

BUILDING BORDERS (OR HOW TO DEFEAT ONE'S PURPOSE)

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN
HERITAGE LABEL'S WORKINGS IN THE
NETHERLANDS

Ana-Roxana Mitroi

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL'S WORKINGS IN
THE NETHERLANDS

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I herewith assure that this dissertation was written independently and represents my original work not submitted or published before. All interpretation presented from here onwards is that of the author and does not represent the official position of Wageningen University and Research or any other affiliated institution.

Ana-Roxana Mitroi

May 11, 2019

Noi

Noi suntem semințe și pământul e al nostru,
Știm cel mai bine locul și patima și rostul,
Știm cel mai bine legea și mersul înainte,
Suntem după nevoie și lacrimă și dinte.

Nu cerem nimănuia nimic, însă oricine
Dacă el vrea-l numim și prieten și vecine.
Aici și pâinea, sarea, noi avem la masă,
Căci ne-am făcut-o singuri, zidindu-ne o casă.

Nu zicem rău de nimeni, stăpâni peste pământ
Noi suntem în picioare, sub noi străbunii sunt.
De-aceea poate-n libertate să lucească,
Deasupra noastră, universală boltă albastră.

Nichita Stănescu (1933-1983)

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An issue of fascination

“It was 6.30 AM and I was already in the train heading towards yet another city in the Netherlands – yes, my research truly took me everywhere in the country and beyond – for what was to be my last interview on the European Heritage Label. I felt pumped because I had just had that coffee that I should not have had from Kiosk and my fingers were already running on the surface of my keyboard as I completed the transcript from the interview two days earlier. The plan was to send it to my interviewee by 7.30 AM so that I still had sufficient time to review my questions for my pending conversation, although I knew all of them by heart, and to “massage my brain” (i.e. do nothing and think of nothing for 15 minutes).

As I finished the tasks that I set up for myself, I noticed however that my mind could not sit still, it continued to chase thoughts racing at a staggering speed. Something I did not even hear about till perhaps ten months ago, the European Heritage Label had got me thinking so intensely that smoke was almost literally coming out through my ears. Now when I am writing this passage, I have a cartoonish image of myself in the train that morning in my mind. But I digress.

What I was then thinking was that conducting my research on it was in all fairness a deep dive into unknown waters. But the Label is remarkable in so many ways, and I could talk for days about what it intends to do, what it actually does, how it does it, and what the effects thereof are. I believe I am supposed to allow distance between myself and my research, but that distance is impossible when something gives you such a broad range of emotions from pure elation to utter and complete frustration.”

Extract from my personal journal (February 10, 2019)

A personal statement

Dear reader,

Given the character and the subject of my thesis, I assume it is easy to be misled into believing I am pointing my finger to certain persons or particular institutions. Of course, as any researcher, I am having my own thoughts and opinions on the subject of my study, especially since I was so invested in its examination throughout the last months, as I hope I succeeded to highlight above. For you to be able to navigate safely and securely throughout the content of this report, please allow me to share some of these thoughts and opinions with you.

My first acquaintance with the idea of European heritage, and later with the initiative called the European Heritage Label, took place only by chance through my rather last-minute participation in a European workshop on heritage. From the very beginning, I kept on thinking to myself “What is this European heritage everyone talks about?” and “Who says that that’s European heritage?”. I had a rather hard time in understanding what the purpose of an initiative such as the European Heritage Label is, although I do not disagree with all of the issues it raises. This is also the very reason I decided to make the Label my Master of Science dissertation topic.

This is also the very reason I decided to take a critical stance in the analysis of this initiative and of its (unintended) consequences. My intention is not to criticize the people involved in the organization and administration of the Label, but to provide a well-argued view on the procedures put in place around the Label. Even then, it is not a matter of right or wrong, it is purely observing the reality through a critical researcher’s lens. My interpretation may therefore be at times rather straightforward or unforgiving, which may or may not be found constructive in the further development of the European Heritage Label. I do hope however that you, dear reader, will be given some food for thought.

Thank you!

Dear reader,

Before you go on any further, I would like to thank you for taking the time to immerse yourself into my story about the European Heritage Label. Whether you like my input to the academic debate or not, whether you agree with it or not, reading such a lengthy report is worth considering. Now, I can go on thanking those who have directly shaped the outcome of my rather long, but sustained, Master of Science thesis journey.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest appreciation towards my supervisor, Dr. Ana Aceska, without whose guidance and patience this dissertation would have in all probability taken a very different turn. I am forever indebted to her for her encouragements and for our pep talks when I could not see the way forward any longer, and for not giving up on me even when I failed to meet the deadlines we had agreed on. But most of all, I am truly grateful to her for teaching me how to think and how to approach my dissertation critically – this is what I have learned a truly great deal from.

I would also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of my interviewees for their time and willingness to participate in my research project and for giving me food for thought during each conversation. I am enormously grateful and honoured to have had the opportunity to meet them and for all the information and materials they have provided me with. Without their input, this would have been once again a very different story.

Last, but not least, I am forever indebted to my dear ones who have never left my side and always lit up my “down” days with words of encouragement and strength, despite the distance. I must thank Irina, one of my best friends, without whose help I could not have seen the light at the end of my thesis tunnel. I am truly thankful to her for seeing sense in my lengthy phrases and for pointing to the senseless, I can only hope I have been able to help her in the same way. But most of all, I must thank Franke, who bared with me even at the worst of times, who lifted up my spirits each and every day, who pushed me to go through and who made sure I never missed anything. There are no words or gestures that could truly and genuinely represent my love and appreciation for him.

Yours sincerely,

Roxana Mitroi

Bucharest, May 11, 2019

ABSTRACT

The construction of a European identity and a European sense of belonging is undoubtedly an important component of the EU's political agenda in the context of increasing threats to the integrity of the European project. Where output legitimacy has proven to be insufficient, the identification and definition of a common cultural heritage as the basis for a European collective identity has become paramount, as shown through the proliferation of initiatives such as the European Heritage Label. But while the idea of such an initiative may sound well on paper, is the Label an appropriate instrument to construct a sense of belonging to the Union in practice too? Making use of the three Dutch sites awarded the European Heritage Label – Camp Westerbork, the Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty – I explore how the Label is practiced and produced in the context of the Netherlands. Aided by the analysis of documents and interviews conducted with representatives of the Label's administration at local, national and European level, I conclude that the Label works in fact in disfavour of its purposes, in practice being bound to remain a national enterprise.

Keywords: European Heritage Label, relational thinking, European heritage, European identity, boundaries

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Disclaimer.....	III
Acknowledgements	V
Abstract.....	VII
List of figures	X
List of acronyms.....	XI
1 Introduction: Adjusting heritage and identity to a European context.....	1
1.1 Problem statement.....	2
1.2 Research objective and research question.....	3
1.3 Scientific and social relevance.....	3
1.4 Report outline	3
2 Theoretical framework: Social constructivist perspectives on place, heritage and Europe	4
2.1 Identity	4
2.2 Geography matters	5
2.3 Heritage: Building identity, making place	6
2.4 Europe and the European identity	8
2.4.1 What and where is Europe?	8
2.4.2 What does it mean to be “European”?	9
2.4.3 European heritage	9
3 Methodology	11
3.1 Overall methodological design.....	11
3.2 Case studies.....	11
3.2.1 The Peace Palace, The Netherlands	11
3.2.2 Camp Westerbork, The Netherlands.....	12
3.2.3 The Maastricht Treaty, The Netherlands	13
3.3 Semi-structured interviews.....	13
3.4 Official policy documents and reports	14
3.5 Strategies of data analysis	15
3.6 Validity and reliability	15
3.7 Limitations.....	16
4 The European Heritage Label: The thoughts on paper	17
4.1 The early stages of development	17
4.2 Becoming an EU-governed action.....	18
4.2.1 The name, the preamble and the objectives	18
4.2.2 The categories of eligible sites	20
4.2.3 The selection criteria	21
4.2.4 The roles and the selection procedure	25
5 The European Heritage Label: In practice	27
5.1 To get involved? Not to get involved?	27
5.2 The Dutch national pre-selection	29
5.2.1 The national stakeholders and their tasks	29
5.2.2 “We need a story!”	30
5.3 The implementation of the EHL criteria in a Dutch environment.....	32
5.3.1 Narratives of Europeanness?.....	32
5.3.2 The effects in practice	38
6 Discussion	41
6.1 How the actions defeat the purpose	41
6.2 A reflection on theory.....	43
7 Conclusion.....	44
References.....	45
Appendices	51
Appendix A: Interview guide	51

Appendix B: List of interviewees.....	52
Appendix C: List of policy documents and reports	53
Appendix C1: European Level documents.....	53
Appendix C2: Dutch National Level documents	54
Appendix D: Criteria EHL	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3-1. Aerial view of the Peace Palace.....	12
Figure 3-2. The National Westerbork Monument and the Watchtower.	12
Figure 3-3. Copy of the Maastricht Treaty exhibited in the Limburg provincial building.....	13
Figure 5-1. Dutch national stakeholders and their functions (own elaboration).....	30

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CoE	Council of Europe
CoEU	Council of the European Union
EC	European Commission
EHL	European Heritage Label
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
MS	Member States
OCW	Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [<i>Ministry of Education, Culture and Science</i>]
RCE	Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed [<i>Cultural Heritage Agency</i>]
RvC	Raad voor Cultuur [<i>Council for Culture</i>]
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization
WHL	World Heritage List

1 INTRODUCTION: ADJUSTING HERITAGE AND IDENTITY TO A EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Who are we? Where do we belong? What is characteristic for us and makes us stand apart from others? According to Tilley (2006), these questions represent the classic interests of social identity. It has long been accepted among scientific circles that identity is not single, coherent and fixed, but rather malleable, multiply constructed (Hall, 1996) and produced as result of social interaction (Jenkins, 1996). However, attempts – whether by local, regional, national and international authorities and institutions – to create and foster essential identities based on a common past within bounded territorial spaces – themselves relational and ever-changing instead of absolute and stable (Massey, 2005) – are nowhere close to over. Indeed, as Leve argues, “[i]dentity [...] is among the most compelling of contemporary concerns” (2011, p. 513) and remains a pivotal element in politics and society (Hall, 1996). Among the strategies deployed in identity-building and space-fixing endeavours, the reconstitution of the past in the form of heritage may be regarded as a method to offer meaning and depth to human existence and to constitute a shared sense of belonging and sameness (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2000).

Already since its establishment in the nineteenth century, the modern nation-state has been most actively employing such tactics, such appeal to cultural roots, as a source of legitimacy and authority over an imagined political community within a limited and sovereign territory (Anderson, B., 1991). Today, nevertheless, we bear witness to a dislocation, relocation and reformulation of identities, places and heritages from the nation-state’s area of concern to different scales ranging from the most localized to the most global (Tilley, 2006). Unsurprisingly, contestation and dissonance come increasingly to the foreground (Ashworth & Graham, 1997), as identities, places and heritages are challenged and constituted in diverse ways by different social agents and institutions at various levels (Graham et al., 2000). At the supranational scale, perhaps the most exemplary case of trials to disjoint or, following the idea of multiplicity, to add new layers of meaning to the national identity, place and heritage is the European project (Ashworth & Graham, 1997; Graham et al., 2000).

Originally grounded in economic cooperation and collaboration in the coal and steel markets as the most expedient strategy to “re-establish the European spirit threatened with destruction by the war” and the harmony among European countries (Burgess, 2002, p. 477), the lack of public support and commitment to the story of a common market, free trade and economics, and the weak sense of belonging to Europe (Eder, 2009) soon prompted the European institutions to explore other possibilities for European unity and congruence. A European identity rooted in a sense of fraternity and belonging across countries was deemed to be the manner through which to engage citizens, to increase popular endorsement and, to use Benedict Anderson’s terminology, to imagine a European community (cf. Sassatelli, 2002). 1973 marks the year in which the *Declaration on European Identity* was signed and ratified by the representatives of the then nine Member States (MS) of the European Community (i.e. Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom). The construction of such a collective identity – which would seemingly allow the survival of the common European civilization based on shared history, heritage and values such as freedom, democracy and human rights would better delineate the relationships between the Community and the international arena (Burgess, 2002; European Community, 1973) – became a key preoccupation of the European institutions (Shore, 1993).

Since 1992-1993 however, once with the Maastricht Treaty and subsequent establishment of the European Union (EU), Europe has been confronted with ever-decreasing support and attacks towards the legitimacy of the European project, as diverse social, political and economic crises swept across its MS causing growing scepticism towards the possibility of harmonious unity and socio-political consensus (Duchesne, 2008; Lähdesmäki, 2016). The eastward enlargement of the EU has transformed appeals to a common European sense of belonging based on myths of origin such as the humanist tradition, Reason and the (Christian) mutuality and charity no longer suitable in a more and more multicultural and multi-ethnic Europe (Amin, 2004). More recently, the debt crisis of 2010 with its uneven distribution and the successive waves of non-European refugees and asylum-seekers have acted as centrifugal forces fuelling anti-European sentiment

and a rise of right-wing nationalism (Kaiser, 2014). For instance, Lähdesmäki (2015) demonstrates that in the case of Finland, populist political parties judge the European institutions not only as an undermining of national identity and distinctiveness, but also of European identity itself. Such threats to the integrity of the European project materialize in the exit of the United Kingdom from the EU, an event now famously known as Brexit, and growing calls for a “Nexit”, i.e. the Netherlands’ leaving from the EU (Khan, 2018). Europe is increasingly weaker or, at least, so it seems.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against this background and given their recognized potential to create communality and promote identification with a certain group as shown by the example of the nation-state, culture and heritage have become an element of growing importance in the discourse of European institutions as well (Niklasson, 2017; Sassatelli, 2002). Whereas until 1992, culture was an area of concern reserved exclusively for national institutions with only a few programmes initiated at supra-national level by organizations such as the UNESCO and Council of Europe (CoE), the Maastricht Treaty opened this space and introduced culture, although reluctantly, under the formal sphere of influence of the EU (Brkić, 2011).

Since then, numerous symbolic initiatives specifically targeting the creation of European identity have been undertaken, including the design of a flag, anthem and currency (Sassatelli, 2002; Shore, 1993). Furthermore, a variety of actions and activities at the supra-national cultural scene directly aimed at creating a shared sense of belonging have been amassed under umbrella programmes such as Kaleidoscope (1996-1998), Raphael (1997-1999), Culture 2000 (2000-2006), Culture 2007 (2007-2013) and, today, Creative Europe (2014-present) (Brkić, 2011; Kaiser, 2014). In their majority, these programmes have been criticized for enforcing a top-down elite-driven sense of belonging based on culture (Schlesinger, as cited in Brkić, 2011; Niklasson, 2017). Nevertheless, some of the actions undertaken did register a certain level of success, with the European Cities of Culture – now known as the European Capitals of Culture – being in all likelihood the most successful cultural initiative at the European level so far (Lähdesmäki, 2016).

A more recent and “perhaps the most emblematic” development in the sphere of European cultural policy is however the European Heritage Label (EHL) (Niklasson, 2017, p. 152). Originating from a 2006 intergovernmental initiative, the Label was officially launched at the level of the EU in the year 2013 and it is currently offered to 38 sites of symbolic value to Europe and the European narrative (EC, 2017b). The EHL explicitly aims at increasing EU’s citizens’ and especially youth’s identification with Europe, subscribing thus to the same overall goals and objectives as for example the European Heritage Days and the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, which are not mere celebrations of a common culture, but also political attempts to save the European project by uniting people in their diversity (Lähdesmäki, 2017). Put simply, the EHL appears to be another effort to construct a shared European identity based on a shared European heritage and culture.

Although a relatively new initiative, the EHL has already attracted academic reflection, with some of the most notable contributions made by the Finnish scholar Tuuli Lähdesmäki. In various occasions, she criticizes the Label for its focus on “tangibilizing” European heritage (Lähdesmäki, 2016), its blunt transformation of the darker episodes of European history into a story of positivity (Lähdesmäki, 2017) and its attempt to “produce self-creating and self-maintaining communality, coherency, and cultural integration in the EU” (Lähdesmäki, 2014, p. 416). Zito and Eckersley’s (2018) preliminary analysis of the EHL as an EU policy instrument also highlights internal tensions and the “circular reasoning” by which it functions (i.e. sites need to demonstrate their “European significance” to citizens, but at the same time they need to ensure that the same citizens have the opportunity to discover the values underpinning Europe(an integration)). Konopka (2015) goes on to argue that, in the context of an overall shift in the EU’s discourse towards the economic valuation of heritage sites, the EHL continues to be a chiefly symbolic action. However, although providing valuable theoretical propositions, Lähdesmäki’s, Zito and Eckersley’s and Konopka’s input remain primarily based on official document research which provides little empirical insight into the Label’s workings. Breaking away from the theoretical contributions, Kaiser’s (2014) study in Austria on the EHL-awarded Archaeological Site of Carnuntum and the “Silent Night! Holly Night!” thematic site, whose

candidature for the EHL title was rejected, concludes that the most difficult challenge encountered by sites is to communicate the European dimension to their audience. Although a noteworthy exception, Kaiser's research does not rigorously uncover how the Label is produced and reproduced in empirical settings and whether its purpose of creating a common sense of belonging with a shared heritage at its core is (likely to be) achieved.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

In the light of the above-formulated problem statement and taking a social constructivist epistemological approach, the objective of this research is to understand how the EHL creates the idea of European identity and heritage and whether its purpose of creating commonality among European citizens is likely to be met, by investigating the ways in which the Label is produced and practiced in the Netherlands through its three EHL sites Camp Westerbork, The Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty. The research objective underlined above is reformulated in the form of the following central research question:

In what ways is the European Heritage Label produced and practiced in the Netherlands?

1.3 SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE

As the EHL grows as an EU-wide action, so is the body of literature addressing the Label and its workings from a rhetorical viewpoint without, in fact, demonstrating how it is adjusted in empirical settings. However, according to Ashworth and Graham (1997), the idea of European heritage in itself calls into question what is precisely to be defined as such, who has the right or decision-making power to do so, what effects the designation of heritage as European has at different spatial scales and under what conditions such initiative is to be successful. In consideration of this assertion, in the present thesis report I seek to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to contribute to the ongoing debate on the EU's cultural policies as means to foster integration at European level by capturing the Label "in action" in the context of the Netherlands. Furthermore, I seek to address the need to understand whether an initiative such as the EHL is effective in breaking down local, regional, or national boundaries built around heritage, or on the contrary it serves to reinforce them. It exposes therefore how heritage is manipulated and contested by diverse entities through "the addition of new layers of meaning" (Ashworth & Graham, 1997, p. 382) and how their designation as European becomes a race for pride and prestige. The findings of this research project may prove insightful not only for the academia but may also trigger reflection on behalf of policy makers. Understanding how the EHL is reproduced and practiced is likely to provide the relevant actors with the tools necessary to better deal with the issues the action is confronted with.

1.4 REPORT OUTLINE

The present thesis report is divided into several chapters and subchapters building on each other in order to give an answer to the formulated research question. Chapter 1 shortly introduced the context in which the EHL develops and highlighted the knowledge gaps in the study of the initiative in need of immediate academic attention. Chapter 2 brings to the fore the main theories and concepts employed to understand and analyse how the initiative under scrutiny is constructed and reconstructed at different levels. The notions of (European) identity, place and heritage seen from a social constructivist angle function as the theoretical backbone of this dissertation. Subsequently, Chapter 3 offers a detailed account of the methodology employed in the execution of this study, including a description of the data collection and data analysis strategies and a reflection on limitations, validity and reliability. Chapter 4 follows the evolution of the EHL initiative from its initial phase as intergovernmental action to its current setting as EU-led action and underlines the gaps in the Label's set-up, attempting therefore to lay the functional basis for the analysis in the ensuing sections. Subsequently, I analyse how the Label has been implemented so far in the context of the Netherlands by zooming in on the three Dutch EHL sites. Consequently, Chapter 6 comprises the summary of this research project's main outcomes and a reflection on its input to the academic debate. Finally, in chapter 7, I underline my conclusions in light of the objective and central question defined in section 1.2 of the present chapter.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST PERSPECTIVES ON PLACE, HERITAGE AND EUROPE

In consideration of the research objectives previously underlined and the overall social-constructionist epistemological stance taken within this research process, in this chapter, I highlight the main theories and concepts which inform the present study. Starting with the definition of identity including different points of attention as extracted from the literature, I go on to the notion of place and the role it plays in the formation of (territorial) identities. Moreover, from the understanding that it may function as an identity-building and place-making tool, I review the concept of heritage. Finally, I investigate the manners in which Europe and the European identity, space and heritage have been tackled so far.

