents thought were most efficient, were: live exhibitions and guided tours (N=19, strongly agreed), the website of the site (N=17), live seminars, workshops and lectures (N=14) and celebration events (N=14) (Figure 17).

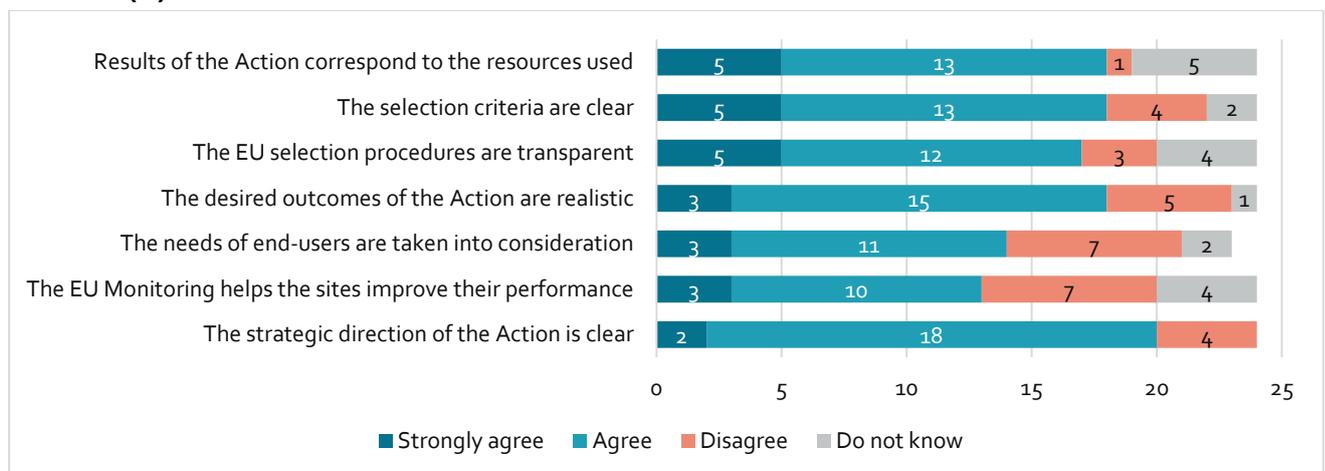
Figure 15. Do you think that the following measures are efficient in reaching the target audiences and communicating European narrative of the sites to them: (N)



N=24

Regarding the governance of the programme, respondents mostly agreed that the following aspects are present: results of the action correspond to the resources used (N: 5 strongly agreed and 13 agreed), the selection criteria are clear (5 strongly agreed and 13 agreed) and that the EU selection procedures are transparent (5 strongly agreed and 12 agreed). The weakest areas were perceived to be the usefulness of EU monitoring in improving performance of the sites (N=7, disagreed), taking the needs of end-users into consideration (N=7) and having realistic desired outcomes of the action (N=5) (Figure 18).

Figure 16. Do you think that the following aspects are present in the governance of the Action? (N)



N=24

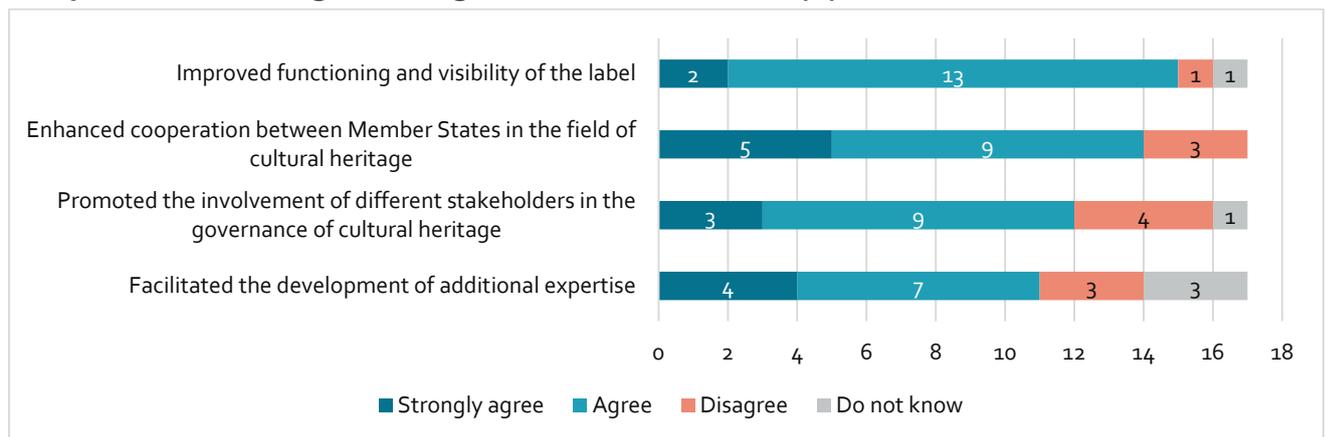
Some aspects on efficiency of the EHL were also covered in the comments section. One respondent noted that the EHL list contains some interesting but disparate heritage

