

CALL FOR SAFEGUARDING MUSEUMS AND PROTECTING ARTISTIC AND ARCHEOLOGICAL PROPERTY IN ITALY

The establishment of a “super manager” figure with absolute powers bestowed upon him within the scope of the new Direzione generale dei musei italiani (General Management of Italian Museums) and the project of commercial profit of the artistic and archeological heritage underlying it are profoundly mistaken choices today and laden with irreparable damage for the future.

To see that patrimony reduced to a negotiable commodity and with it the disappearance of its traditional protection arouses a strong sense of uneasiness and a firm reaction of refusal. The much needed reform of the management of Italy’s cultural property should ensure the quality of professional competence and technical-scientific training while at the same time affirming the historical and educational dimension of this endeavour, in order to guarantee the conservation in the present and entrustment to the future of the works, and prevent their depreciation and deterioration.

Those who manage and govern our country do not have the authority to endanger the heritage which has assured Italy its foremost position in Western culture, thus threatening this extraordinary ensemble, made up of works and their context, of the events in their history, in their conservation, in their country and in their museums . This does not mean excluding those capabilities qualified to ensure the adequate administration of these resources, but it does mean guarding against the danger of introducing a process of disposable consumerism.

A unique and inalienable heritage cannot be compared to any other form of capital, even with the pretext of the current economic crisis.

The international scientific community herein affirms its dismay and requests the immediate repeal of such a Direzione generale, and denounces the need for a radical rethinking of policies.

Rome, 17 November 2008