2.1 IDENTITY

Fundamental to disciplines such as psychology and sociology, the notion of identity has attracted a great deal of attention in the academia to the point that some would consider it to have become meaningless at least as category of analysis (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). Indeed, as Kantner (2006) puts it, “[i]dentity tends to be a catch-all phrase for the presumably needed ‘thick’ moral underpinnings of social and political order” (p. 506). In Martin’s review of the concept, he asserts that, for some, identity equated to an interior self-defined by particular core characteristics which provide it with “integrity and coherence” (Martin, 2005, p. 97). This interior subjectivity remains relatively stable in the flux of time and provides a point of reference for personal meaning and experiences (Eder, 2009; Martin, 2005). This sort of identity is what could be called personal identity, which is defined by Hogg (2006) as a self-construct representing someone’s unique personality attributes.

Once with the evolution of social thought, increasingly stronger emphasis is placed on the influence of the social on the human identity (Martin, 2005). From this viewpoint, Jenkins (1996) claims that an individual’s sense of self cannot be acquired outside social processes and interaction. Although experienced individually, identity, whether personal or otherwise, is a fundamentally social matter: “[a]ll human identities are in some sense – usually a stronger than a weaker sense – social identities” (Jenkins, 1996, p. 4). As such, in developing their Social Identity Theory, Tajfel and Turner, for example, assert that social identity is defined by one’s membership to a certain social group whose members evaluate themselves, their similarities and differences, in respect to out-group members in the same way (as cited in Hogg, 2006). Following this viewpoint, identity stops being the essential, immovable and unchangeable core of humans’ sense-making of the world, but becomes reflexive, malleable, and multiple. In Tilley’s words:

“Identity becomes something spoken about in the plural, not one but many, something always changing in space-time. Identities are always responding to change, mobile rather than fixed and static, constantly open to formulation and reformulation. From such a perspective notions of identity as being forever grounded, stable and immutable can only have a mythic status.” (Tilley, 2006, p. 8-9).

In addition to the understanding of the concept of “identity” as the product of social processes, in line with poststructuralist and postmodernist epistemological stances, recent decades also witness a switch towards identity as a “discursive construction” (Martin, 2005, p. 99), as narratives (Eder, 2009). It is here that identity politics with its focus on difference(s) comes to the fore (Woodward, as cited in Martin, 2005), a clear example being national identities which have thrived upon their exclusivity in a given territorially bounded political community (Eder, 2009). As result, Hall (1996, p. 4) argues that “[i]dentities are more the product of marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity”. However, an important point of attention is that, while all identities are the product of social construction and discourse, of imagination if we are to follow Benedict Anderson’s terminology, according to Jenkins (2006, 2008), they have far from imaginary consequences. Identity in its discursive form entails then “relations of power, subordination and exclusion” (Martin, 2005, p. 99). Eder subscribes to this view, underlining the fact that processes of identity building are “a cognitive mode of boundary construction” (Eder, 2006, p. 259).

Having inventoried some of the meanings and understandings of identity, it is high time I return to Brubaker and Cooper's claim that the concept is no longer analytically meaningful. In their critique towards the abusive use of identity, they argue that in thinking of it as "constructed, fluid and multiple" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 1), the term has been softened, rendered vague, even self-contradictory, and stripped away of its analytical prowess. As solution, Brubaker and Cooper propose a range of alternative, "less congested" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 14) expressions such as "identification"/ "categorization", "self-understanding" and "commonality"/ "connectedness"/ "groupness". Drawing on the work of sociologist Richard Jenkins, it is suggested that the terms "self-identification" (of the self in relationship to others) and "categorization" (of the self by others), which oblige to specify the agents doing the identifying, are more suitable as a category of analysis. These terms are not only situational and contextual, but they also find themselves in a relationship of interdependence where external categorization may affect internal definition and vice versa. The interplay between these processes of "self-identification" and "external categorization" is defined as an internalization process, which may happen when authoritative identifiers such as the state exert their power or are perceived as the legitimate body to label and to categorize (Jenkins, 2000). Turning to the second group of alternative terms proposed by Brubaker and Cooper (2000), "self-understanding" refers to the tacit or explicit cognitive and emotional sense one has of whom he or she is. However, this term is also limited in that it is subjective and auto-referential, it appears to be focused on cognitive self-awareness and to fail to capture the objectivity of strong "identity". Finally, looking to "commonality"/ "connectedness"/ "groupness", where commonality refers to sharing a common characteristic or attribute, connectedness to the relational links between people and groupness to the sense of belonging to a particular group, Brubaker and Cooper argue that these terms are better fitted as analytical categories than the "all-purpose identity" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 20).

2.2 GEOGRAPHY MATTERS

If we are to judge from its primacy as "the everywhere of modern thought" (Crang & Thrift, 2000, p. 1), it can arguably be said that spatiality is also a central element in the construction of social identities (Martin, 2005). Our identities, or the stories we tell about who we are, are defined by place (Anderson, J., 2010; Tilley, 2006) both from a territorial and social viewpoint (Keith & Pile and Carter et al., as cited in Martin, 2005). Taking the argument further, Casey (2010) claims that place and identity are co-constitutive, in the sense that humans leave traces in the places they inhabit, while places shape their thoughts, feelings and actions. In this sense, the ways in which we conceptualize space and place have effects or, in other words, geography does matter (Massey, 2005).

Old ideas on spatiality imply that place could function as container for clear, consistent and enduring social identities based on the past of that very place (Tilley, 2006). However, such understanding of place as a constant resource upon which an enduring social identity can be established is increasingly problematic given the fluctuation of spatial flows (Tilley, 2006). If identity is the product of social construction and interaction, and as such, it is multiple, flexible and susceptible to manipulation, an equal conception of place as socially constructed and a recognition of the sustained (political) efforts necessary for people to identify with place are required. Indeed, as Tilley pinpoints:

"Identifying with place does not just happen. It requires work, repeated acts which establish relations between peoples and places (Creswell, 2004, Massey; 2005) and significantly expands intersubjective space-time (Munn, 1986) beyond the self." (Tilley, 2006, p. 14).

One of the strongest proponents of the social constructivist approach to space and place in the last decades is British geographer Doreen Massey. As response to the globalization debate of the 1990s and accusing the old notions of fixed and stable places of essentialism and failure to acknowledge the history of correspondence with elsewhere, Massey (1991, 1995, 2005) posits that spatiality should be handled relationally. In this conception, places are then seen as "spatio-temporal events" (Massey, 2005, p. 130), as "articulated moments in networks of social relations" (Massey, 1991, p. 28), as "bundles of relations" (Tilley, 2006, p. 21). Unpacking this proposition further, in her well-known essay *A global sense of place*, Massey (1991, p. 26) underlines that in the context of socially-diverse "time-space-changes" it is more sensible to

think of places as dynamic processes rather than static entities, because the social relations that make places and their meaning are themselves undergoing production, reproduction and change across time. Furthermore, given their processual character, places have no boundaries, no frontiers that would enclose them from the “out there”, and, if they do, they are porous and shifting (Massey, 1991, 1995). Instead, the nature and qualities of place are to be thought of in relationship, not in counter-position, to other places and scales (Tilley, 2006) and it is these relationships, global, local and everything in-between, which shape a place’s identity (Massey, 1995). However, this identity is neither singular, nor coherent, as it is subject to a myriad of internal conflicts which prompt an ongoing construction and negotiation (Massey, 1991, 2005). Indeed, “[i]f it is now recognized that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places” (Massey, 1991, p. 27). Understanding places in this fashion does not strip away their uniqueness, it does not make them part of a homogenous whole; they remain unique, but not because of some intrinsic features or a presumed history, but because any new “meeting” generates new constellations and configurations of trajectories in a specific locus (Massey, 1991).

In relational thinking thus, to assume that cultures, societies or nations have a fundamental relationship with a bounded territorial space and that places are internally authentic seems naïve (Massey, 2005). Yet, such imagination of place is still being employed in order to legitimate the territorialisation of society and to define and control a shared identity based on a shared territory (Massey, 2005). The temporal dimension of place, its history or, better said, a certain version or even part of that history, is here an important justification of these politics of enclosure, of boundary-building (Massey, 1995). The experience and expressions, material or immaterial, of the past are carried into the present by tradition (Tilley, 2006) and it is in the invention of these traditions linked to what was understood as a stable and fixed identity that the invention of a place’s coherence happens (Massey, 1995). Who gets the opportunity to invent such traditions are those wielding dominant power such as the nation-state which attempts to ‘make place’ and to order it by establishing and deliberately maintaining (territorial) boundaries (Anderson, J., 2010). When disruption is perceived to take place between past and present or future and when traditions appear to be upset by relations to what seems to be the “outside”, feelings of insecurity and nostalgia seem to fuel nationalist or populist discourses (Tilley, 2006) and to justify further territorialisation. However, “this is a representation of space, a particular form of ordering and organising space which refused (refuses) to acknowledge its multiplicities, its fractures and its dynamics” and which attempts to build upon a past, a purity, that never existed (Massey, 2005, p. 65). Then, a relational approach to space and place also necessitates a new type of anti-essentialist politics which embraces heterogeneity, openness (Anderson, B., 2008) and the relational constructedness of identities and places (Massey, 2005).

2.3 HERITAGE: BUILDING IDENTITY, MAKING PLACE

Although concern with the past is not a novel phenomenon, but rather an integral part of the human condition (Harvey, 2001), the present-day understanding of the notion of heritage can only be traced back to the nineteenth-century modern Europe (Graham et al., 2000). This is synchronously the era of the emergence of the European nation state, of the industrial revolution and consequent urbanization, and of the growing interest on behalf of a liberal educated class in the protection and unaltered conservation of the threatened legacy of the past (Graham et al., 2000; Smith, 2006). Such tumultuous times enabled the past’s physical artefacts to be seen as providing a sense of stability and security and a basis for social cohesion and collective identity within the newly evolving territorial formations (Graham et al., 2000; Smith, 2006). Forwarding to the 1960s and 1970s, heritage remains a principal source of environmental and social concern for scholars and practitioners alike, with the 1964 Venice Charter and 1972 UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage constituting only two examples of the massive legislative body developed as response to a perceived need to conserve and protect inheritance from the past (Smith, 2006). While in line with the nineteenth century European values and tastes the focus had been laid on material heritage such as monuments, buildings and archaeological sites, since the beginning of the 2000s the concept of heritage has been expanded to include intangible resources such as oral traditions, rituals and social practices (UNESCO, 2011).

Despite this “original” and general assumption about heritage – tangible and intangible – as the relics of the past to be passed on to present and future generations (Graham et al., 2000), once with the advent of poststructuralist and postmodern thought the term has been subjected to a myriad of contingent characterizations. The most widely accepted definition (at least among researchers), already apparent in the above underlined relationship of the past with the present and future, is that heritage is simply the “contemporary use of the past”, be it in economic, political, social or cultural terms (Graham et al., 2000, p. 2). Rather than highlighting any inherent value (Graham et al., 2000; Smith, 2006), this conceptualization emphasizes that heritage is ultimately meaning constructed in the present through intricate social interactions and conferred upon artefacts (Graham et al., 2000; Harrison, D., 2004). In this study, the social and political uses of heritage are of particular interest, as heritage becomes the means through which identity is constructed. Indeed, as Graham and Howard (2008) assert:

“In a world in which identity is fundamental to politics and contestation at a global scale, understanding the means of articulating often vague feelings and senses of belonging becomes quite crucial. Heritage in its broadest sense is among the most important of those means, even more so because identity can no longer be framed primarily with the national contest that has so defined it since the European Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.”
(Graham & Howard, 2008, p. 1)

Moreover, given that the present is ever-changing, an understanding of heritage as a resource of the past to be used in the present underscores its processual nature, challenging therefore notions of fixity (Harvey, 2001; Smith, 2006). In this light, Rodney Harrison concludes that “[h]eritage is [...] an active process of assembling a series of objects, places and practices that we choose to hold up as a mirror to the present, associated with a particular set of values that we wish to take with us into the future” (Harrison, 2013, p. 4). However, Harrison’s interpretation also draws the attention to the selectivity of heritage (Graham et al., 2000; Harrison, 2004; Smith, 2008), which in turn raises the question of what criteria for selection are deployed, who is implicated in this process and, evidently, who is not, and with what purposes (Graham et al., 2000).

In response to this question, David Harrison (2004) argues that the production and reproduction of heritage meanings and performances is determined by those pertaining to specific classes and nations beholding certain status and power. Echoing this view, in her book *Uses of Heritage*, Laurajane Smith (2006) makes reference to the “Authorized Heritage Discourse” (AHD) used by hegemonic bodies – usually, the nation state – in identity-building and place-making endeavours. It is only what “makes sense” within this discourse that is defined as heritage and is subsequently protected, conserved and promoted. What “makes sense”, at least according to Western dominant elitist conceptions of heritage, is by and large material artefacts endowed with impressive aesthetics and representing episodes of greatness and goodness (Smith, 2006, 2007, 2008). By way of example, Light (2000) demonstrates how in post-1989 Romania, history was subjected to active rewriting with the communist past largely erased from official representations both to national citizens and foreign tourists. Beyond the national level, the same observation can be made: UNESCO, the largest intergovernmental organization involved in heritage protection and conservation worldwide, has been criticized in various occasions for engendering sanitized heritage narratives which are easily digestible for a broader segment of the public (see for example, Tucker and Carnegie’s 2014 account of the Göreme Open Air Museum in Turkey). Nonetheless, AHD with its tendency to disregard and obscure subaltern voices and everyday engagements with the past does not remain unchallenged, heritage becoming then also a source for counterclaims and resistance from within as well as from outside (Smith, 2006, 2007, 2008) and lending itself to conflict and dissonance (Graham et al., 2000). According to Tunbridge and Ashworth, dissonance takes place because of “the zero-sum characteristics of heritages, all of which belong to someone and logically therefore, not to someone else” (Tunbridge & Ashworth, as cited in Graham & Howard, 2008, p. 3).

Another important aspect of the AHD relates to its deployment of scientific knowledge, especially in the form of archaeology as a “neutral and objective science”, in order to validate the state’s political and cultural legitimacy and control over heritage resources (Smith, 2007). In other words, heritage in the form of AHD

is closely connected to the exercise of knowledge and power and serves as argument for social inclusion and exclusion (Graham et al., 2000; Smith, 2006, 2007, 2008). For example, in his study about the medieval site of Ani situated in Eastern Turkey, Apaydin (2018) demonstrates how archaeological research is used by the national state apparatus to support Turkish against Armenian claims to territory. Heritage expertise is then deployed as a “technology of government” (Smith, 2007, p. 161) with the purpose of identifying and defining in- and out-group identities (Smith, 2006), while heritage experts are “stewards and trustees” delegated with the protection and the preservation of the meaning of the past and present so as to be passed on unaltered to future generations (Smith, 2007, p. 164).

2.4 EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

“European identity emerges as something with varying boundaries, depending upon which story we tell.” (Eder, 2009, p. 438)

Having established what identity, place and heritage, mean and how they engage with each other, I now turn to the examination of these concepts in the context of Europe. If we are to accept that these three notions are multiple, with no precise boundaries and in a continuous state of flux as highlighted so far throughout this chapter, then so is a European identity, place and heritage, in spite of attempts to identify and define fixed and essentialized versions. Indeed, as Lowenthal (2000) argues, Europe must be understood through the “myriad of linkages with the world beyond” (p. 314). However, albeit all products of imagination, distinctions between different models and meanings of Europe can be made, as underlined in the next section of this report.

2.4.1 WHAT AND WHERE IS EUROPE?

Following Lee, Paasi (2001) distinguishes three geographical perspectives through which Europe can be defined: (1) Europe as experience, i.e. a socio-spatial experience which is currently still a nation-bound occurrence; (2) Europe as an institution, i.e. in great lines, the Europe of the EU; and (3) Europe as a structure i.e. a physical and human geographic unit. Along similar lines, based on the work of Davies, Jenkins (2008) identifies six models of Europe, namely: the territorial Europe, the “racial” Europe, the cultural Europe, the outsider’s Europe, the Union Europe and the economic Europe. It is important to note that, while they seem to point to a specific, enclosed (kind of) Europe, these constructions do not possess either clear, or stable borders (Jenkins, 2008; Paasi, 2001). They are boundary-making narratives whose plausibility fluctuates over time and space (Eder, 2006). In this sense, as Shore (1993) argues, the privilege given to static and exclusivist notions of European identity by the European policy makers does not stand on solid ground.

Taking territorial Europe as example, it is widely accepted that Europe refers to the stretch of land between the Atlantic seaboard in the West, the Mediterranean in the South, the Ural Mountains in the East, and the Arctic seaboard in the North. However, this geographical delimitation, this imagination of Europe between the above-mentioned boundaries, is problematic because it does not account for offshore islands such as Britain and the Azores, nor for the former Soviet republics situated to the south-east of Russia. And, can we really draw a straight line in the middle of the Ural Mountains, and claim that all that is to the west of this line is Europe (Jenkins, 2008)? If we turn to Union Europe, the issue is no less complicated, especially taking into consideration the recent eastward enlargement, which makes borders and, for that matter, the geographical centre of the Union, a moving target (Eder, 2009; Jenkins, 2008, Smith, 1992). As Massey (1995) argues, “[t]o call the current Economic Union ‘Europe’ is therefore to appropriate a name with a history of much wider resonance” (p. 189).

In the case of cultural Europe, European culture is said to derive from Graeco-Roman, Judaeo-Christian and Humanist heritage (Niklasson, 2017; Sassatelli, 2010). However, accepting this textbook definition means bluntly disregarding the historical influences, for example, of the Oriental, African and American Other or of the Orthodox tradition to the construction of Europe (Jenkins, 2008; Prutsch, 2017). Borrowing from Massey, such internal construction insinuates a singular dominant version of history which, when it does recognize outside connections, it does so through negative interrelation (Massey, 1995). Moreover, and

perhaps even more importantly, such myths of origin do not account for the Europe's internal heterogeneity in terms of, for example, social class and education (cf. Prutsch, 2017) and ethnicity (Amin, 2004). If they are problematic at the national level, with the nation-state itself being a highly heterogeneous and anything but clear-cut entity, how can a pan-European identity be formed? If any meaning of Europe raises concerns and engenders exclusion and inclusion, then what is it that does rise a sense of commonality among Europeans?

2.4.2 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE "EUROPEAN"?

In this context, the challenge or impossibility, as some may call it (Prutsch, 2017), to construct a coherent European identity is unsurprising. David Lowenthal (2000) identifies five non-exhaustive impediments, namely: linguistic diversity, unequal size and resources, lasting cultural disagreements, scepticism and suspicion towards Europeaness, and finally top-down bureaucratic approaches. Adding to the discussion of what may or may not be a European identity is the relationship between the national and European identifications. According to Duchesne (2008), three opposite, but simultaneous processes can be identified to take place in regard to the connection between the national and European identity: (1) complementarity; (2) independency and (3) antagonism. Although in European institutional discourse the European identity was never meant to substitute the national one, as shown in the 1973 Copenhagen Declaration of European Identity whose focus is on unity and common heritage, yet acknowledges diversity and importance of preserving national cultures, nationalistic discourses which counterpose European and national constructions of identity are more prevalent, especially after 1989 (Shore, 1993).