components. Nonetheless, the link between the history of European unification and the promotion of its values, like peace and democracy, is very clear in some of the labelled sites and, from this point of view, the Label is consistent. However, a few respondents stated that the action needs to focus on the promotion of the Label and creation of a long-term communication strategy. Another respondent claimed that the Label does not yet have a very clear identity compared to other existing initiatives and, therefore, needs to revise its criteria to be even more focused on heritage that contributed to the construction of the European idea. It was also indicated that the Label should include more heritage sites representing social history (focused on the people), as it currently places more emphasis on the history of the ruling classes (e.g. *The Imperial Palace of Habsburgs*).

Questions on EU added value of the EHL

The consultation included two questions (Q12-13) that were aimed to collect data on the EU added value of the EHL. Respondents quite favourably evaluated the added value brought by the transformation of the initiative to an EU-level action, specifically in terms of functioning and visibility of the Label (N: 2 strongly agreed and 13 agreed) and cooperation between Member States (5 strongly agreed and 9 agreed) (Figure 19).

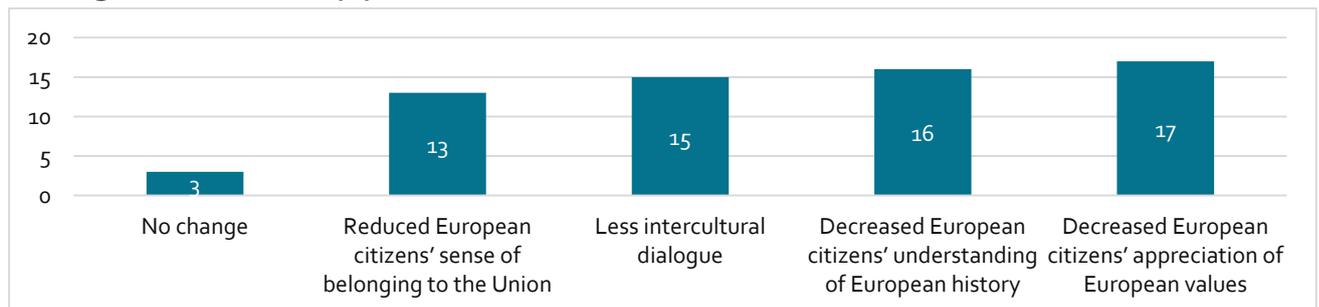
Figure 17. Before 2011, the European Heritage Label functioned as an intergovernmental initiative. Do you think that its transformation into an EU action in 2011 has added value in comparison to the original intergovernmental initiative? (N)



N=17

Regarding a hypothetical termination of the EHL action, the respondents stated that it could bear a negative impact in the areas of European citizens' appreciation of European values (N=17) and understanding of European history (N=16), fostering intercultural dialogue (N=15) and strengthening citizens' sense of belonging to the Union (N=13). Only 3 respondents stated that the termination of the action would bring no change (Figure 20).

Figure 18. In your opinion, what would be the potential impact of terminating the European Heritage Label action? (N)