A further issue identified by Burgess (2002) is the trial of European institutions to build on projections of the traditional nation-state. According to Anthony Smith (1992), this traditional concept of nationhood, the substance of a nation, includes (at least) five components: (1) a shared bounded historical territory; (2) shared origin and historical memories; (3) common mass culture; (4) shared rights and duties; and (5) a shared economy. However, as Prutsch (2017) argues, "given the exclusive character of most national forms of identification, [it is] impossible for prevailing models of national 'primordial' identities to simply be transposed at a European level" (p. 25). Against this background, it has been argued that identity could eventually be fostered at the European scale by upright and effective politics and policies, by so-called "output legitimacy" accompanied by adequate communication to the European public (Prutsch, 2017). Notwithstanding, even this form of identification stands against serious obstacles such as possible incompatibility between the objectives of European policy-making and those of democratic structure improvement, fragility in face of non-successes and, given the subsidiarity principle based on which the EU functions, impossibility to demand exclusive ownership of policies (Prutsch, 2017). Therefore, in order to function properly, output legitimacy needs to be reinforced by other sources of identification both at a cultural and political level (Prutsch, 2017).

2.4.3 EUROPEAN HERITAGE

It is precisely here that heritage comes into play. According to a 2015 expert report assigned by the European Commission (EC) named *Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe*, heritage (and especially cultural heritage in the context of the study) brings an enormous positive contribution to the European economy, the quality of life and wellbeing of Europe's citizens as well as to the sustainable development of its regions. At the same time, heritage is deemed to be "at the heart of what it means to be European" (EC, 2015, p. 5). But what is a European heritage?

Ashworth and Graham (1997) argue that European heritage might be thought of in terms of the history of European unity. However, this version of European heritage remains problematic. While possibly having a stable basis in the history of achievements of European economic and political union or, in other words, the above-mentioned output legitimacy, such construction is met with a scarcity of resources in comparison with the variety of resources existing at national level (Ashworth & Graham, 1997). Furthermore, Prutsch (2017) claims that such imagination of European heritage grounds the beginnings of a European past exclusively to the 20th century and, above all, in a negative foundation myth, given that the European Project

emerged at the outset of WWII. Instead, Ashworth and Graham (1997) and Graham et al. (2000) suggest that a European heritage should embrace and acknowledge Europe's diversity and dissonance.

Yet, the issue of European heritage remains contentious not only in relation to its content, but also to its ownership. Graham et al. (2000) argue that in defining a European heritage the attempt is not to erase local, regional or national heritages, but rather to complement them, to add a novel layer of meaning to the heritage in question. At the same time, this process also forces national boundaries to open offering "opportunities for national as well as sub-national as well as transnational stories competing with each other to shape European identity stories" (Eder, 2009, p. 428). Interestingly, however, trials to identify and to label supra-national heritage in order to promote supra-national concerns function in fact at the benefit of the lower heritage scales, especially the national scale. To exemplify this view, de Cesari (2010) in her study on World Heritage Listing in Palestine and Israel argues that UNESCO through its WHL supports and advances the nation-state's control and claims to legitimacy over heritage, frequently in the detriment of local communities. Ashworth and Graham (1997) make a similar observation in the case of Europe, remarking that a Europeanization of heritage might in the end work counterintuitively, by conferring higher status and power over identity and territory claims to regional icons. The tension between the different levels of heritage production and reproduction is therefore clear (Graham et al., 2000). Taking this into consideration, Vos's (2011) suggestion that European heritage remains deliberately vague and abstract so as not to override national claims to heritage seems sensible.

3 METHODOLOGY

Informed by the theoretical framework and grounded in the main research question formulated – In what ways is the EHL produced and practiced in the Netherlands? –, in this chapter I highlight the research methodologies and methods deployed for the purpose of this study. I begin by justifying my choice for a case study approach including a short description of each of the three EHL sites under investigation. I continue by providing an outline of the data collection methods and sources employed and, subsequently, of the data analysis strategy put to use. I end by critically reflecting on the validity and reliability of this study, as well as the ethical aspects and limitations encountered in the course of this research journey.

3.1 OVERALL METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

In line with the social constructionist epistemological stance, taking into consideration that this study is focused on comprehending the processes and manners by which the EHL is (re)produced in a Dutch national environment and demonstrating whether it indeed has the potential to construct a European identity, I employed an exploratory qualitative design (cf. Jennings, 2012). The rationale behind this choice was that this approach acknowledges the active role individuals and groups have in the social construction of reality (cf. Boeije, 2009) and it can shed light on such constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, in view of the fact that the literature on the EHL as new EU initiative meant to instil a sense of belonging and communality among citizens remains meagre, a qualitative approach offered stronger exploratory power, as it remained flexible throughout the entire research process (cf. Boeije, 2009).

Furthermore, guided once again by the scarcity of the EHL literature, this research was undertaken in the form of case studies focusing on the Dutch labelled sites, namely The Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork and The Maastricht Treaty. This decision was led by several aspects, among which the most important is the possibility to elaborate thick, rich descriptions of the cases under investigation on basis of the different qualitative data collection methods as I elaborate below (Verhoeven, 2014). In addition, the choice for a multiple case study was made in order to reinforce my arguments and to obtain a broader understanding about how the EHL is produced in the context of the Netherlands overall.

Last, but not least, in consideration of the qualitative character of this study, two qualitative data sources and data collection methods were employed: semi-structured interviews with actors of interest to the EHL initiative and official policy documents and reports at local, national and supra-national level. According to Boeije (2009), such triangulation of methods and sources of data allows to reveal the different layers of the studied, while contributing to an improved internal validity of the research project. A more detailed account of my choice for semi-structured interviews and EHL policy documents and panel reports as data sources is to be found in sections 3.3 and 3.4 of this report.

3.2 CASE STUDIES

As previously mentioned, the three selected case-studies are The Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork and the Maastricht Treaty in the Netherlands. In the following lines, I succinctly describe each of these heritage sites, in the attempt to build the background against which the findings and analysis underlined in the subsequent chapters must be understood.

3.2.1 THE PEACE PALACE, THE NETHERLANDS

The Hague's Peace Palace (see figure 3-1) was designated as an EHL site in 2013, once with Camp Westerbork in the Netherlands, the Great Guild Hall of Tallinn in Estonia and the Archaeological Site of Carnuntum in Austria (EC, 2013). Emerging from an increasingly popular peace movement across Europe and America and fuelled by the attempt to contain political tensions and the threat of war, the first World Peace Conference was organized in the city of The Hague in the year 1899 at the initiative of Czar Nicholas II. The discussions between the 26 participating countries revolved around disarmament, mediation and arbitration, which resulted in the creation of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (Municipality of the Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012). A much larger (44 participants) peace conference was organized for the

second time in The Hague eight years later. 1907 coincided with the year in which the first foundation stone of “the temple of peace and justice” (This is the Peace Palace, April 25, 2018) was laid.



Figure 3-1. [Aerial view of the Peace Palace]. Reprinted from Nudge Sustainability Hub website, by Nudge Sustainability Hub, 2016, retrieved from <http://www.nudgesustainabilityhub.com/nudge-summit-in-the-peace-palace-the-hague>. Copyright 2016 by Nudge Sustainability Hub.

Sponsored by the Scottish-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie for 1.5 million dollars (Andrew Carnegie, n.d.) and following the designs of French architect Louis Cordonnier and Dutch architect J.A.G. van der Steur (Architecture, n.d.), the neo-Renaissance style building opened its doors in 1913. All the participating countries to the Second Peace Conference supported the construction of the palace and the adjacent park in the form of donations of building materials such as marble and mahogany wood, or interior elements such as furnishings and art (Municipality of the Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012). “[P]raised as a true dream palace for world peace” (Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012, p.

6), today, the Peace Palace is a work palace hosting various judicial and academic institutions such as the International Court of Justice (since 1946), the Permanent Court of Arbitration (since 1913) (Jurisdiction, n.d.), the Peace Palace Library and the Hague Academy of International Law (since 1923) (Study, n.d.).

3.2.2 CAMP WESTERBORK, THE NETHERLANDS



Figure 3-2. The National Westerbork Monument and the Watchtower. Author's own collection.

Located in the province of Drenthe, in the North-Eastern part of the Netherlands, Camp Westerbork's history starts in the year 1939 as internment camp for Jewish refugees who had illegally entered the country. Until the year 1971, the camp served various purposes including as internment camp for NSB and other former Nazi collaborators, as military camp for soldiers coming from and leaving to the former Dutch East Indies and as repatriation camp for former Royal Dutch East Indies Army members of Moluccan origin. The period it remains most famous for however is the period between 1942 and 1945, as it is then that 93 trains with 107.000 people on board left from Westerbork

towards Auschwitz, Sobibor, Theresienstadt and Bergen-Belsen. To remember, commemorate and reflect on the past events, Queen Beatrix officially inaugurated the Memorial Centre of Camp Westerbork in 1983. Since then, the Camp has undergone various developments including the instalment of information boards in symbolic forms and associative elements that would make the site recognizable and a switch of its focus towards education for young and old alike (Herinneringscentrum Kamp Westerbork, n.d.).

3.2.3 THE MAASTRICHT TREATY, THE NETHERLANDS

The Maastricht Treaty is the latest of the additions of the Netherlands to the European heritage register of the EHL (EC, 2017). Although the controversial result of a political struggle for European integration, the Treaty on the European Union, as it is formally known, is considered the founding document of the EU today. Met with significant resistance on behalf of the Danish electorate and only by a narrow margin approved by the French voters, the Maastricht Treaty was signed on February 7, 1992, by 12 MS of the then European Economic

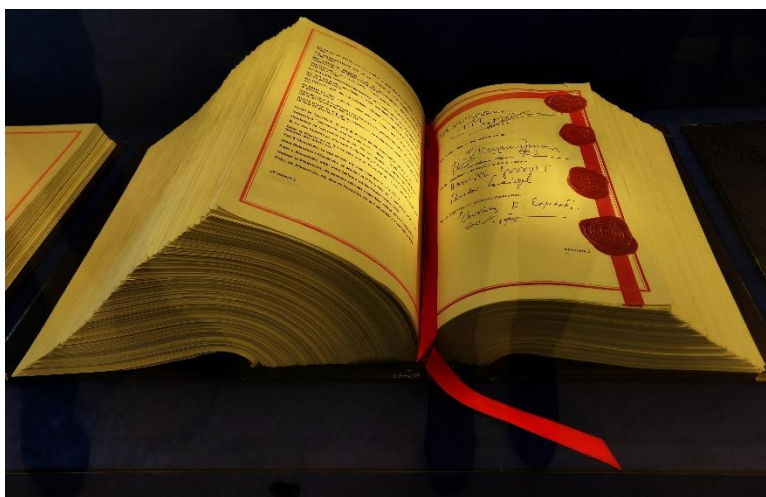


Figure 3-3. Copy of the Maastricht Treaty exhibited in the Limburg provincial building. Author's own collection.

Community (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom) and came into force on November 1, 1993. Given the Netherlands's presidency over the Council of the European Union (CoEU) in the second half of 1991, the Treaty was signed in the Statenzaal of the Gouvernement aan de Maas, the administrative building of the Province Limburg. The treaty revolved around three particular tenets: (1) EU citizenship, which granted every citizen of an EU MS to vote and to be elected in the local and European Parliament (EP) elections in the EU country where they reside, without regard to their nationality; (2) introduction of a common currency and central banking system, which resulted in the establishment of the European Central Bank, the European System of Central Banks, and the European Monetary Institute; (3) cooperation in the areas of foreign, security and defence policies and environment, policing and social policy (Gabel, n.d.). Despite the amendments and changes brought through the later treaties of Amsterdam (1999), Nice (2003) and Lisbon (2009), the Maastricht Treaty presents still an important pillar in the European integration. It is for this reason that an exhibition commemorating the Treaty and its symbolism was created and is now accessible to visitors in the Limburg provincial building.

3.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In order to grasp the different ways in which the EHL is produced and performed in a Dutch national context, semi-structured interviews were conducted with actors involved in the administration and coordination of the EHL at all levels (local, national, European). According to Boeije (2009), the goal of this type of interview is to encourage the respondent to express their view on the phenomenon under investigation, without the confinements of a fully structured interview. At the same time, the semi-structured interview allows a certain degree of control, especially in terms of topics to be asked, enabling comparison across respondents, and thus being generally considered a more reliable measurement instrument than the unstructured interview (Boeije, 2009).

The participants to this study were selected using a purposive sampling method, i.e. the selection of the interviewees was done on the basis of the ability to offer in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation (Coyne, as cited in Boeije, 2009). In this case, the stakeholders of interest (i.e. EHL site managers, national administrators and coordinators and expert Panel members at European level) were identified through the research of websites and policy reports on the EHL. The interviewees were approached by email in order to confirm their readiness and availability to participate in this study. In order to ensure a greater likelihood that prospective interviewees would participate in this research project, in addition to face-to-face encounters, they were provided with the opportunity to conduct the interview by telephone, video conference or in written. In addition, site managers and national coordinators were considered gatekeepers for employees or other staff involved in the preparation of the application for the

EHL and subsequent implementation of the proposed EHL work plan and project at local or national level. As a result, they were asked to refer to any other potential interviewees, employing thus also a 'snowball sampling' method (Boeije, 2009). In regard to the expert Panel, since access could not be secured directly, I called upon the European administration of the initiative which enabled the contact with one of the Panel members.

In consequence, 10 interviews, out of which one double, were conducted in the period 1 December 2018 to 8 February 2019, with a duration varying from 32 minutes to 79 minutes. Six out of the 10 interviews took place at the offices of the respective stakeholders in the Netherlands or abroad. Due to time constraints on behalf of the interviewees, three of the remaining interviews were handled by video conference and one by telephone. All interviews were conducted in the English language, except for one which at the request of the interviewee was conducted in Dutch. In order to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of all interviewees as requested, in the further elaboration of this study their names are substituted with a code and no reference is made to their specific organization and function therein. Nonetheless, a short overview of these interviewee codes is to be found in appendix B of the present report.

In line with the theories and concepts brought to the fore in Chapter 2 of this report, all interviewees were asked overall similar questions based on the interview guide to be found in appendix A. The topics comprised more general questions referring to their understanding of European heritage and European identity, but also specific questions in reference to the procedures of the EHL, the reasons for participation, the activities undertaken under the auspices of this initiative, debates around the Label's achievements so far, as well as the challenges and future situation of such a programme. It is important however to mention that, just as this research evolved from a theoretical point of view, so has the interview guide evolved as topics and key ideas became clearer.

3.4 OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

Equally important when studying the ways in which the EHL is performed and practiced in the context of the Netherlands are the official documents on the initiative. In this study, the relevant pieces included the official policy documents regarding the establishment of the initiative, the selection criteria and the application procedures, as well as the expert panel reports which present the outcome of every selection round as well as of the monitoring. These European-level documents were made available through the EUR-Lex – the official website of the EU when it comes to the Official Journal of the European Union, EU law and other international agreements – as well as through the EC's webpage addressed to the EHL. In addition, given the focus on the case of the Netherlands, official *Raad voor Cultuur*¹ (RvC) reports, letters and speeches from the ministers and/or other politicians involved in the administration and organization of the Label at this level, as well as the EHL application dossiers (where made available by the site representatives) were also used. These documents were accessed via the RvC's online archive, the Dutch Senate and House of Representatives' archives, as well as the official websites of the three heritage sites under investigation. A complete list of the analysed documents is presented in Appendix C of the present report.

According to Bowen (2009), documents are an appropriate manner in which to corroborate evidence from other sources such as interviews and observation. In the same time, they may also generate additional interview questions, for example, thus complementing the other data collection methods employed (Maxwell, 2009). Indeed, making use of the documentation already available at the beginning of the research process helped to establish and to better understand the context in which the EHL was created and to refine the interview questions. The same document data allowed the researcher to clarify several points raised by interviewees throughout the conducted conversation and to challenge what was told where necessary (cf. Yanow, 2007). In the process of analysis, the data emerging from the official documents was utilized to strengthen and give more depth to the arguments brought forward.

¹ Council for Culture

3.5 STRATEGIES OF DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of the gathered data was undertaken concurrently to the data collection. The first step in the data analysis process was to transform all raw data into analysable pieces, i.e. ensuring all data had a similar format which, in this particular case, was written text. After the interviewees were informed about this study's purposes and gave their oral consent to be recorded, all interviews were audio documented and subsequently transcribed in edited form (i.e. the parts irrelevant to the purpose of this research were omitted, while ensuring that the meaning of the rest of the data is not altered). Depending on the function of the interviewee, each transcript was then connected to the official documents collected to represent the local, national or European levels.

The rich textual data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and official documents was then rendered valuable through a thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) claim that such analysis enables the researcher to define themes recurring throughout the data and to find meaningful relationships between them, thus contributing to the development of theory. Therefore, the second step in the data analysis procedure was that of open coding during which the data was structured by using both deductive codes identified during the literature review phase and inductive codes emerging from the data itself. Based on the researcher's personal preference and on the possibility of adding further explanatory notes, the data was coded manually on paper, without reliance on computer programmes such as Atlas.ti. The third step in the analysis process was the axial coding phase, during which the codes previously identified were evaluated and re-arranged upon necessity. Given that both data collection and data analysis were simultaneously carried out, the axial codes were constantly adapted and reformulated as new ideas and themes emerged (conform to the principle of "constant comparison" underlined by Boeije (2009)). The final phase in the data analysis process was selective coding during which the codes deemed to be the most representative were defined and linked to each other and to the theoretical framework (Boeije, 2009).

3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Two critical indicators of the quality of qualitative research are validity and reliability. While validity refers to the measurement instrument's suitability to measure what it is designed to measure, reliability refers to the consistency of these research tools, should a study be replicated (Boeije, 2009). Despite the fact that qualitative research is grounded in the use of flexible research methods and relies on the researcher as a measuring tool, a series of measures were put in place in order to maximise this study's quality.

To ensure internal validity, thus diminish the interviewees' and researcher's bias, method triangulation (i.e. using more than one research method) was employed. The data collected through the semi-structured interviews was in all cases set side by side to the data gathered from official documents and reports on the EHL. In addition, so as to be able to provide a complete and detailed account of the ways in which the EHL is produced and performed in the Dutch circumstances, all governance levels involved in the organization and administration of the Label, namely the site, national and European stakeholder levels, were addressed both through the interviews and the document analysis. In this way, the external validity of this research was enhanced.

As regards reliability, a semi-standardized interview guide was used in order to ensure that the same topics were covered throughout all interviews, while flexibility to ask probing questions was also allowed. Moreover, as previously mentioned in section 3.5, to make certain that all data is accurately captured, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. Subsequently, all interviewees were offered the possibility to verify their own transcript, in order to ensure that the information provided reflected their views and to add any information which they thought could be of relevance for the purpose of this study. According to Boeije, "[t]his is a direct test of the reliability of the observation", as "[a]ny misunderstandings or selections that may have taken place can be removed at this time." (Boeije, 2009, p. 177). Out of the 10 interviews only five were proofread by the respective interviewees, which may affect the reliability of this study's findings.

3.7 LIMITATIONS

As any other research project, the present study is also confronted with its own share of limitations. Taking into account that the overall EHL initiative has a history of approximately 14 years at the moment of writing this report, an aspect that may be understood as a limitation is the fact that many of those who participated in the intergovernmental and EU negotiations around the establishment of the Label were no longer available for interviewing, mainly due to changes in their functions. Therefore, particularly regarding the beginnings of the EHL in the Netherlands, the official documents and letters were the main source of data, with only few of the aspects herein mentioned strongly supported by this study's interviewees.

Furthermore, given that this research project was focused on the production and practice of the EHL, an important source of data which could have strengthened the final conclusions would have been participation into the activities organized by the sites. Although unstructured observation in the form of leisurely visits to the three sites did take place, I did not participate into any of the (educational) activities put in place by the three Dutch EHL holders, as to the best of my knowledge none were organized throughout the fieldwork period. In this way, it is possible that valuable insights which could affect the final conclusions of this report were overlooked.

In addition, although all governance levels were covered throughout the research process, not all stakeholders *within* these levels were interviewed. Apart from time-related constraints, this situation took place as some of those approached declined to take part in this study, given administrative and organizational issues on their behalf, or did not respond to the research invitation. In one case, an interview with a person of interest for the European level was confirmed, however it was last-minute cancelled and not rescheduled due to health issues on behalf of the interviewee. Taking this into account, it is possible that some views were not sufficiently scrutinized, therefore proving to be a threat to the validity of this study. Nevertheless, the addition of the document analysis counterbalances this limitation to a certain extent.

Another limitation could be considered the language. Although the great majority of the interviews were conducted in English, some of the interviewees mentioned that their English language skill level was rather insufficient and one preferred to be interviewed in Dutch. Consequently, particular information and nuances might have been lost in translating from Dutch to English for the purpose of the analysis. An equivalent issue is valid for the official documents collected at national level, which, given the focus of this research on the EHL in the context of the Netherlands, were naturally elaborated in Dutch.

Finally, although not a (methodological) limitation, this study focuses on the practice and production of the EHL into a Western European country, which has been part of the "European project" since its commencement. Whether the conclusions of this study can be transferred to other national contexts is therefore questionable, although the process of "Europeanization" results in country-specific outcomes in, for example, South Eastern European countries as well, as Vos (2011) demonstrates in the case of Serbia. Nevertheless, newer MS of the EU, especially in the East, have been arguably very eager to prove their Europeaness, in spite of triggering redefinitions on the very meaning of a European identity and the EU itself (Amin, 2004). Consequently, it is recommended that future research is conducted in, for example, Eastern European contexts as well in order to understand whether the EHL is appropriated there in the same ways as this study reveals.

4 THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL: THE THOUGHTS ON PAPER

Understanding the ways in which the EHL is practiced and performed in the context of the Netherlands requires firstly an overview of the overall initiative as it was elaborated “behind the desk”. It is essential to observe that, although meant to introduce the reader to the overall functioning of the EHL, this chapter is not only descriptive in character but also evaluative. In this context, I seek to argue that the manner in which the Label is set up creates the favourable conditions for it to remain nation-centric rather than to become cross-border or transnational. For this purpose, I start by evaluating the rationale behind the establishment of the Label and by following its development as an intergovernmental action. I continue by investigating its becoming an EU-led action and the rhetoric, procedures and processes conceived by the EU institutions around the Label in its current form.

4.1 THE EARLY STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The EHL has its roots in a 2006 intergovernmental action initiated by the then French Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, and subsequently jointly led by France, Spain and Hungary. The initiative was perceived as a manner in which to counteract the citizens’, in particular the youth’s, disengagement with Europe and in which to inspire and support a sense of shared (European) identity based on a set of common values. Its explicit aim was to:

“strengthen the support of European citizens for a shared European identity based on democratic values and human rights and to foster a sense of belonging to a common cultural space.” (EC, 2010a, p. 5)

and to

“encourage people’s understanding of, and respect and support for, their heritage and it represents a means of protecting and promoting our cultural heritage, with the aim of identifying and passing on that heritage to future generations.” (EC, 2010a, p. 17).

In order to achieve these objectives, all participating European states – both EU MS and third countries – were invited to propose sites emblematic for Europe’s common identity and willing to take the European narrative further. Being designated an EHL site implied meeting a set of requirements such as developing education and information activities meant to encourage the European citizen’s identification with Europe and ensuring adequate accessibility and facilities for all members of the audience. Furthermore, sites were asked to assist partnerships between heritage and contemporary creativity and stimulated to set up a “dynamic network” through which knowledge and experiences could be exchanged (EC, 2010a).

The establishment of the formal procedures and communication on and about the Label became the responsibility of a revolving secretariat, first held by France, and then by Spain. After rules for application and selection were ratified, the EHL was officially launched in 2007 - undoubtedly a strategic decision, as it matched with the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome through which the European Economic Community was established and which constitutes one of the first steps in the creation of what we nowadays call the EU. On this occasion, a first series of sites were also conferred the Label, amount which increased to 64 in 17 EU MS and Switzerland by 2010 (EC, 2010a).

However, according to the Impact Assessment conducted by the EC in 2010, the EHL in its intergovernmental form presented several mainly procedural weaknesses which endangered its quality and diminished its potential to achieve its overall objective. Firstly, although overall criteria and rules had been put in place, the selection of sites and implementation of the Label remained primarily a national responsibility. This made room for country-specific interpretations of the Label and, aided by the absence of an overseeing body to reinforce the procedures established by the revolving secretariat, resulted in a gross lack of clarity, transparency and quality in regard to the EHL’s practical application. Secondly, the lack of visibility of the Label was attributed in particular to its defective promotion and communication. The EC asserts that, except for some webpages established in March 2009 by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, “[u]p to the beginning of 2009, absolutely no structured information on the EHL was available on the internet.

[...] [I]t was almost impossible for an interested individual or organisation to assemble these elements into coherent and reliable information.” (EC, 2010a, p. 18). Finally, the initiative was confronted with little odds of continuity. The fact that, after Spain, no other state showed interest or willingness in taking over the revolving secretariat in charge of the administration of the Label deemed the then current organization inappropriate, as it did not allow the development of a long-term approach or of necessary expertise to ensure the EHL’s survival (EC, 2010a).

For these reasons, already in the early stages and with backing from the EP, through the Council of Ministers of the EU, MS asked for a proposal on an EHL under the auspices of the EU. Interestingly, it appears that this was also the final objective of the intergovernmental initiative, as demonstrated by official documents. An EU-led action was seen as bringing renewed value in terms of raising and improving the (national and international) profile of MS, but also in terms of fostering a cultural network enabling the sharing of experiences and best practices. Moreover, an EU-governed initiative was also expected to favour the increasing knowledge about Europe’s shared but diverse cultural heritage among citizens, in particular among youth, and the improvement of artistic, cultural and historical education and thus intercultural dialogue and understanding (EC, 2010a). In 2011, after lengthy negotiations on the practical and procedural aspects of the new scheme with prevalence on the role of the nation-state, the permanence or temporality of the award, and the possible overlap with other initiatives, decisions were adopted by the EP and the CoEU establishing the EHL as an EU action (EP & CoEU, 2011).

4.2 BECOMING AN EU-GOVERNED ACTION

Against the previously-highlighted background, the transformation of the EHL into an EU-led initiative adds a novel instrument meant to “fill the gap between citizens and the EU” to the already available toolbox “aimed at addressing the same problem” (EC, 2010b, p. 2). Although seen to provide a “clear added value” and to “take a qualitative step forward” (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 1) regarding the cooperation between participating countries, the establishment and the application of clearer, more transparent criteria (EC, 2012), the new EHL scheme under the auspices of the EU builds upon many of the elements of the former intergovernmental initiative. However, in spite of adding long-term continuity, such build-up is concurrently problematic because significant changes in the constitution and organization of the Label do occur, as I demonstrate in the following paragraphs.

4.2.1 THE NAME, THE PREAMBLE AND THE OBJECTIVES

The first, and perhaps most obvious, point of comparison between the intergovernmental and the EU initiative is the unaltered name. This choice is peculiar, as the EP and CoEU (2011) state that the new EU-led EHL is only open to sites within the MS of the Union, whereas as highlighted in section 4.1 the previous intergovernmental initiative was accessible to heritage sites within all European countries regardless of their membership to the EU. The same reorientation of the initiative’s focus towards the EU also surfaces from the preamble of the EP’s and CoEU’s decision. Here, we observe an intertwining of Europe with the EU, through which the Union takes on the task of supporting the MS in their cultural endeavours and, simultaneously, of encouraging European (Union) citizenship, integration and belonging (EP & CoEU, 2011). In light of the set context, the formulation of the general objectives of the new EHL action similarly speaks to the need to consolidate the sense of belonging of the European citizen to the *Union*, rather than to Europe:

*“(a) strengthening European citizens’ sense of belonging to the Union, in particular that of young people, based on shared values and elements of European history and cultural heritage, as well as an appreciation of national and regional diversity;
(b) strengthening intercultural dialogue.”* (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 3)

This interweaving of the conceptions of Europe and the EU is also to be noticed in the intermediary and specific objectives of the Label, which tightly link the two through the repeated use of the expression “the history and culture of Europe and/or building of the Union” (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 3). Although reference is made to the various social, (inter)cultural, and economic implications the Label may have across the whole of Europe, the more political and instrumental consequences for the EU appear to take centre stage.

The way in which this rhetoric of the Label was adjusted to fit into the EU's discourse raises however an important issue. The formulation of the previously described elements does not only recognize the current lack of engagement of the European citizen with the EU, nor does it only attempt to solicit sentiments of common belonging based on the now typical "unity in diversity" discourse. This articulation suggests that identification is not sought with Europe, but with the EU. In turn, this insinuates an equation of Europe with the EU, through which European heritage would only be European by virtue of its physical location on the territory of a MS. INT2, for instance, argues:

"The whole story is [that] in the past Europe was connected in many ways. We should show everybody that we are connected through times, through centuries, and you can still experience, and feel, and see this through our heritage. But we all know that the EU borders are also new. So, the whole story of the connectivity between the European states is much broader, of course, than the EU. But the EU now said, 'This is our label.'" (INT2, December 19, 2018)

The same is observed by the European expert Panel (see section 4.2.4 for an explanation of the Panel's function and responsibilities) who in its 2017 report extends a similar critique: "due attention should be given to extending the action to incorporate the whole of Europe's territory – regardless of other agreements – since the history and culture of Europe does not stop at the borders of the EU or such agreements" (EC, 2017b, p. 29). The 2017 Panel Report is however not the only instance when the Panel expresses disagreement with the choice to maintain the Label confined to the borders of the EU, with equivalent arguments available throughout all of the selection reports from 2013 onwards (EC, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2017b).

The Panel's plea did not go by unnoticed. Mentions about the possibility of opening the Label to third countries which participate in the umbrella programme "Culture" nowadays known as "Creative Europe" can be found in the EC-conducted Impact Assessment. Here, the current state of affairs is attributed to the fact that the "the implementation of the rules of the EHL will be a complex process" and that the "practical arrangements [have yet to] prove to be sufficiently strong and efficient" (EC, 2010a, p. 39). The same line of argumentation appears also in the discourse of INT4a and INT4b (January 9, 2019) who also point out that it would be premature to extend the EHL not only because of the lengthy and intricate process of altering the Legal Basis of the initiative, but also because of the lack of a political forum which could foster communication between third countries and current MS. A further challenge, according to them, is also represented by the difficulty to monitor the appropriate application of the rules and conditions of the Label in absence of established protocols. Otherwise said, the unavailability of narrative control mechanisms in third countries makes it impossible for the EU to integrate potential heritage sites into its authorized heritage discourse. This is the reason why, notwithstanding the recognition of these issues by the EU institutions, in lack of strong political motivation (e.g. candidacy to become a MS of the EU), it is unlikely that the Label would become accessible to these countries in the near future (INT4b, January 9, 2019).

In this light, in the hands of the EU, the EHL in particular and European heritage in general transform into a tale of inclusion and exclusion. Although the initiative encourages the subtraction of (national) borders from heritage narratives and the incorporation of discourses into wider European context(s) (see section 4.2.3 for an account of the Label's selection criteria) subscribing thus to Massey's relational thinking about place, it does not appear to follow this process all the way through. INT2, for example, notes in the case of the Netherlands:

"I do work a lot [...] with heritage that is connected to the Netherlands, but it is not in the Netherlands, but especially in our former colonies like Indonesia, Surinam, etc. For me, that's European heritage too, because it is the heritage of the European expansion or the European colonialism or European war. It is not an easy heritage, but you are still connected." (INT2, December 19, 2019).

If we are to accept Massey's relational thinking as premise however, the new EHL's understanding of European heritage as confined within the borders of the EU is ignorant of the history of interconnections

with elsewhere in Europe or beyond and blind to the porosity of these very borders. Heritage sites outside of the EU's territorial boundaries are not allowed to become part of the representation of European heritage the Label promotes, fact which portrays the EU's territory as the sole container of an essential and pure European identity and heritage. This limited view of European heritage is not only present into the discursive narrative of the EHL, but lies also beneath the Label's practical arrangements, as it is elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

4.2.2 THE CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBLE SITES

Conform to the standards and norms imposed by the new EU Label, there are three categories of sites eligible for participation, namely single sites, transnational sites and national thematic sites (EP & CoEU, 2011). In the new EHL's conception, a single site's definition is extended to include "monuments, natural, underwater, archaeological, industrial or urban sites, cultural landscapes, places of remembrance, cultural goods and objects, and intangible heritage associated with a place, including contemporary heritage" (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 3). Otherwise stated, the EHL is extended to involve and to encourage a varied range of potential heritage sites to apply. At the same time, this deliberate choice is instrumental as it allows the EU institutions to accommodate as wide an array of views and interpretations as possible and to avoid potential conflicts of interest. For the sake of not repeating arguments, I develop this point more thoroughly in section 4.2.3.1 under the heading *The European dimension*. Nonetheless, it can already be appreciated that, coupled with the fact that it encompasses the lowest degree of coordination, the category of single sites is the best represented in the repertoire of European heritage the EHL portrays.

The second category, that of transnational sites, is designed to include either one site spread on the territory of at least two MS or various sites in different MS subscribing to a common theme and submitting a joint application. It is paramount to observe that, conform to the EP and CoEU (2011), all component sub-sites within a transnational application must be situated on the territory of a MS, collaboration with sites outside of the territory of the EU being at least momentarily not suitable for receiving the EHL. Once again, this speaks to the EU's efforts to construct an image of itself as the carrier of European heritage and identity.

Transnational sites represent a category of particular interest for the EC. According a note of Macedo (2010) commissioned by the EP, such sites are subject to positive discrimination due to their representativeness and consistency with the overall aim of the EHL. Confirming Macedo's remark, in the Guidelines for Candidate Sites, it is highlighted that transnational sites are to be given priority, should the expert Panel be confronted with a choice between a single site and transnational site application of equal quality (EC, 2018a). The examples provided by the EC in their guidelines for application, all symbolizing cross-border connectivity and mobility, further support this hypothesis: "a bridge, a battlefield, a token of the past division of Europe or of the former internal borders of the EU, an archaeological site which pre-dates the drawing of national borders" (EC, 2018a, p. 4). However, among the current 38 EHL awarded sites, transnational sites are underrepresented with only one such site – the Former Natzweiler concentration camp and its satellite camps (France – Germany) – receiving the distinction in 2018 (EC, 2017b). Such lack may be attributed to the increased level of intergovernmental cooperation and coordination a transnational site implies, given that only one of the participating sites is to act as coordinator and single point of contact for the Commission (EP & CoEU, 2011; EC, 2017b). Indeed, giving the example of the failed attempt of the Dutch government to establish a cooperation for proposing the Hanseatic cities as a transnational EHL site, INT1 goes on to argue that the difficulty lays in reconciling the many interests of the stakeholders:

"[B]ecause there are so many countries, governments, local stichtingen [foundations] that are so divided, it is very difficult to find one rode draad [red thread] that everyone says 'That's the way we like it and I can commit myself to this initiative.' [...] It was not possible to propose this initiative only on behalf of the Netherlands, because it's not so easy to say these Dutch cities were very important for the complete history of the Hanseatic trade." (INT1, December 10, 2018)

Similarly, the independent expert Panel also underlines that, for transnational site applications to be successful, the participating sub-sites need to be able to deliver a common narrative and common activities (EC, 2017b). Nevertheless, while underrepresented in the EHL's list of awarded sites, joint larger scale applications appear to become increasingly popular with four transnational applications having been submitted in 2017 (EC, 2017b) and at least one being prepared by Belgium and the Netherlands for the year 2019 (INT1, December 10, 2018).

Last, but not least, national thematic sites are also invited to submit applications for the EHL. These are defined in the EP's and CoEU's Decision as "several sites, located in the same MS, which focus on one specific theme in order to submit a joint application" (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 3). Equivalent to transnational sites, such sites are encountered with a narrative and administrative coordination challenge, reason for which only one such site – the Sites of the Peace of Westphalia (1648), Münster and Osnabrück in Germany – was awarded the EHL in 2014 (EC, 2014).

4.2.3 THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Regardless of whether a candidate site is single, transnational or national thematic, all applications must comply with a series of common selection criteria formulated by the EC (see appendix D for an integral reproduction of these criteria). While the preamble of Decision No 1194/2011/EU indicates the European institutions' clear intentions and trust in heritage as the means through which to engage the audience and to instil a sense of common belongingness, the criteria on the basis of which the EHL is awarded are what sets this initiative apart from other labelling schemes such as UNESCO's World Heritage List and the CoE's Cultural Routes. Here, the assessment of (candidate) sites does not rest on their aesthetical or architectural value, but on their symbolic contribution to the EU's identity story and on their capacity to convey this story to the public. However, these criteria together with the set-up of the procedures and roles highlighted in section 4.2.4 are what in fact destine the EHL's purpose not to be met.

4.2.3.1. THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION: "NOBODY KNOWS WHAT IT IS!"²

In order to be awarded the EHL title, sites must first demonstrate their "European dimension" (INT4a, January 9, 2019) or "symbolic European value" (EC, 2018a) which may stem out of either European history and culture more generally or/and European integration more specifically (EC, 2017b). Under Decision No 1194/2011/EU, this means that candidates must prove they embody one or more of the following aspects:

- (1) their cross-border or pan-European nature: how their past and present influence and attraction go beyond the national borders of a Member State;*
- (2) their place and role in European history and European integration, and their links with key European events, personalities or movements;*
- (3) their place and role in the development and promotion of the common values that underpin European integration.* (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 4)

In other words, articulating the European dimension under the EU's EHL means pinpointing the moments of European cross-border interconnections, seemingly accounting with the trend in heritage studies to consider heritage unfettered by borders as argued in section 4.2.1. The attempt is therefore to construct "a kind of genesis narrative" of Europe/EU, by dislocating a site's narrative from what is generally considered a national, local or regional arena and transposing it into a European context. This attempt to rewrite a site's story presents however an important issue, not only from a discursive, but also organizational perspective: the vagueness of the supposed "European dimension" of heritage. Undoubtedly, the question of what precisely European heritage is in the EHL's understanding is deliberately left unanswered, because "when you encounter heritage, you should have no labels, no prejudices" (INT9, February 4, 2019). Except for explanations as to how it should be conveyed and articulated (EC, 2017b), additional specifications as to

² Jonathan Evan-Zohar, speech at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, with the occasion of the Europadag on December 11, 2018.

what precisely the European dimension is or could be are nowhere available. This status of things conversely translates into two key implications, as I underline below.

On the one hand, this criterion's vagueness converts the EHL repertoire to a *de facto* display of European cultural diversity. The awarded sites, which greatly differ from each other not only in form as explained in section 4.2.2, but also in substance and content, are witness hereof. INT7 also emphasizes: "you see they really award different institutions that tell a story" (INT7, January 17, 2019). Indeed, should one endeavour to categorize the EHL title holders so far, countless thematic divisions can be made into sites representing the struggle for peace (e.g. Franja Partisan Hospital in Slovenia and Camp Westerbork in the Netherlands), democracy and freedom (e.g. Ancient Athens in Greece and the Sighet Memorial in Romania) or knowledge (e.g. the Libraries of the University of Coimbra in Portugal and the Students Residence in Madrid, Spain) amongst others (EC, 2016; INT9, February 4, 2019). In this sense, the Panel poetically refers to the EHL as "a tapestry, with a discovery of colours, patterns and materials" (EC, 2016, p. 41).

On the other hand, the very same vagueness also transforms the European dimension into the most demanding criterion of the Label. As INT1 formulates:

"To prove what exactly the European dimension is – that's the toughest part. Most applicants say they have a museum and they tell its story every day. Or, this person is a very important painter. Van Gogh – of course, Van Gogh has European value. Yes, but write it down! Prove it to me! Tell me where this European dimension actually is! How did this painter or how did this object or paper change the European world? How did it affect European culture? That's the way applicants have to think about their proposal and that is not easy for them." (INT1, December 10, 2018).

The same is observed by the Panel who notes that to fully understand, articulate and convincingly present the European significance "remains a challenge for most candidate sites" (EC, 2017b, p. 22). Many fall into the trap of oversimplification and anachronism, as thinking of European heritage narratives for European audiences beyond the national borders is as refreshing as it is unusual (EC, 2017b; INT7, January 17, 2019).