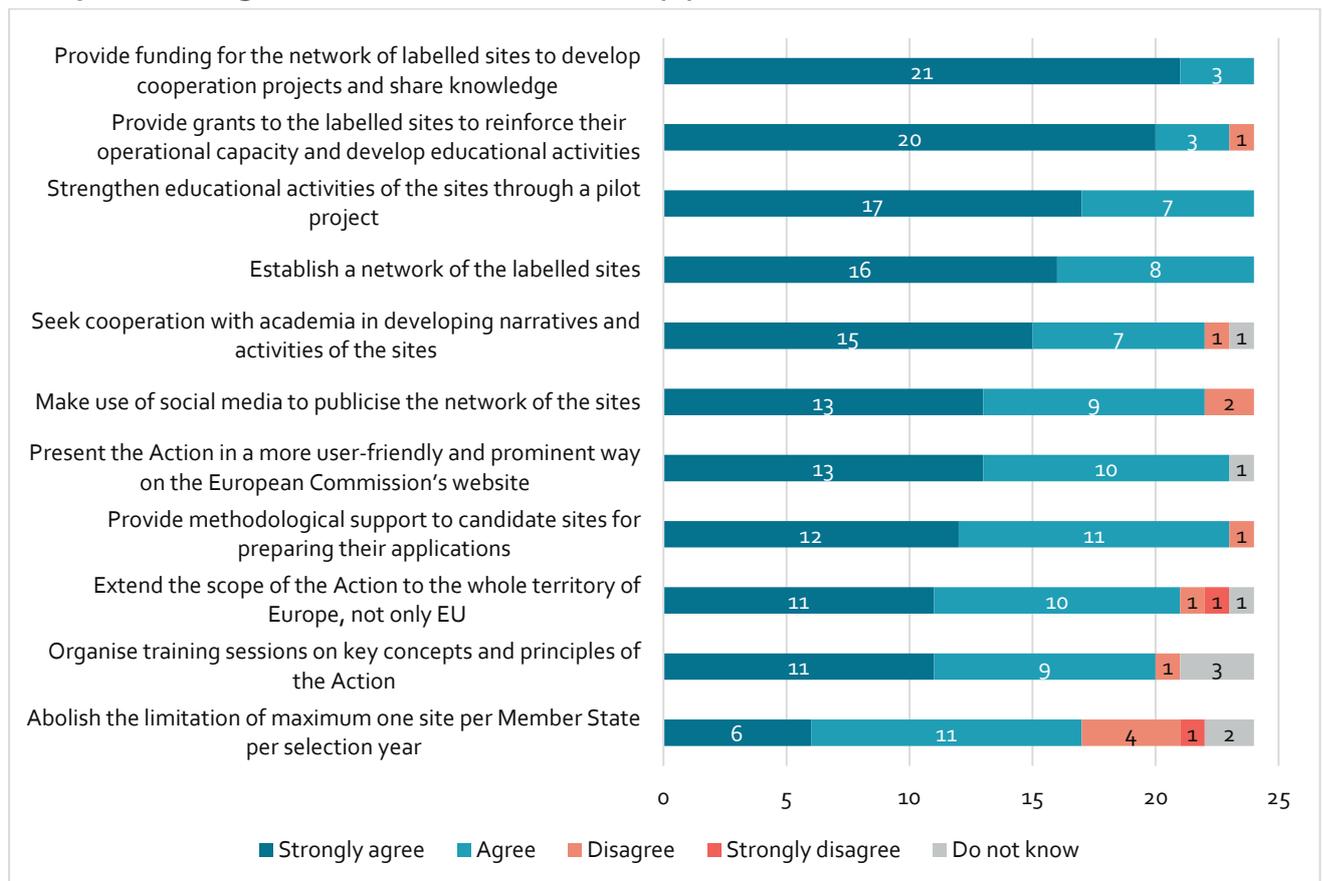
N=24

Possible improvements

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with statements about the helpfulness of different measures to improve the operation of the EHL. These suggested measures ranged from funding provisions to abolishing the selection quotas (Q14). Respondents were also given an open-ended question (Q15) to elaborate on any other measures that could improve the performance of the action.

The respondents quite favourably perceived all proposed measures. The measures that respondents agreed most with were: providing funding for a network of the labelled sites to develop cooperation projects and share knowledge (N: 21 strongly agreed and 3 agreed); providing grants to the labelled sites to reinforce their operational capacity and develop educational activities (20 strongly agreed and 3 agreed); and strengthening educational activities of the sites through a pilot project (17 strongly agreed and 7 agreed). Measures that were least agreed with, though still evaluated highly positive, were abolishing the limitation of maximum one site per Member State per selection year (6 strongly agreed and 11 agreed); organising training sessions on key concepts and principles of the action (11 strongly agreed and 9 agreed); and extending the scope of the action to the whole territory of Europe (11 strongly agreed and 10 agreed) (Figure 19).

Figure 19. Do you agree that the following measures could improve the performance of the European Heritage Label action in the future? (N)



N=24

Respondents suggested potential measures to improve the following areas of the action: communication, selection criteria and procedures, application form and the geographic coverage.