As a consequence hereof and aided by the selection procedure described in section 4.2.4, the ambiguity of the European dimension makes room for nationally specific interpretations and reveals points of tension between the national and European authorized heritage discourses. For example, INT6 points out:

"the European dimension, when I think of the EHL, how we perceive it in the Netherlands [...] is EU Europe. It is not Europe, Europe as such. [...] But what I can see from some of the objects that received the Label – that's more European dimension instead of the EU dimension." (INT6, January 15, 2019).

The issue encountered in the intergovernmental initiative in regard to the interpretability of the selection is therefore not yet concluded. Any sort of European dimension portrayed by sites must be nationally approved in the first place, or put differently, must be accepted within the national discourse about European heritage. In this way, despite the efforts taken by the EU institutions to encourage sites to reposition themselves in broader European geographical and historical contexts, site narratives do not go *per se* beyond national borders, but remain rather limited within their "usual" national environments.

4.2.3.2. THE PROJECT

The EHL does not simply invite sites to rethink their own narratives and reframe them into a wider European context, but it functions primarily as an information and communication instrument for the EU institutions (EC, 2017b). In the Label's perception, citizens need to be informed and need to be made aware of "the benefits of living in Europe as well as of the challenges ahead" (EC, 2017b, p. 8; INT4b, January 9, 2019). Once the cognitive awareness is there, informed opinions and/or emotions can be triggered (INT2, December 19, 2018).

As a result, earning the EHL title points to a site's capacity to elaborate a "project" (EC, 2018b) comprising a range of actions and activities with the ability to carry on the EU's identity story. Indeed, the Guidelines for Candidate Sites explicitly mention that:

"the 'project' [...] must encompass at the same time a long-term vision of how a site intends to highlight its European dimension as well as a short- and medium- term series of activities to give concrete expression to that vision" (EC, 2018a, p. 7; own emphasis).

It is the project that makes the Label "pragmatic" (INT9, February 4, 2019), however the same pragmatism pinpoints the envisaged instrumentality of each of the heritage sites selected to bear the EHL designation. Although sites need to create site-specific projects in agreement with the proportionality principle included in the Label, each 'project' must include a series of five to six elements designed by the EC as being the most effective means to cultivate the European narrative: information provision at the site, involvement in education, multilingualism, participation in the EHL network events, the use of new technologies (and optionally organization of artistic and cultural activities including contemporary creativity) (EP & CoEU, 2011). In the context of the present study, three of these aspects are of specific relevance, as I detail below.

The first component of the project is to "rais[e] awareness of the European significance of the site, in particular through appropriate information activities, signposting and staff training" (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 4). Interesting here is the figure of the site staff who is envisaged as a gatekeeper, the medium through which the site's (European) story is to reach the visitor. As the Panel highlights "staff information sessions and/or training for their staff on the EHL in general and on the particular reasons why their site received the Label should be an important element of the project" (EC 2017b, p. 23). The responsibility of increasing the Label's visibility and communicating the European story is also laid upon them. In this way, a site's staff becomes crucial, as their role switches from information providers to agents willing to cultivate and propagate the European story.

The second element comprised in the "project" criterion of the EHL is "organizing educational activities, especially for young people, which increase the understanding of the common history of Europe and of its shared yet diverse heritage and which strengthen the sense of belonging to a common space" (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 4). In this context, it is interesting to highlight the fact that the EHL's European administration falls under the duties of the EC's Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture who has long been the advocate of a European Educational Area. The Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg in November 2017 entitled *Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture* clearly points to the function played by education and culture "as drivers for jobs, social fairness, active citizenship as well as a means to experience *European identity in all its diversity*" (EC, 2017a, p. 2; emphasis in original). Concurrently, education remains a domain largely overseen by national authorities with the EU only occupying a supporting role, as Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) indicates (EU, 2012). In this case, through the education requirement, heritage sites designated as EHL become the means to bypass the provisions of the TFEU and to disseminate the European story within the national environments the sites' activities usually revolve in. Indeed, in its *A Roadmap to achieve the European Heritage Label Objectives*, the Panel highlights that:

"The EHL sites act as gateways for the young generation to get acquainted with the history and culture of the continent. School curricula are extended beyond borders. In the same ways as the Erasmus networks created a shared European experience of study and education, EHL sites and their network of knowledge offer shared heritage experiences to young people using their preferred communication tools." (EC, 2017b, p. 8).

Thought-provoking in the Panel's statement is the emphasis on the youth and on the collaboration with schools and educational institutes. Although in some instances the focus on educational activities for the younger generations has been contested (INT4a, January 9, 2019), the fact that all sites which have received the Label so far adhere to this sub-element of the second selection criterion indicates otherwise. The rationale behind this decision is clarified by INT2: "the EU really values if you organize activities for young generations from the idea that if you can educate the new generation of Europe about everything that has

happened before they will take it with them and they will keep it in their mind when they have to decide what the future of Europe will be.” (INT2, December 19, 2018). Nevertheless, taking the objectives of the EHL initiative into account (as explained in section 4.2.1), the choice to engage with youth, especially through educational institutes, appears to be instrumental. Not unlike the site’s staff, the teachers seem to be seen here as potential active agents in the construction of a sense of belonging to the EU.

The final element of importance in the “project” is the active participation of sites in the EHL network “in order to exchange experiences and initiate common projects” (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 4). The purpose of this network is, in fact, not only to function as a communication tool between sites, but also as a manner in which to increase the EHL’s brand visibility (EC, 2018c). Although the organization of the networking meetings is facilitated by the EC, it appears that so far this has not been done so efficiently and successfully (INT7, January 17, 2019; INT10, February 6, 2019). Coupled with the financial and logistic impediments mentioned in the next section, the network requirement is likely to push sites into arrangements which are not cross-border or pan-European as intended.

4.2.3.3. THE WORK PLAN

Candidate sites must not only demonstrate their European significance and the manner in which they intend to disseminate it to a varied (European) audience, but also prove that they are in state to carry out the proposed project (organizational and operational capacity). In the Panel’s formulation, this means that:

“[t]here should be a stable, professional and viable structure, ensuring the functionality of the site and capable of managing the proposed project.” (EC, 2017b, p. 24)

For this reason, in their application for the EHL, sites must submit a “work plan” which must comprise information regarding: the (environmentally friendly) management of the site, the preservation regime, the quality of the facilities, the public access (in particular of the youth), the sustainable development of tourism and the communication strategy around the European dimension (EP & CoEU, 2011). For the argument advanced in this study, three elements are of particular importance: the protection regime, the communication strategy and the financial implications of becoming an EHL site.

Firstly, according to the EC a site must “outline its current protection scheme and any future plan. It should list all relevant legal, regulatory, planning or institutional status of the site.” (EC, 2018a, p. 7). Therefore, obtaining the EHL title does not (directly) result in improved conservation and protection, with all such measures necessarily already in place at the moment of application. It is generally the case however that the protection and preservation of sites usually falls under national and, less often, regional or local responsibilities, with many of the sites already included in the EHL’s repertoire being monuments of national interest (e.g. Hambach Castle in Germany, Sighet Memorial in Romania, Camp Westerbork in the Netherlands). As I demonstrate in Chapter 5 through the cases of the three Dutch EHL sites, these protection regimes are one of the aspects that go against the EHL’s goal of fostering a cross-border sense of belonging to the Union.

Secondly, every candidate heritage site must engage in “developing a coherent and comprehensive communication strategy highlighting the European significance of the site” (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 4). In the Panel’s view, it is not sufficient that a site employs the Label’s logo on its website and communication materials or that it makes use of the promotional tools put at disposal by the EC (EC, 2017b). Furthermore, it is not reasonable for site managers to expect the EC to take charge of the entire communication and branding strategy, but they should build on their own capacities to increase the visibility of the Label as well as of the site under their administration (EC, 2017b), given the limited financial means available for the action. This restricted support on behalf of the EC, as I further detail in Chapter 5, works however counterproductive to the EHL’s objectives, forcing the labelled sites into mainly national arrangements to be able to meet with this requirement.

Last, but not least, it is paramount to observe that receiving the EHL designation does not grant candidate sites any financial aid. The EC only provides funding – a rather modest sum – in order to support administrative activities, the work of the independent expert Panel at EU level and as of lately the design

and management of the network and capacity building activities of the Label (EC, 2018c; INT4a, January 9, 2019; INT4b, January 9, 2019). At the same time, MS, for example the Netherlands, argue that the EHL must bear little to no financial obligations for the country under whose coordination the site falls and that the costs associated with the Label must be budgeted within the existing EU financial schemes (Verhagen, 2010). In turn, this means that sites are expected to have secured financing which would enable them to fulfil the activities proposed in the project (as described in section 4.2.3.2). For this purpose, sites may apply for funding in a host of other (partly) EU programmes on a project-by-project basis. For example, the European Heritage Stories – one of the flagship initiatives of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 – was one such project where EHL sites together with European Heritage Days communities and EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Award winners were invited to participate (INT4a, January 9, 2019; INT4b, January 9, 2019). However, in most cases, the major funding sources are not EU projects and programmes, but fund-raising actions at national level (INT7, January 17, 2019; INT8, January 29, 2019). This further confines the EHL sites within their national environments, instead of encouraging working across borders, as I explain through the case of Camp Westerbork, the Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty in section 5.3.2 of the present report.

4.2.4 THE ROLES AND THE SELECTION PROCEDURE

In comparison to the intergovernmental initiative where states were responsible for the selection process and the overall reinforcement of the Label as highlighted in section 4.1, the new EU-led Label witnesses a new division of roles and tasks between the EU and national levels. Looking at the EU level in the first place, the EC, and more precisely, the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture as mentioned in section 4.2.3.2, is the entity responsible for the secretariat and general administration of the Label. Moreover, the overall communication around the EHL, including the administration of the Label's webpage, the elaboration of communication materials such as postcards, but also the organization of the networking events prescribed in the criteria is also (partly) the responsibility of the EC.

In addition, given its supporting role, the EC also assists and facilitates the work of the European Panel of independent experts responsible for assessing the candidatures according to the selection criteria underlined in section 4.2.3 and for providing a recommendation report on the sites to be designated as EHL (EC, 2017b). The Panel itself is formed out of 13 members, assigned by different European bodies for a period of three years as follows: four by the EP, four by the CoEU, four by the EC and one by the Committee of Regions. Under Decision No 1194/2011/EU, all panels members should have demonstrable “experience and expertise in the fields relevant to the objectives of the action” and be “drawn from a balanced geographical spectrum” (EP & CoEU, 2011, p. 5). Apart from its evaluator role, it is also the Panel's task to monitor the correct application of the selection criteria across the MS in collaboration with the respective National Coordinators (EP & CoEU, 2011). It is significant to remark that the Label is awarded on a permanent basis, although each and every site must be monitored every four years, in order to ensure that it conforms to the project and work plan advanced in the original application (EP & CoEU, 2011). If failure to fulfil the selection criteria is observed and no action is taken to adjust, the expert Panel may advise the Commission to strip the heritage site in question of its distinction.

Turning to the overall role of the nation-state in the EHL initiative, the MS appear to be involved in three different processes, namely ratification, pre-selection, and monitoring. Firstly, for sites to be eligible for the EHL, MS need to ratify the scheme. In line with the principle of subsidiarity, this ratification is done on voluntary basis, with 24 out of the 28 current EU MS currently having confirmed their participation. Secondly, once participation in the initiative is sanctioned, MS are responsible for the communication of the information offered by the EC to the public and for the organization and implementation of the national pre-selection process on a biennial basis. It is at the MS's discretion to institute their own selection procedures and calendar as long as the final applications submitted to the EC comply with the scheme's European-level guidelines. It is also important to note that at the stage of pre-selection, each MS may only propose two candidate sites per selection year (EP & CoEU, 2011). Coupled with the limitation of only one awarded site per country that the independent expert Panel must respect, this condition ensures that the EHL's list of

labelled sites is balanced and no country is overrepresented. Finally, although assisted by the European expert Panel, it is the MS's, and more precisely the National Coordinator's, duty to monitor the appropriate application of the Label's criteria (EC, 2010a).

In other words, the manner in which the overall selection procedure is organized lays much of the responsibility around the EHL at the national level. This exposes anew the contestation between the national and European levels of significance around the EHL, in which the MS appear to be the most influential stakeholders. In the following chapter, through the analysis of the Dutch EHL sites – the Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork, and the Maastricht Treaty, I illustrate how this is indeed the case.

5 THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE LABEL: IN PRACTICE

After a preparatory year, 2013 and 2014 constituted the transitional years during which the new EHL was officially put in motion. 2013 was exclusively open to the five MS which did not take part in the previous intergovernmental initiative and wished to participate in the EU one. 2014 was open to the rest of the 18 MS who did engage in the previous scheme as well (EC, 2013). Given that the Dutch government had decided not to participate in the intergovernmental initiative, the Netherlands was one of the first countries invited to exceptionally submit four candidate sites instead of two for the EHL redesigned under the EU's auspices in 2013. Since then, three heritage sites – the Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork and the Maastricht Treaty – have become the Netherlands' representation in the repertoire of European heritage the EHL embodies. From this perspective and through the examples of the three afore-mentioned sites, my attempt is to illustrate how heritage places or objects awarded the Label become a receptacle of national identity and pride rather than the force through which a European sense of belonging is constructed. In this context, I begin with an exploration of the rationale behind the Dutch government's decision to become involved in the new EU-led action. I continue with an inventory of the Dutch national actors implicated and the national pre-selection procedures put in place. I conclude by highlighting the diverse understandings of the European dimension of the Dutch EHL sites from the viewpoint of the different stakeholders and the practical actions which condemn the EHL to remain primarily a national enterprise.

5.1 TO GET INVOLVED? NOT TO GET INVOLVED?

In 2010, the then secretary of the OCW, Mrs. Marja van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, underlined that the rationale behind the Netherlands' decision not to participate in the intergovernmental initiative was the unclear distinction and added value of the EHL compared to other (international) cultural heritage initiatives: "Indeed the Netherlands, just like other (North) Western countries, did not submit any proposals under the intergovernmental programme, because the Netherlands was not convinced about the added value of this programme in comparison with, for example, the UNESCO World Heritage List."³ (van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, 2010, p. 4; own translation). Interesting in the secretary's statement is that in explaining the reasons behind the decision made, there is an underlying comparison and similarity of vision and sentiments with other countries with similar value systems, i.e. (North) Western countries such as Ireland, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Estonia (van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, 2010).

Despite this official response towards the Chairman of the Dutch Senate, INT6 suggests that the reasons for the Dutch government's wariness to participate in the intergovernmental initiative might have been in fact scepticism towards the initiators' actual motivation to establish the Label: "We have really got the feeling that the reason why our French colleagues brought the Label to the fore [...] was because there was not much room on the UNESCO WHL anymore for tangible heritage." (INT6, January 14, 2019). Similarly, INT2 indicates that the WHL could not accommodate more "old towns" and therefore a new listing system for European sites which could not become World Heritage had to be established (INT2, December 19, 2018). This allegation does not appear completely ungrounded. The latest joint application of Belgium and the Netherlands, The Colonies of Benevolence, was first submitted as a potential World Heritage site (The Colonies as World Heritage?⁴, n.d.), and, upon (temporary) rejection, is currently tendered as a possible EHL site (Possible European Heritage Label for the Colonies of Benevolence⁵, 2019). Strikingly, it seems as if the two countries display the same behaviour that they presumably accused their French counterparts of, with the EHL coming across as the lesser version of the prestigious WHL. However, it is noteworthy that according to the Colonies' webpage, the two titles do not come in conflict with each other because while the WHL is focused on the physical environment and its maintenance, the EHL concentrates on the European

³ Original text in Dutch: "Inderdaad heeft Nederland, net als andere (Noord)west Europese landen geen voorstellen gedaan onder het intergouvernementele programma, dit komt omdat Nederland in eerste instantie niet overtuigd was van de meerwaarde van dit programma t.o.v. bijvoorbeeld de UNESCO Werelderfgoedlijst."

⁴ Original title in Dutch: "Koloniën Werelderfgoed?"

⁵ Original title in Dutch: "Mogelijk European Heritage Label voor de Koloniën van Weldadigheid"

symbolic value, as also explained in section 4.2.3 (Possible European Heritage Label for the Colonies of Benevolence⁶, 2019).

In spite of the differing perspectives and blurriness around the reasons not to participate in the intergovernmental version of the EHL, the 2008 proposal of the EC for an EU-led action dispelled the initial worries of the Netherlands in regard to its participation to the Label. Nevertheless, such worries would have persisted, should the proposal not have underlined the voluntary basis on which countries may choose to partake in the initiative. For example, the state secretary of the OCW emphasizes:

*"For the sake of good order, I would like to repeat that countries can participate on a voluntary basis and hence they can decide not to participate or possibly skip a year."*⁷ (van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart, 2010, p. 4; own translation)

Analogous remarks can be found in the letters of the 2010-2012 Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. J.M. Verhagen, towards the Dutch House of Representatives. He explains that after "initial doubts", the Netherlands decided to confirm its participation, as its position regarding the freewill of countries and of sites to submit applications has been respected (Verhagen, 2010). The voluntary participation clause appears to respond therefore to the concern of the Dutch government over the sharing of power and influence over heritage sites with the EU institutions. In other words, it represents a way of tackling the possibility of heritage sites breaking out of the nationally authorized heritage discourse and validating another (European) set of practices and performances.

Nevertheless, there is ambivalence underlining the remarks of both Van Bijsterveldt-Vliegenthart and Verhagen. On the one hand, it appears crucial for the Dutch government to ensure that the EHL does not give room to the EU to supersede the nationally approved heritage narratives and thus interfere with efforts to maintain the national identity. The manner in which the overall selection process is structured, and the particular measures put in place at national level to control the stories told about the heritage extended to be European are evidence of this (see section 5.2 for a detailed account hereof).

On the other hand, whereas non-participation in the intergovernmental initiative would have had few, if any, implications for the Netherlands, non-participation in an EU-initiative could be perceived as a statement of readiness to be excluded. As INT2 asserts, "[I]t would be a statement not to join. [...] when you are requested to join and you say 'I'm not going to', then that's a statement. If everybody's in, then we are in too." (INT2, December 19, 2018). In this light, the EHL appears to transform into a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion, as a decision of non-participation means setting oneself outside of the symbolic boundaries created through and by the idea of European heritage.

Furthermore, in the Dutch rhetoric, non-participation is a proof of lack of considerable contribution to the Europe we came to know today. However, as formulated by the RvC:

*"Although there is no strong tradition of pan-European thought formation on Dutch soil, during the post-war period the Netherlands has always demonstrated to be a strong proponent of European cooperation. Together with five other European countries, the Netherlands was one of the founders of the Union. In the Council's opinion, the Netherlands should not be missing in the European Heritage register."*⁸ (RvC, 2012a, p. 3; own translation)

The Netherlands' statute as "one of the inventors of the idea of Europe" (INT1, December 10, 2018) transforms the country into a model of EU values such as democracy, freedom and rule of law. Given this

⁶ Original title in Dutch: "Koloniën Werelderfgoed?"

⁷ Original text in Dutch: "Voor de goede orde wijs ik er op dat landen op basis van vrijwilligheid kunnen deelnemen en derhalve kunnen besluiten niet mee te doen, of eventueel een jaar over te slaan."

⁸ Original text in Dutch: "Hoewel op Nederlandse bodem geen sterke traditie is op het gebied van pan-Europese gedachtevorming, heeft Nederland gedurende de naoorlogse periode zich steeds een groot voorstander van de Europese samenwerking getoond. Nederland behoorde met vijf andere Europese landen tot de grondleggers van de Unie. In de ogen van de raad mag Nederland dan ook niet ontbreken in het Europese Erfgoed register."

undeniable contribution to the establishment of the EU, the representation of the Netherlands on a list of European heritage is consequently indispensable, although that representation must match its self-image, as I detail in sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.1 below.

5.2 THE DUTCH NATIONAL PRE-SELECTION

Remaining faithful to the position adopted in the negotiation phase, the Dutch national government instituted particular practical procedures to ensure that “alongside attention given to common European values and history, [...] the regional and national diversity within Europe”⁹ (RvC, 2012b, p. 3; own translation) is also underlined. In this section, I attempt therefore to highlight who the stakeholders involved within the national pre-selection process are and what their function is. Furthermore, I seek to highlight the efforts made in order to display the national identity alongside the European one and the implications thereof.

5.2.1 THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR TASKS

In view of the decision to participate and to propose candidates for the EHL under the EU’s administration, a group of national stakeholders was assembled for the dissemination of the information about the Label, for the assistance of the potential applicants in the formal process of selection and for the evaluation of the applications. These stakeholders, each with a different function are: DutchCulture (also known as Creative Europe Desk NL), the *Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed*¹⁰ (RCE), the *Raad voor Cultuur*¹¹ (RvC) and the *Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap*¹² (OCW). For the sake of clarity, figure 5-1 visually presents these actors and their respective tasks.

DutchCulture – an organization involved in international cultural cooperation and subsidised by the OCW and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and partly by the EC when it comes to European activities – is the main responsible for the (limited) communication around the Label at national level (INT2, December 19, 2018; INT3, January 8, 2019; INT6, January 15, 2019). For this reason, at the request of the RvC (INT3, January 8, 2019; INT6, January 15, 2019) the organization created a Dutch-language dedicated website on which information regarding the national themes (see section 5.2.3 for a detailed analysis thereof), as well as the overall application process, is displayed. In addition, DutchCulture lends formal support to the RCE in gathering all candidatures and in verifying their overall completeness (INT1, December 10, 2018; INT2, December 19, 2018).

In comparison with DutchCulture whose function is rather administrative and organizational, the National Coordinator within the RCE – itself a part of the Ministry of OCW whose main responsibility is the implementation of heritage laws, regulations and policies at the national level and the offering of advice on national monuments, landscapes and archaeology among others – oversees the content-related component of the candidatures (INT1, December 10, 2018; INT2, December 19, 2018). This means offering the applicants with information on, for example, the European selection criteria outlined in depth in section 4.2.3 of this report, or the Dutch themes of interest. The National Coordinator is also the main intermediary between the candidate sites and the EC and the European expert Panel, no direct contact between the former and the latter being allowed under the EC’s rules (EC, 2018a).

The applications deemed appropriate by DutchCulture and the RCE are subsequently sent to the OCW who furthers them to the RvC (INT1, December 10, 2018; INT2, December 19, 2018)– the independent legal advisory body of the government and of the parliament in the fields of art, culture and media (INT3, January 8, 2019). The primary task of the RvC within the national pre-selection process is the evaluation of the applications conform to the content requirements (INT1, December 10, 2018; INT2, December 19, 2018; INT3, January 8, 2019; INT5, January 10, 2019). To this end, the Council works with a fixed five-member

⁹ Original text in Dutch: “Naast aandacht voor gedeelde Europese waarden en geschiedenis is het ook van belang dat een site de regionale en nationale diversiteit in Europa benadrukt.”

¹⁰ Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency

¹¹ The Council for Culture

¹² The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

expert committee which assesses all the applications and issues an advice report to the Minister of OCW (INT1, December 10, 2018). It is important to note that the members of this committee do not participate in the overall monitoring procedures taking place every four years, as mentioned in section 4.2.4 (INT3, January 8, 2019; INT5, January 10, 2019; INT6, January 15, 2019).

Upon receiving the final advice on behalf of the RvC, the Minister of OCW may decide whether to take on these recommendations to the House of Representatives or not (INT1, December 10, 2018; INT2, December 19, 2018). Subsequently, the entire House of Representatives must vote whether the heritage sites endorsed by the RvC are the contribution the Netherlands submits to the EC. As INT1 formulates it, “[i]t is actually an application of the *Ministerraad* [The House of Representatives], in a way of all the ministers on behalf of our government.” (INT1, December 10, 2018).

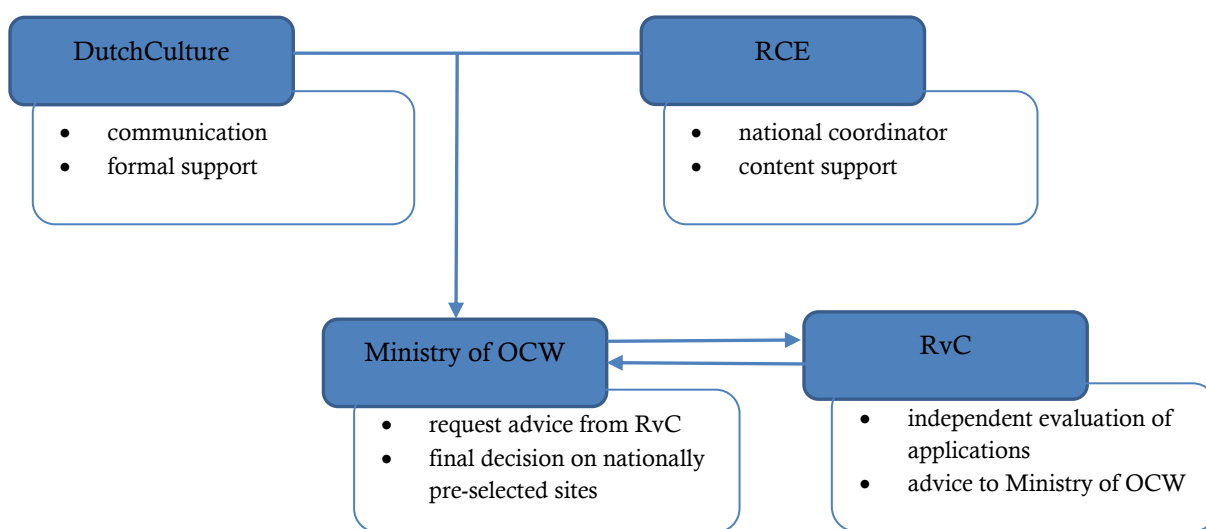


Figure 5-1. Dutch national stakeholders and their functions (own elaboration)

5.2.2 “WE NEED A STORY!”¹³

To complement the Netherlands’s support for voluntary participation described in section 5.1 and in line with the principle of subsidiarity based on which the EU functions, the 2012 Dutch secretary of state for OCW, Halbe Zijlstra, asked the RvC for advice “in regard to the choice of general themes as framework for the selection of sites and in regard to the sites that qualify for nomination for the EHL.”¹⁴ (Zijlstra, 2012a, p. 1; own translation). The secretary of state went on to reason that using a maximum of five national themes proposes several advantages among which the prevention of random choices, the reduction in the number of candidate sites and the content cohesion and cooperation between site holders. However, themes could also “articulate the importance of the Netherlands in Europe and in the creation of the European Union”¹⁵ (Zijlstra, 2012a, p. 3; own translation). Indeed, as INT2 formulates, the issue at the beginning was rather about “what is the story that we as the Netherlands want to tell the world?” (INT2, December 19, 2018). Hence, rather than fostering unity and intercultural dialogue and incorporating into a broader EU narrative, these themes would act as different sides of the image that the Netherlands as a country desires to promote.

Fulfilling the request of Mr. Zijlstra, the RvC assembled a list of nine themes which, according to them, represent the Netherlands abroad and also the ways in which the Netherlands has been contributing to the

¹³ ‘We hebben een verhaal nodig!’, title of a talk about identity and nationhood in literature having taken place at De Balie, Amsterdam, on February 15, 2019.

¹⁴ Original text in Dutch: “over de keuze van algemene thema’s als kader voor de selectie van sites en over de sites die in aanmerking komen voor de voordracht voor het EEL.”

¹⁵ Original text in Dutch: “Door middel van thema’s kan het belang van Nederland in Europa en de totstandkoming van de Europese Unie worden verwoord.”

union of the European countries. In complying with the secretary of state's inquiry to involve both experts and the youth in the definition of these themes, the RvC subjected the nine items to a directed online survey. In order of importance as resulted from the survey, the initial list comprised: water, the Golden Age, tolerance, design, international law, agriculture, mobility, sport and youth culture. Out of these items, the first three themes epitomised the common image of the Netherlands abroad in the eyes of the RvC (RvC, 2012a). However, the nine afore-mentioned topics were too specifically related to the Netherlands as a country, whereas to make these themes understandable at the level of the Union a higher level of abstraction was necessary (RvC, 2012a).

As such, it was decided to combine the topics into four overarching themes, each with two different sub-aspects, and with different levels of visibility and importance (INT1, December 10, 2018): *Tolerantie & Recht*¹⁶, *Mobiliteit & Maakbaarheid*¹⁷, *Cultuur & Sport*¹⁸ and *Geld & Koopmanschap*¹⁹ (RvC, 2012a). The first theme – Tolerance and Justice – demonstrates the Netherlands' role in the European history of tolerance and justice through its hospitality to newcomers, regardless of their origin and religion, and by having been one of the first seven countries to unite against war. The second theme – Mobility & 'Makeability' – refers to the Dutch nation's prowess in creating land from peat, swamp and even water, and to the role a high degree of mobility (through railways, highways and especially waterways) plays for a transit country such as the Netherlands. The third theme – Culture & Sport – is highlighted through the example of De Stijl, an avant-garde cultural movement initiated by Dutch artist Piet Mondriaan, and that of the Dutch Masters alongside the Ajax football club and old ice-skating icon Jaap Eden. Finally, the fourth theme – Money and Business Sense – makes reference to the role played by the Netherlands in the European commerce networks already before the 17th century by establishing the West-Indies Company and by being a member in the merchant guild confederation known as the Hanseatic League (Europeeserfgoedlabel.creativeeuropedesk.nl).

Reacting on the final themes proposed by the RvC, the secretary of state claims that:

*"I support the Council's decision to look from a broad cultural-historical perspective for themes that embody the motto of the European Union 'unity in diversity' and that specifically represent Dutch characteristics. In this way the importance of the Netherlands in Europe and the development of the European Union can be articulated. This should make it possible to select sites that played a key role in the creation of a united Europe and at the same time be a striking example of Dutch identity."*²⁰ (Zijlstra, 2012b; own translation).

Similarly, INT1 argues that the themes "are symbols of our identity, [...] symbols of the way in which the Netherlands has developed from Year 0 till today" (INT1, December 10, 2018). Consequently, the selection of topics was made first and foremost in order to address Dutch national identity. At the same time, through this choice of themes, and particularly of the first set, which also appears among the European values the EU selected for itself (EP & CoEU, 2011), the Netherlands further draws status from its positioning as one of the MS with the most representative European heritage. The heritage sites pre-selected for the Label become then repositories of Dutch national pride, rather than the unifying factors for the fabrication of a European identity that the EU seeks. Barriers and boundaries around the definition of heritage are therefore raised, instead of diminished, as I further illustrate in the following section through the examples of the three Dutch EHL sites.

¹⁶ Tolerance and Justice

¹⁷ Mobility and 'Makeability'

¹⁸ Culture and Sport

¹⁹ Money and Business Sense

²⁰ Original text in Dutch: "Ik onderschrijf de keuze van de Raad om vanuit een breed cultuurhistorisch perspectief te zoeken naar thema's die het motto van de Europese Unie «verbonden in verscheidenheid» belichamen en specifiek Nederlandse kenmerken vertegenwoordigen. Op deze wijze kan het belang van Nederland in Europa en de totstandkoming van de Europese Unie worden verwoord. Dit moet het mogelijk maken sites te selecteren die een sleutelrol hebben gespeeld in de totstandkoming van een verenigd Europa en tegelijkertijd een sprekend voorbeeld zijn van de Nederlandse eigenheid."

5.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EHL CRITERIA IN A DUTCH ENVIRONMENT

If so far I underlined the procedural aspects staged at the Dutch national level, I turn now to the manners in which the EHL is actively applied. My intention here is to demonstrate how the Label is indeed appropriated by the national government and transformed into a display of Dutch identity at the European level, as it was already pinpointed in section 5.2.2 of this report. For this purpose, I employ the examples of the three Dutch heritage sites which until today were awarded the EHL designation: Camp Westerbork, the Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty. Against this background, I start by highlighting the intermingling of the European, national and local understanding of the European dimension of heritage sites. I end by emphasizing how the criteria of the project and the work plan put in practice by each site reinforces the national boundaries around heritage.

5.3.1 NARRATIVES OF EUROPEANNESS?

Prompted by the requirement to address all of the European criteria in the national pre-selection in order to maintain the clarity and transparency of the Label, the Dutch national stakeholders must give due attention to the articulation of the European dimension presented by the candidate sites. Above the national themes, this is in fact the first factor on basis of which the RvC evaluates the applications (RvC, 2012b; 2016; 2017). Nonetheless, there is a particular understanding of the European dimension that is highlighted, namely the “EU Europe” (INT6, January 15, 2019), in spite of the fact that the EHL also accommodates sites more broadly linked to European history and culture, as explained in section 4.2.3.1. Adding detail to this perspective, INT5 points out that the nationally pre-selected sites should:

“[n]ot [be] only interesting European places, whatever that may be, but places that were witnesses as they are now of the not straight line of development of what we now have come to recognize as the European Union. [...]. We selected specifically with this idea of illustrating this contorted way that the European peoples and their partners have walked towards this haphazard goal that we now consider the European Union.” (INT5, January 10, 2019)

Therefore, in comparison to their European level counterparts (i.e. the expert Panel) who seemingly portray the EU as a peace project by their reference to its receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize (EC, 2017b), the Dutch evaluators depict the EU as a rather convoluted and gruelling cooperation between nation-states with different interests and perspectives. At the same time, it is implied that sites which fail to present this double-sided story would not be recommended as the Dutch representatives in the register of European heritage the EHL is. In turn, this points to the influence exerted by the Dutch nation-state in the definition of the image of the EU among its citizens and raises questions about the odds of success the EHL has in regard to the construction of a European identity and sense of belonging. Against this background, the Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork and the Maastricht Treaty each present a case in point.

5.3.1.1 A STORY OF PEACE?

The Peace Palace, together with Camp Westerbork, was one of the first heritage sites to candidate for the EHL designation, at the active suggestion of the Dutch Ministry of OCW. Originally, this call was met with some scepticism, because the Peace Palace is perceived as “maybe more like international heritage. Not only European heritage, but also thinking about the whole world.” (INT8, January 29, 2019). However, once with the intervention of the Municipality of The Hague, questionably also approached by the same Ministry, the original uncertainty converted into openness towards the EHL and what it symbolizes (INT8, January 29, 2019). The thought behind was that, while it is nowadays an international organization, given the host of international institutions it accommodates, “when the Peace Palace was established and the whole history before that is a really European story.” (INT8, January 29, 2019). Indeed, the final application positions the establishment of the Peace Palace as the result of an “enormous international peace movement [...] nurtured by famous writers and pacifists such as Leo Tolstoy (‘War and Peace’, Russia), Bertha von Suttner (‘Die Waffen Nieder’ [Lay Down Your Arms], Austria) and Jean Bloch, a French banker who for six years worked on a historical description of ‘The Horrors of the War’.” (Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation,

2012, p. 5; emphasis in original). Also its physical presence is the symbol of the joint efforts of several European countries to *emplace* the pacifist movement, as the building materials necessary for its construction originate from diverse European places (Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012). What is more, the Peace Palace remains today a working place for institutions representing “an international system based on the Rule of Law” (Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012, p. 9), with the application explicitly referring to Article 2 of the TFEU where the rule of law is presented as one of the core values on which the EU was built. In this way, the road to peace through the rule of law is therefore constructed as an EU narrative whose embodiment is the Peace Palace.

The European expert Panel similarly evaluates the Palace as a token of the joint European fight to reach peace through the application of the rule of law, concluding that “The Peace Palace is thus an icon and a symbol of Peace and Justice in Europe and in the word [sic], a “Peace Shrine”, stressing at the same time the significance of European efforts for peace processes.” (EC, 2013, p. 5). Once again, therefore, peace and the rule of law are emphasized as the leitmotifs of the European story and the foundational characteristics of the EU and European integration. It is interesting however that reference is not only made to the Peace Palace as the emblem of these values, but also to the city of The Hague:

“The Hague thus has been, on the one hand, a symbolic site, in which since the end of the 19th century the efforts leading to the pursuit of “the dream of world and peace” have been concentrated, whilst, on the other, it became the seat of the institutions executing the ideas of peace co-existence in Europe and in the world, such as the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration.” (EC, 2013, p. 5).

In other words, The Hague itself is claimed to be European. Nevertheless, the reference to the city must not come as a surprise, as the Municipality of The Hague was involved in the entire application and funding processes of the Peace Palace. The Carnegie Foundation – the administrator and caretaker of the Peace Palace – worked in close collaboration with the local municipality in order to rethink and reconsider the Palace’s narrative into a broader European context (INT8, January 29, 2019; Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012). The reasons behind the Municipality’s interest in the Peace Palace receiving the EHL are twofold. On the one hand, the *Monumentenzorg Den Haag*, the primary monument caretaker and licensing authority in the city of The Hague, is part of the Municipality, therefore their approval was necessary in order for the Carnegie Foundation to be able to develop the educational projects and activities implied when becoming a Label holder (INT8, January 29, 2019). On the other hand, as it already transpires from above, it is arguably the case that the EHL is not anymore simply a site-specific tool, but it is extended to become a city-wide marketing apparatus. Indeed, in 2013, the Municipality of the Hague altered the city’s coat of arms to include the expression “*Vrede en Recht*”²¹, therefore “promoting itself as a city of justice and *Vredespaleis* [The Peace Palace] [as] part of it” (INT3, January 8, 2019). Consequently, the designation of the Peace Palace as EHL site is a pivotal instrument to reinforce the Hague’s profile as the “international city of peace and justice” (“The Hague, international city of peace and justice”²², 2017) and to inflate its position regionally, nationally and internationally.

Nonetheless, while the Peace Palace itself, the Municipality of The Hague and the European expert Panel attempt to integrate the Palace into a European narrative built around the notions of peace and justice, there is also a counter voice which claims the same values as part of the Dutch national identity, but expresses regret that this was not more clearly accounted for in the application. In its 2012-issued advice, the RvC states:

“The candidates have used the application form prepared by the European Commission. This naturally does not take into account the thematic framework created specifically for the

²¹ Peace and Justice

²² Original title in Dutch: “Den Haag, internationale stad van vrede en recht”

*Dutch situation. The thematic framework has therefore hardly been able to play a role in the current structure.*²³ (RvC, 2012b, p. 3; own translation).

Certainly, throughout the application, there are no mentions of the role of the Netherlands as a country in the fostering of the peace movement and the support towards the international justice law system. The RvC nevertheless finds sufficient reason to integrate the Peace Palace in the national theme “Peace and Justice”, arguing that:

*“The fact that the Netherlands was chosen as the location to house the Court of Arbitration was related to Dutch openness and its neutral position in Europe at the time. In its history with Erasmus and Grotius, the Netherlands has been at the cradle of international law.”*²⁴ (RvC, 2012b, p. 9; own translation).

In the RvC’s eyes, the Peace Palace’s coming to being is simply a consequence of the openness and tolerance characteristic and “unique” to the Dutch nation-state. Peace and justice are no longer European values as such, but rather the exceptional contribution of the Netherlands to the repertoire of European principles. In this context, the Peace Palace’s comes to represent the Netherlands’ historical legacy and a means through which the Dutch nation-state can “showcase [itself] as a country ... of law and peace” (INT1, December 10, 2018). Put differently, it becomes a political element in the normative production and reproduction of a Dutch identity.