In terms of communication, some respondents stated that there needs to be more promotion of the action and of the labelled sites and suggested the following measures: to create a new user-friendly, interactive website that can serve as a platform for communication and exchange between the EHL sites; to develop a joint inclusive communication and promotion strategy, which should include different private, public and civil society actors; to develop practical communication tools and easy-to-integrate promotional material; to improve the direct communication between National Coordinators and the EHL sites; and to organize a yearly rotating chairmanship among the EHL sites, assisted by National Coordinators, to develop pan-European projects of the EHL network.

One respondent also suggested that the website and printed promotional material of the EHL should present the sites organised in categories according to the values each site portrays (e.g. peace, rule of law, religious freedom, freedom expression, multiculturalism, political and social tolerance, human dignity etc.). A similar viewpoint was shared by another respondent who suggested to create various travel routes alongside the EHL sites and enhance cooperation between the sites.

In respect to the selection procedures, it was suggested not to organise an open-call; provide support to candidate sites; and clarify definitions of the "European dimension" and the "project". Suggestions were also made to improve the application form, including developing the form to make it more readable and appealing; revising the administrative part; presenting topics in the same order, as in the guidelines for candidate sites; having the summary at the end of the application form and also avoiding repetitions. Also, one respondent underlined that the existing guidance for the applicant sites needs to be improved in order for them to prepare high-quality applications.

A suggestion to make the application forms public was made. It was suggested developing the application form and guidelines in a way that applications can be made at least partly public either by the European Panel or the sites themselves. It was proposed to make public the first part of all applications (description of European significance) and the second part of the labelled sites' applications (the project).

Some respondents also touched upon the funding of the action and the labelled sites by suggesting to provide grants or establish a specific EHL fund for financing joint projects of the EHL network and the language-related investments. One respondent stated that the financial support is essential in order for the sites to undertake work within the remit of their designation as EHL sites and become sustainable. The scope of the action was suggested to be broadened to include member states of the European Free Trade Association and the non-EU participants of the Creative Europe programme, and in the long run, the member states of the Council of Europe.

Position papers

Respondents could submit a concise document, such as a position paper, to the consultation. The consultation received 7 documents. A summary of these documents is provided below:

- A position paper from the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences (EuCheMS). The paper perceives the European Heritage Label action to be a very positive initiative, and its evaluation an invaluable opportunity to better assess the ways in which the action can be improved. The paper calls for a greater recognition for heritage of science in Europe, since the early years of the European project were centred on shared efforts in coal, mining and the steel industry, and in later years, agriculture, health, toxicology, energy (subjects that are all based on engineering and science, including chemistry). The paper presents a recently launched *EuCheMS Historical Landmarks* programme, which will have specific sites recognised as central to European chemistry, and expresses willingness to cooperate with interested parties and European institutions.
- A position paper from the European Students' Association for Cultural Heritage (ESACH). The paper recognises that developments in cultural perceptions in the Member States – especially among young people within Europe – influence the development of the

- common cultural heritage. The paper calls for establishing a participatory selection process within the European Heritage Label action and suggests to introduce a formal participation of the younger generation by involving student representatives in the process of making selection decisions at the European and national levels.
- A position paper from the City of Regensburg, Germany. The paper recognises that the EHL initiative can contribute to recognising Europe's diverse and multi-layered cultural heritage. The paper highlights that the strengths of this initiative are in the combination of cultural and non-cultural heritage, as well as in that candidate sites are required to present a project in the application phase. The project requirement sets the EHL action apart from other initiatives in the cultural heritage field and allows the EHL to focus on citizens' integration in the action. At the same time, the position paper calls for a greater visibility and promotion of the Label and suggests some of the following measures to increase the number of applications: organising targeted activities for capacity building for national cultural authorities and potential applicants; as well as organising annual thematic conferences. The paper expresses regrets that not all European countries have joined this initiative and claims that the City of Regensburg supports the continuation of this initiative and is interested in an active participation.
 - A document with feedback on the 2018 Evaluation of the European Heritage Label (Feedback period: 5 July - 2 August 2017). The paper included two individual comments on the EHL. The first one stated that the Label covers too few sites and, due to the limitation of only two pre-selected sites per Member State per selection year, it will take too long until the Label will have an impact. It would be more useful, if Member States were encouraged to present a European narrative in all their heritage sites. The second comment indicates that there are no EHL sites in Ireland, but, if the selection was opened to heritage sites bypassing the government, there could be some sites interested to apply.
 - ASELART organisation from Spain submitted several documents: a brochure and two reports. These documents reflect on the organisation's activities in the field of socio-cultural development of local areas through arts, creativity and culture.