5.3.1.2 A STORY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR?

Similar to the Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork applied for the EHL in the first selection round organized at EU-level at the counsel of the Ministries of Internal Affairs and of OCW (INT7, January 17, 2019). Enticed by the idea of interacting more also with its history before and after the Second World War and of partaking to an international network of like-minded heritage sites, the camp took on the recommendation of the Ministry and submitted its candidature (INT7, January 17, 2019). Contrary to the narrative of peace and justice brought forward by the Peace Palace, the site in Hooghalen presents an antithetical image of war and crisis. It is here where the camp’s European dimension surfaces: a stratified (dark) history within a compact space. INT5 eloquently underlines the essence of Camp Westerbork’s appropriateness for the EHL designation:

“Camp Westerbork is primarily known for its role in the Second World War as an ‘overgangskamp’ [transit camp] for the transport towards the concentration and extermination camps. What made it interesting for the EHL is that before and after, it used to be at least four other things. It used to be a refugee camp before the war, after the war it was a prison for NSB, a refugee camp for immigrants, and opvangkamp [receiving camp] for people from former colonies. So, it’s not because of its Second World War function but because of the layering of five different functions that happen to document the vicissitudes of European history in a remarkable way.” (INT5, January 10, 2019).

However, it is not simply the layered history which recommends Camp Westerbork for the Label, but its connection to themes which also unfold elsewhere in Europe. In this sense, INT7 argues that “[t]hese are themes that have to do with European history. It is refugee crisis, World War II, collaboration, colonial history. You can’t focus on these themes from a typical Dutch point of view. It’s European history.” (INT7, January 17, 2019). The assertion is made that these themes and episodes from within the 1931-1971 period have been experienced by all, or at least, many of the European people. The search for and the articulation

²³ Original text in Dutch: “De kandidaten hebben gebruikgemaakt van het aanvraagformulier dat is opgesteld door de Europese Commissie. Hierin is uiteraard geen rekening gehouden met het specifiek voor de Nederlandse situatie in het leven geroepen thematische kader. In de huidige opzet heeft het thematische kader dan ook nauwelijks een rol kunnen spelen.”

²⁴ Original text in Dutch: “Dat Nederland gekozen werd als locatie om het Hof voor Arbitrage te huisvesten, hield verband met de Nederlandse openheid en zijn destijds neutrale positie in Europa. Nederland heeft in zijn geschiedenis met Erasmus en Grotius aan de wieg gestaan van internationaal recht.”

of these commonalities, not only in space, but also in time (e.g. the theme of refugees is still actual nowadays), are the technique through which the Camp attempts to break from the boundaries of national heritage discourses and situate itself into a broader European narrative.

The European expert Panel retains the storyline proposed by the site, embracing it not only as symbol of the Nazi “system of extermination” (EC, 2013, p. 8), but also making reference to its pre- and post-World War II functions. In the monitoring report of 2016, the Panel underlines:

“[The Camp’s] layered history and relevance is an invitation to reflect on the values on which the European Union is built.” (EC, 2016, p. 25).

For the Panel, the value of Camp Westerbork lays therefore in its remembrance component, which helps to situate the EU as a project of peace and harmony in comparison to the horrors of the war. The episodes of the persecution of the Jews by the Nazi regime and of the World War II in particular are accepted and incorporated into the EU’s narrative, but as opposites to what the EU stands for. This view is also taken on board by the RvC, who underlines that the camp in Hooghalen symbolizes one of the “*raison d’être* of the European Union” (RvC, 2012b, p. 6; emphasis in original).

While the Holocaust and World War II as the negative foundation myth of the EU are not novel, thought-provoking in the Panel’s evaluation is the reference to Anne Frank who was also deported from Westerbork elsewhere together with other 107.000 people (EC, 2013). Her character is undoubtedly distinctive and fundamental within the Dutch national discourses on the Jewish persecution and the horrors of the World War II. In distinguishing Anne Frank as representative of the EU’s memory of the Holocaust, the national heritage discourses around the Camp is however reiterated, rather than gone beyond. The chance to rearticulate a national figure is not missed by the RvC, judging by the various mentions to her throughout the national assessment of the Camp Westerbork (RvC, 2012b). Anne Frank then does not only embody the essence of Camp Westerbork’s history, but simultaneously becomes a “unique selling point” of the Dutch identity and heritage at the local, national and European levels.

At the same time, apart from the reproduction of a national historical figure on the European scene, the Camp’s designation as EHL also satisfies the yearn for a distinctive national narrative within the boundaries of the Netherlands. In comparison to the site’s own understanding that all of its history is linked to broader European themes as highlighted above, the non-World War II and non-Holocaust stories are “Dutch aspects of the camp’s history” (RvC, 2012b, p. 6; own translation). The perception of these stories as exclusively Dutch reproduces however the symbolic boundaries around Camp Westerbork as a carrier of Dutch identity and of values such as peace although in reverse, as the RvC underlines by connecting it to the national theme of “Tolerance and Justice”.

5.3.1.3 A STORY OF A MONETARY UNION AND THE POLITICAL DRAMA BEHIND?

Where Camp Westerbork’s and the Peace Palace’s respective nominations represented two sides of the same coin at the time of their application in 2013, the Maastricht Treaty’s journey to the EHL designation was more laborious, as both the successes and challenges of European integration had to be incorporated in the same narrative (INT3, January 8, 2019; RvC, 2016). The Maastricht Treaty is a turning point in the process of European integration, which resulted in the introduction of the Euro and of the principle of subsidiarity, but also in the strengthening of democratic representation, through the establishment of the Committee of the Regions and the transformation of the EP into a co-legislator (Province Limburg, 2017). In this way, the site’s narrative matches the third pillar under which European dimension can be demonstrated as per the EHL’s criteria.

In its recommendation, borrowing from the expressions used by the site-holder in the candidature dossier, the Panel states:

“The Maastricht Treaty (1991-1992) was a milestone for European integration: it was in Maastricht that the then 12 Member States agreed to proceed with the economic and monetary union, which lead to the introduction of the Euro, and reinforced democratic

representation along with an extension of European competences to new areas such as culture.” (EC, 2017b, p. 18; own emphasis).

In this way, the economic union and democracy are pinned down as European values, which together with peace and justice form the core of the EU.

Even more intriguing in the Panel’s evaluation highlighted above are two other points: the extension of the EU’s influence in the field of culture and the focus on the location of the Treaty’s signing. Firstly, highlighting culture as a new domain of concern for the EU is curious, because it does not appear in the application of the site for the EHL (Province Limburg, 2017). Although indeed culture is mentioned in article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty, the power conferred onto European institutions is only limited to a supporting function, as mentioned in the Chapter 1 of this report. Confirming this aspect, INT9 points out that “actually countries did not want the European institutions to dig into culture and into heritage. That’s the reason why they *reluctantly*, I would say, accepted a clause because they saw the interest. But on the other hand, that clause is also very, very restricted.” (INT9, February 9, 2019; own emphasis). However, the emphasis laid on the involvement of the EU in culture and heritage in the Panel’s evaluation serves to legitimize and naturalize that very same involvement.

Secondly, by underlining Maastricht as the place where the Treaty was signed, the Panel in fact augments the city’s status at European level. This is also one of the ambitions of the site’s coordination, as implied throughout the application dossier (Province Limburg, 2017). Here, the site-holder’s aim is not only to reinforce and restate the still current importance of the Treaty as one of the tenets of the EU, but also to attract attention to Maastricht as a historically important location for the discussion around Europe. For instance, in the speech given with the occasion of the unveiling of the Label, the King’s Commissary in Limburg states:

*“Welcome here at the gate of the Gouvernement, the most European located house in the Netherlands. Most European located because it lies in the home area of Charlemagne. Here in Maastricht, on the Onze Lieve Vrouwenplein, you still have the possibility to drink a beer where the Father of Europe also used to. Most European located, because we live here closer to our foreign neighbours than to our own countrymen. Brussels is closer than the Hague and, by train, you’re always going to reach Paris faster than Groningen. And most European inclined, because here – behind me in this building in our Statenzaal – the Maastricht Treaty was signed. A memorable moment that has put the city as well as the university on the international map.”*²⁵ (Bovens, 2018; own translation).

In other words, the geographic location of Maastricht at the territorial border with Germany and Belgium is what has favoured international cooperation and exchange both in cultural and economic terms. Values such as financial acumen and spirit for intercultural exchange are therefore arguably embedded in the way of living specific to Maastricht. Therefore, for the city, to have the Maastricht Treaty included in the EHL register is a confirmation of these local and regional values, and, streaming from here, a source of pride and prestige on European scale.

Simultaneously, the recognition of the Maastricht Treaty and Maastricht itself as of European significance functions as a source of tension between the different stakeholders, as this also inflates the status of the city and the province on a national level. Conform to the framework imposed at national scale underlined in section 5.2.2 of this report, the Treaty’s narrative did not only need to account for a European component,

²⁵ Original text in Dutch: “Welkom hier aan de poort van het Gouvernement, het meest Europees gelegen huis van Nederland. Meest Europees gelegen, want het ligt immers in het thuisgebied van Karel de Grote. Hier in Maastricht, aan het Onze Lieve Vrouweplein, kunt u nog steeds een biertje drinken waar de vader van Europa dat ook graag deed. Meest Europees gelegen omdat we hier dichterbij onze buitenlandse burenen wonen dan onze eigen landgenoten; Brussel ook meer nabij is dan Den Haag; en je met de trein altijd nog sneller in Parijs bent dan in Groningen...En meest Europees genegen omdat hier – achter mij in dit huis in onze Statenzaal - het Verdrag van Maastricht werd getekend. Een memorabel moment dat zowel de stad als de universiteit internationaal behoorlijk op de kaart heeft gezet.”

but also for a Dutch element. The string of actions before the site's application is witness of the importance assigned to this aspect. The Province of Limburg – as owner and manager of the building in which the Maastricht Treaty was signed, the Gouvernement aan de Maas – had the chance to submit the application for the EHL at the Dutch national level twice (INT5, January 10, 2019; INT10, February 6, 2019). The first version of the application was deemed insufficient to qualify as the Dutch submission to the EHL, because the narrative presented was a “safe story” which only pinpointed the successes of the economic union started with the Maastricht Treaty, but not the political drama and failure of the Netherlands to see its social and political goals reached (INT3, January 8, 2019; INT5, January 10, 2019; INT6, January 15, 2019; RvC, 2016). Moreover, it laid too great focus on the Euro-regional standing of the Province of Limburg (INT3, January 8, 2019; INT5, January 10, 2019; INT6, January 15, 2019; RvC, 2016). But this proved to be a misunderstanding because “if you look into the functioning structure of Europe, the Province of Limburg has nothing to say. We are part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and our Dutch government has something to say in the European discussion.” (INT10, February 6, 2019). The Province was then given a second chance to apply, upon insistence that 2017 – the year in which the Maastricht Treaty could have been awarded the EHL title by the EC – coincided with the 25-year jubilee of the signing of the Treaty (INT10, February 6, 2019; RvC, 2016). Following the advice offered by the RvC in cooperation with the RCE and DutchCulture (INT10, February 6, 2019; RvC, 2016), the new and definitive application included reference to the Netherlands's position prior to signing the Maastricht Treaty and underlined the manner in which the site-holders intend to engage in discussion about the meaning of the EU with the youth and with places with similar significance elsewhere in Europe (Province of Limburg, 2017). The upgraded application of the Province was positively evaluated by the RvC, yet it is important to observe that the accent on the Dutch dimension of the site is not so much brought to the fore in the issued advice.

One of the two remarks to it in the five-page document is:

*“The application also focuses on the failed attempt of the Netherlands to include a far-reaching political and social agenda in the Treaty.”*²⁶ (RvC, 2017, p. 2; own translation).

Nevertheless, this mention is not insignificant, for it impacts the EU narrative conveyed by the site, and it implicitly rearticulates a set of Dutch social values in opposition to the EU's overall economic character. Interestingly, however, the failure of the Maastricht Treaty in general, and of the Netherlands in particular, are only scantily touched upon, and respectively concealed, in the European expert Panel's assessment for the EHL (EC, 2017b). This choice on behalf of the Panel must be seen as instrumental as, in the attempt to fulfil the EHL's promises and objectives, it portrays the EU as a success story which transcends national borders and boundaries.

The second remark to the national role in the RvC's advice is:

*“In its previous advice the council wrote that the Maastricht Treaty is a milestone in the development of the European Union and therefore of great significance for the European history. [...] In addition to the fact that the Treaty of Maastricht has great symbolic value for the history of unification of the European Union and also for the role of the Netherlands in the process towards it, the application also fitted in with the national thematic framework.”*²⁷ (RvC, 2017, p. 1-2; own translation).

Indeed, in the site's application, the site's story is narrated in such a way to explicitly match with the national themes of “Money and Business Sense” and “Tolerance and Justice”. By highlighting the values represented

²⁶ Original text in Dutch: “Ook is er in de aanvraag aandacht voor de mislukte poging van Nederland om een vergaande politieke en sociale agenda aan het verdrag te verbinden.”

²⁷ Original text in Dutch: “In zijn eerdere advies schreef de raad al dat het Verdrag van Maastricht een mijlpaal is in de ontwikkeling van de Europese geschiedenis. [...] Naast het gegeven dat het Verdrag van Maastricht grote symbolische waarde heeft voor de eenwordingsgeschiedenis van de Europese Unie en ook voor de rol van Nederland in het proces daarnaartoe, sloot de aanvraag ook aan bij het nationale thematische kader.”

by the site as Dutch, the Treaty becomes a symbol of Dutch identity and a validation of the Netherlands's important contribution to the European integration.

5.3.2 THE EFFECTS IN PRACTICE

As argued in Chapter 4, while the articulation of the European dimension in a site's narrative is paramount, it is not sufficient for becoming a Label holder. Instead, a site must elaborate a project and possess the adequate operational capacity to convey the European dimension to a varied audience (EC, 2013; 2014; 2015; 2017b). If in the previous section I attempted to demonstrate how the European dimension a site portrays must match the nationally authorized heritage discourse and how sites become elements of national pride, I endeavour now to show how, at least in the case of the Dutch EHL sites, the practical actions around the Label binds them to their national environment and thus reinforces symbolic national boundaries. Given that there is some overlap between the selection elements of the project and the work plan, I follow the example of the RvC's issued advice and analyse them under the same section.

5.3.2.1 REGIMES OF PROTECTION AND FUNDING

For heritage sites to become an EHL holder, it is of utmost importance that suitable protection regimes are in place that grant a site's preservation and continuity. In the Netherlands, monuments are divided into diverse categories, depending on their local, regional and national importance, which determine the rights, obligations and (financial) opportunities of the monument owner in regard to the maintenance, restauration or renovation of the asset in his/her possession (Monumenten.nl, n.d.). It is important to note that these registers of heritage on different scales, are not static, as they change when heritage objects are added or removed from the list.

In regard to the three Dutch EHL sites, while Camp Westerbork and the Peace Palace are monuments of national interest (INT7, January 17, 2019; INT8, January 29, 2019; Municipality of The Hague & Carnegie Foundation, 2012), the provincial building where the Maastricht Treaty was signed in 1992 and where the EHL exhibition is nowadays located is a protected monument under city law (Province Limburg, 2017). Such protection regimes, i.e. the designation of heritage objects as national or municipal monuments, are in themselves "constitutive cultural processes" through which the sites are given meaning (Smith, L., 2006, p. 3). As such, the status of the three Dutch sites as heritage is fundamentally reinforcing an authorized heritage discourse approved at national, respectively local level. Therefore, Camp Westerbork, the Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty have only been proposed as the Dutch contribution to the register of European heritage, because they primarily have a national significance and contribute to the sense of belonging and pride towards the country.

At the same time, the protection regimes under which sites are covered also represent a source of income, in the form of subsidies, for the sites themselves. Taking into consideration the EU administration of the Label does not financially support the sites in their capacity building endeavours at least for the moment (EC, 2017b; see section 4.2.3.3 for a more detailed explanation), the state and/or municipal funding remains important for sites to be able to cover their daily activities. In regard to state subsidies, INT2 for example highlights that:

"[i]f you want your 4-year subsidy as a cultural institution, you get it from the Ministry of Culture, but the Council for Culture is deciding if your content is good enough to be handed over the money." (INT2, December 19, 2018).

Otherwise stated, subsidy inquiries are only approved, if the narrative of the site satisfies the authorized heritage discourse. Camp Westerbork, for instance, receives a fixed amount of financial aid each year on behalf of the Dutch government, which covers a third of the Camp's annual costs (INT7, January 17, 2019). This makes the state subsidy a significant contribution to the conservation and continuity of the site. There is therefore a sense of pragmatic dependency that is created between the state institutions and the heritage site, which on the one hand creates opportunities and on the other hand constricts the site.

Nevertheless, it is not only the protection regimes and the affiliated subsidy regulations that affect the probability of a heritage site to truly go beyond national boundaries built around them. The implementation of the project and activities proposed under the EHL generally requires sites to find additional funding sources. In the case of the Peace Palace for instance, this comes in the form of subsidies from the Municipality of The Hague, or from cultural foundations mainly based in the Netherlands, such as the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds or VFonds (INT8, January 29, 2019). In response to the question of whether changes in the funding structure have taken place since the award of the Label, it appears that these have remained primarily the national structures and foundations, because these are the usual ones. This is a further argument which underlines the propensity of EHL sites to in fact remain within their national environments, rather than searching for cross-border financing opportunities.

5.3.2.2 INFORMING, COMMUNICATING AND NETWORKING

As pinpointed in section 4.2.3, an important requirement of the EHL is the establishment of a communication strategy and the participation in the network of labelled sites in order to bring the overall message of the initiative closer to the public, and in this way, to encourage a sense of belonging to the Union. Although funding on behalf of the EC is generally restricted, there are investments made at European level to foster the growth and development of the network. Furthermore, even though limited, the EC also puts a set of communication tools at the disposal of the EHL sites (INT4a; January 9, 2019)

One of these tools is a travelling exhibition which heritage sites can request through their national coordinators. This travelling exhibition consists out of a set of 38 panels, in which each site is briefly described and their significance for Europe and/or the EU is underlined in four different languages. The Province of Limburg, the administrator of the Maastricht Treaty, hosted this exhibition in the beginning of 2019 on the hallway leading from the *Statentzaal*, where the Maastricht Treaty was signed, to the small exhibition space of the Maastricht Treaty. Interestingly, the best way to organize the panels was deemed by the site coordinator to be per country. In this case, the three Dutch sites –The Peace Palace, Camp Westerbork, and the Maastricht Treaty – stay next to each other at the middle of hallway’s railings, with at the left of it The Village of Schengen in Luxembourg and at the right the Sighet Memorial in Romania (Personal observation, February 6, 2019). However, as INT9 emphasizes:

“If you look at the timetable, you will see that the Panel always presented the sites on a timeline and not per country. [...] Actually, it is the only scheme that I know of where the sites are not presented by country. World Heritage is by country. But in the Panel reports, they are presented in a chronological order. The postcards, I think, are also presented in chronological order.” (INT9, February 4, 2019).

The chronological presentation of the heritage sites awarded the EHL is intended therefore to create a sense of historical continuity that goes beyond the national boundaries and to demonstrate that, in fact, national borders are rather recent. Nevertheless, as it appears from the above, the coordinators of the Maastricht Treaty did not understand and assimilate the Panel’s intention of constructing a sense of historical embeddedness of the EU and Europe. The simple action of categorizing the panels per country, as innocent as it was meant, serves here to symbolically reinforce national boundaries around the three Dutch EHL sites.

This is however not the only instance when such reinforcement unintendedly occurs. The overall added value of the EHL initiative is seen by many in the network it establishes. For instance, INT8 points out:

“I think the value for us is [...] broadening our horizon. You meet all those organizations from other countries which normally you would not meet at all. [...] Usually, the Peace Palace is a very international environment, of course, but the Carnegie Foundation is really Dutch, national. So, you tend to always stay a little bit in your national sphere and with the Dutch people, and with this Label, I think it helps to also think for yourself and for your organizations what your international story is, your international links. So, that’s one really big advantage, I thought. So, it’s the cooperation, your network.” (INT8, January 29, 2019).

Despite this, the current inefficiency of the network given the seemingly little support received by sites for the creation of it²⁸ (INT10, February 6, 2019) drives the three Dutch EHL sites to fulfil this requirement within the national boundaries. INT7 (January 17, 2019) and INT10 (February 6, 2019) highlight that in response to the desire to increase the visibility of the EHL as well of the awarded sites, the intention is to establish a national network of labelled sites in cooperation with the National Coordinator. The purpose of the network would be the exploration of the common themes between the three current EHL sites and the organization of common activities and educational programmes with the universities in the respective area of each site. Nevertheless, as INT7 argues:

“it would be much more logical that I connect with institutions in Germany or in Greece or in Denmark for instance, and not only with the Vredesinstituut [The Peace Institute] [...]. But because of all these practical things, of costs of travelling, of time, that’s what you’re going to do: ‘Oh, I’m in The Hague in two hours [...] I can arrange this, and I can arrange that!’” (INT7, January 17, 2019).

Put differently, because of logistic challenges, the three Dutch EHL sites are forced to remain within a national environment. The network thus created becomes essentially an exclusion mechanism on the basis of arbitrary national criteria and by extension, a reproduction of the national identity.

Such exclusion does not exist only at the level of the network, but in fact also at the level of the sites themselves. Although multilingualism is a necessary factor for enhancing accessibility and thus the transmission of the European dimension, not all sites fully respect this criterion. For instance, during a visit to Camp Westerbork in December 2018, while at the Museum, explanations in English and German were also available, the camp terrain was devoid of such multilingualism. All panels and audio-visual material only contained explanations in the Dutch national language, reinforcing thus the idea that the site is in fact meant for national consumption only (Personal observation, December 17, 2018).

²⁸ As of 2019, more (financial) means are invested in the creation and support of the EHL network (EC, 2018c; 2018d). Further information on these aspects was not available at the time of data collection and analysis.

6 DISCUSSION

In light of the findings highlighted in the two previous sections, in this chapter I seek to integrate this study into the broader academic body around the issues of (European) identity, place and heritage. In so doing, I firstly assemble and evaluate the primary debates and issues surfacing from the data collection and ensuing data analysis. Subsequently, I provide a critical reflection on the theoretical framework employed through the lens of this study's findings.

6.1 HOW THE ACTIONS DEFEAT THE PURPOSE

The EHL is without doubt one of the most explicit attempts of the EU to surpass the limitations of its output legitimacy strategy by instilling a sense of belonging among its citizens on the basis of a common heritage and history. Similar to other EU cultural initiatives, such as the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Days, the Label comprehends heritage as a transnational form of cultural capital which transcends the national boundaries. In this sense, the EHL promotes itself as one of the few initiatives which understands the processual and borderless nature of heritage. However, this understanding is neither complete, nor is this incompleteness accidental.

Inspecting the rhetorical construction of the EHL, one observes the typically EU “unity in diversity” discourse through which heritage is expected to play a double function: one that demonstrates the difference, and one that underlines the commonality. It is arguably the case that the most important is the latter, because the expectation is that it reinforces a feeling of belonging to a common cultural space, where certain collective identity elements are shared, though imperfectly, by all citizens. Nevertheless, I argue that in action it is the former function that is being foregrounded.

One of the instances in which the focus is laid on differences is manifested through the strengthening of (symbolic) borders around the EU itself. As shown throughout this report, because of practical, logistical and ultimately political rationales, the EHL is only open to sites within the EU's MS, although calls towards its extension to the whole of the geographical Europe and even beyond have been made. By implication then, European heritage, and to a higher level of abstraction, European identity, exists only within the borders of the EU. Even more, the EU is here Europe, at least until further notice.

The second instance where the attention appears to be laid on difference is revealed through the allocation of the greatest share of responsibility to the nation-state. It is the nation-state who ratifies, pre-selects and monitors sites. It is the nation-state who disseminates the information about the EHL at the national level, who ensures the appropriate protection regimes for the sites and who in many cases provides the necessary financial means for the conservation and continuity of these sites. In this position, I suggest it is unlikely the case that national political agendas would not be followed. In other words, although it is supposed to exceed the national boundaries, the EHL as an initiative and the labelled heritage sites become entangled into an immense bureaucratic apparatus, which does nothing but rearticulate those very national boundaries.

In this study, the Netherlands provided an excellent case of advantage being taken of the gaps into the set-up of the Label. The ambivalent position of the Dutch government already from the outset of the initiative is witness hereof. On the one hand, the stance in favour of voluntary participation in particular appears to be an attempt to limit and to establish boundaries in what concerns the EU's area of influence. On the other hand, non-participation would not have been an adequate decision, since the Netherlands is one of the forefathers of the idea of a united Europe and therefore any list of European heritage which does not include sites on its territory is deficient. To satisfy this position, the decision to partake in the EHL was followed by a series of efforts to establish a group of national stakeholders to communicate, administrate and select Dutch candidates to EHL and a national framework which bring forward key elements of the Dutch identity. What is more, prompted by the ambiguity of the Label's selection criteria, only a specific interpretation of the European dimension of heritage is accepted at national level: a narrative in which the EU is not ultimately a success story, but an intricate cooperation between countries with divergent interests. In this sense, the pre-selection of candidate sites takes place in deliberate fashion so as to serve the nationally authorized discourse about the EU and heritage.

So far, this has resulted in the candidature and awarding of Camp Westerbork, The Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty as EHL sites. In hindsight, that these heritage sites were selected as European heritage both at the national and European level is particular and has consequences for both of these scales. For instance, the Peace Palace and Camp Westerbork, both nominated as the Dutch contribution to the EHL in 2013 at the suggestion of the Dutch Ministries of OCW and of Foreign Affairs, symbolize two sides of the same coin: while the former is representative of peace, justice and the rule of law, the latter envisages the consequences of the lack thereof. The values portrayed by and through the Peace Palace coincide with the values the EU institutions claim that the European project was built upon precisely to counteract the horrors Camp Westerbork illustrates. In other words, these values are claimed to be European. At the same time, they are also claimed to be uniquely Dutch, and the differentiated addition of the Netherlands to the European heritage register. This has two significant and interlinked consequences, namely the reproduction of boundaries around these sites of national importance, and the inflation of their own status as well as the status of the Netherlands as one of the primary contributors to the ideal the EU represents. The same is valid for the Maastricht Treaty which, in comparison to the EU's negative foundation myth the Peace Palace and Camp Westerbork both speak to, represents a dual narrative of success based on monetary union and of challenge based on the failure of a political union. Although contentious at national level as regional interests clashed with the nationally authorized heritage discourses, the importance of the "Dutch result", the Maastricht Treaty, is undeniable to an extent to which not nominating the site as the Dutch contribution to the EHL would have been nonsensical. Therefore, here too, the values represented by the Treaty, i.e. "Money and Business Sense" to use the formulation of the national thematic framework, are in fact elements of Dutch identity which are extended to become part of the European collective identity. Nonetheless, these values are perceived to be first and foremost Dutch.

However, I posit that it is not only the narrative construction around the EHL sites that prevents them from truly reframing their stories in such way that they go beyond national contexts. The project and the work plan, in other words the practical criteria of the Label, are no less troublesome than the European dimension, as they further confine sites within their national environments and reinforce the already existing boundaries around them. For example, to receive the EHL title, sites must show that they are protected under the adequate preservation regimes (or in other words, they must prove they are already someone else's heritage), which can ensure their safe and secure passing on to a new generation of agents. In the case of the Netherlands, the Peace Palace and Camp Westerbork are national monuments, while the Limburg provincial building where the Maastricht Treaty was signed is a municipal monument. Given their status, it is also likely the case that the narratives around these sites must first satisfy nationally, respectively locally, authorized heritage discourse requirements rather than EU/European ones. Therefore, these protection regimes have both a symbolic and axiological function which situate the nation-state as the legitimate source of power and simultaneously advances the values and interests of the state. Nevertheless, I argue that the function of these protection regimes also builds pragmatic dependency between state institutions and the heritage sites, which regulates the behaviour of the EHL site's coordinating body. Considering that the EC provides no financial aid to the labelled sites, except for the rather limited amount of funds invested in the organization of networking events – ironically one of the most significant perceived benefits of the Label –, the implementation of the actions and activities comprised in the project requires sites to search for additional funding elsewhere. In the case of the Dutch EHL sites, simply out of habit or perhaps out of greater confidence in these institutions, the funding sources are in general (local, regional or national) governmental institutions or cultural foundations. In this way, heritage sites are provided with opportunities, while also being constricted within particular national narratives, preventing them thus from truly reaching their potential as "gateways [...] to get acquainted with the history and culture of the continent" (EC, 2017b, p. 8). Simultaneously, at least in the case of the three Dutch EHL sites, the perceived lack of support on behalf of the European administration of the Label and the logistic issues stemming therefrom pushes them into a national network, rather than a European one. Yet again, these circumstances further reproduce the national boundaries discursively established, and demonstrates how the EHL's objective of fostering a cross-border sense of belonging to the Union is once again confronted with bureaucratic banalities.

6.2 A REFLECTION ON THEORY

Having inventoried the main findings of this study, it is now high time I turn to the theoretical underpinnings of this research and reflect on their utility and support in advancing a perspective on identity, place and heritage which genuinely acknowledges interconnectedness. One of the premises on which this study was built was Massey's relational thinking about place and the introductory questions in her seminal essay *A Global Sense of Place*:

"Can't we rethink our sense of place? It is not possible for a sense of place to be progressive; not self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking? A sense of place which is adequate to this era of time-space-compression?" (Massey, 1991, p. 24).

In view of this study's findings, I argue that we can indeed *think* of place as relational, porous and ever-changing – at least in the academic circles – but I also ask if we can *practice* it as such. In today's political, social and cultural climate, the answer seems to be hardly. The EHL demonstrates that when it comes to recontextualizing heritage to a higher scale that recognizes and encourages the interconnections with elsewhere, such an initiative is met with bureaucratic difficulties and limitations which are both senseless and hard to overcome. Yet, this bureaucracy does order the world and it is especially effective when the perceived threat of deterritorialization results in nostalgic imaginations of pure identities within a bounded place (Tilley, 2006). Although she does draw the attention to the political basis on which the settledness of place is reiterated in the face of change, Massey herself recognizes that "[o]f course, in the practical conduct of the world we *do* encounter 'entities', there *is* on occasion harmony and balance; there *are* (temporary) stabilizations; there *are* territories and borders" (Massey, 2006, p. 39; emphasis in original). In spite of this acknowledgement, unfortunately we are not provided with any practical tools through which to engage politics into thinking and acting relationally and through which to defeat the bureaucratic reality in which an initiative such as the EHL is developed and performed. In this sense, should it be wished that relational thinking becomes more than a conceptual issue, it would be recommendable that further research on the EHL or other beyond national heritage initiatives focuses on the ways in which boundaries can be practically, in action, surmounted.

Until then however, what we are left with instead is a symbolic reinforcement of boundaries which portrays the EU as the container of European identity. These essentialist views of identity, although incomplete and nonsensical as Richard Jenkins (2008) pinpoints, are constructed and reconstructed through the marking of difference (Hall, 1996). Similar to old-fashioned nation-building strategies (Burgess, 2002), the EHL attempts to create communality by emphasizing shared heritage within a bounded space, which includes particular EU groups at the expense of non-EU others.

Simultaneously, the EU's component nation-states themselves attempt to build a self-image as the carriers of unique and pure identities, through the underlining of elements which are lent to be European but are first and foremost national. Harvey notices that "[t]he narration and practice of both history and heritage involve the subjective interpretation of selective material and issues" (Harvey, 2001, p. 326-327). The selectivity of heritage (Harrison, D., 2004) is, in the context of the EHL, clearly manifested through the cautious assemblage of national icons to become European heritage. In line with Smith's (2006) claim, only what is understood as matching the nationally authorized heritage discourse is defined as heritage and extended to become European, because it represents the unique contribution of the respective nation to the European narrative. What is more, as Ashworth and Graham (1997) argue, the designation of heritage as European offers higher status to the object of heritage in question, which then functions not only as a powerful tool in the negotiation of identity claims, but also as a repository of national pride which rearticulates the importance of the national identity and, thus, recreates national boundaries around heritage. In this context, it becomes clear that the EHL falls into similar traps as those experienced by the WHL which, as underlined by David Harrison, remains a "complex political process" (Harrison, D., 2004, p. 288), which "reinforces nation-states, and particularly state apparatuses' reach and control over heritage sites and processes" (De Cesari, 2010, p. 299).

7 CONCLUSIONS

The starting point of the present research study was that in the context of increasing threats to the integrity of the European project, the EU institutions have turned to heritage as the common denominator in the construction of a European sense of belonging. The EHL is the latest and likely the most explicit initiative aimed at pinpointing those places where European (Union) history and culture is concentrated. While the action has attracted a large amount of academic attention since its establishment as an EU-led action, many of the contributions tend to focus on rhetorical constructions at the EU level but fail to reveal the empirical circumstances under which the EHL is produced and reproduced. To close this gap, I set out to understand how the EHL creates the idea of European identity and heritage in practice and to assess whether its purpose of creating commonality among European citizens and fostering support for European integration is likely to be met. In order to reach this research aim, I investigated the ways in which the Label is produced and practiced in the Netherlands through the exploration of the three Dutch EHL-awarded sites – Camp Westerbork, the Peace Palace and the Maastricht Treaty. In view of this research objective, the central question guiding this research was: *In what ways is the European Heritage Label produced and practiced in the Netherlands?* On the basis of the analysis of documents and interviews conducted with representatives of the Label at different levels ranging from the local to the European, I conclude that the reproduction of the Label at Dutch national level serves to emphasise Dutch national “uniqueness” and identity and to amplify the status of the Netherlands as a country of importance in what concerns the coming to being of the European project. In this light, the efforts of the EU to establish a sense of belonging to the Union and to create a European (Union) narrative that goes beyond the national borders are being tempered with by the very setup of the EHL initiative. To this end, although remarkable and refreshing in comparison to the usual national interpretations of heritage sites, the action’s odds of success are deemed rather feeble. In the end, the EHL serves as reinforcement of national identities and EHL sites as a recipient of national pride and glory, in a way much alike Ashworth and Graham’s conclusion in their more than 20-year old article *Heritage, Identity and Europe*.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Heritage and European heritage

- How would you define heritage from a general point of view?
- What is a European heritage in your perspective? Why would it be important?
- How would such a heritage contribute to the idea of a common sense of belonging among European citizens?
- How would you describe the relationship between Dutch national heritage and the European heritage?

European Heritage Label (EHL):

- What incentivized the Netherlands as a whole to participate in the EHL programme?
- How does the EHL application and selection process look like at the Dutch national level? What is the specific task of your institution throughout this process?
 - *How did your institution find out about the Label? What incentivized you to apply to become an EHL site? (site coordinators)*
- How do sites experience the institutional arrangements of the EHL, both at a national and international level?
- Sites are asked to present a strong European dimension and to convey it to a wide audience through educational activities. How are Dutch EHL sites complying with these criteria?
 - *The first selection criterion of the Label is for sites to present a strong European dimension. In what consists your institution's European dimension? (site coordinators)*
 - *The EHL seems to focus heavily on the promotion and communication of the European dimension to a wide audience and all participating sites need to have a strong educational programme in place. How is your institution complying with this criterion? Given that 2018 was the European Year of Cultural Heritage and EHL sites appear to have been given a prominent role herein, could you describe some of the activities organized with this occasion? (site coordinators)*
 - *Apart from the European and educational dimensions, every site is expected to already have the operational capacity to handle the proposed project activities. To this end, how is your institution currently financed? (site coordinators)*
- What benefits has the label brought so far to the selected sites, specifically? What benefits has the Label brought so far to the Netherlands, in general?
- What is the (perceived) future of the EHL initiative in the Netherlands and at European level?

APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Interview Nr.	Interviewee Code	Date	Duration	Modality
1.	INT1	December 10, 2018	79 minutes	Face-to-face
2.	INT2	December 19, 2018	56 minutes	Face-to-face
3.	INT3	January 8, 2019	32 minutes	Face-to-face
4.	INT4a	January 9, 2019	66 minutes	Face-to-face
	INT4b	January 9, 2019	66 minutes	Face-to-face
5.	INT5	January 10, 2019	53 minutes	Videoconference
6.	INT6	January 15, 2019	55 minutes	Videoconference
7.	INT7	January 17, 2019	53 minutes	Phone
8.	INT8	January 29, 2019	61 minutes	Face-to-face
9.	INT9	February 4, 2019	58 minutes	Videoconference
10.	INT10	February 6, 2019	79 minutes	Face-to-face

APPENDIX C: LIST OF POLICY DOCUMENTS AND REPORTS

APPENDIX C1: EUROPEAN LEVEL DOCUMENTS

Issuing Institution	Document Title	Document Type	Publication Date
European Parliament and Council of European Union	Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label	Legislative act	22 November 2011
European Commission	European Heritage Label 2013 Panel Report	Report	2013
European Commission	European Heritage Label 2014 Panel Report	Report	19 December 2014
European Commission	European Heritage Label 2015 Panel Report	Report	2 December 2015
European Commission	Panel Report on Monitoring	Report	19 December 2016
European Commission	European Heritage Label 2017 Panel Report	Report	5 December 2017
European Commission	European Heritage Label Guidelines for Candidate Sites	Guidelines	2018
European Commission	Application Form Selection 2019 Single Sites	Application form	2018

APPENDIX C2: DUTCH NATIONAL LEVEL DOCUMENTS

Issuing Institution	Document Title	Document Type	Publication Date
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science]	Nieuwe Commissievoorstellen en initiatieven van de lidstaten van de Europese Unie [New Commission proposals and initiatives of the Members States of the European Union].	Policy Reaction	19 April 2010
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science]	Nieuwe Commissievoorstellen en initiatieven van de lidstaten van de Europese Unie [New Commission proposals and initiatives of the Members States of the European Union].	Policy reaction	31 May 2010
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science]	Adviesaanvraag Europees Erfgoedlabel [Request for Advice European Heritage Label]	Advice request	6 February 2012
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap [Ministry of Education, Culture and Science]	Nieuwe visie cultuurbeleid. Brief van de Statssecretaris van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap aan de Voorzitter van de Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal [New vision on cultural policy: Letter from the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science to the President of the House of Representatives]	Policy reaction	25 June 2012
Raad voor Cultuur [Council for Culture]	Plaatsen van herinnering: Naar een Europees erfgoedlabel [Places of memory: Towards a European Heritage Label]	Advice	May 2012
Municipality of The Hague and Carnegie Stichting	Application Form European Heritage Label	Application	2012
Raad voor Cultuur [Council for Culture]	Advies Kandidaten Europees Erfgoedlabel [Advice Candidates European Heritage Label]	Advice	20 December 2012

Raad voor Cultuur [Council for Culture]	Advies Nederlandse kandidatuur Europees Erfgoedlabel 2017 [Advice Dutch candidature European Heritage Label 2017]	Advice	30 November 2016
Province of Limburg	Application Form European Heritage Label	Application	2017
Raad voor Cultuur [Council for Culture]	Advies Nederlandse kandidatuur Europees Erfgoedlabel 2017 [Advice Dutch candidature European Heritage Label 2017]	Advice	26 January 2017

APPENDIX D: CRITERIA EHL

The criteria below are reproduced integrally as per Article 7 of Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label.

1. The attribution of the label shall be based on the following criteria ('criteria'):

(a) 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. They must therefore demonstrate one or more of the following:

- (i) their cross-border or pan-European nature: how their past and present influence and attraction go beyond the national borders of a Member State;
- (ii) their place and role in European history and European integration, and their links with key European events, personalities or movements;
- (iii) their place and role in the development and promotion of the common values that underpin European integration.

(b) Candidate sites for the label must submit a project, the implementation of which is to begin by the end of the designation year at the latest, which includes all of the following elements:

- (i) raising awareness of the European significance of the site, in particular through appropriate information activities, signposting and staff training;
- (ii) organising educational activities, especially for young people, which increase the understanding of the common history of Europe and of its shared yet diverse heritage and which strengthen the sense of belonging to a common space;
- (iii) promoting multilingualism and facilitating access to the site by using several languages of the Union;
- (iv) taking part in the activities of networks of sites awarded the label in order to exchange experiences and initiate common projects;
- (v) raising the profile and attractiveness of the site on a European scale, inter alia, by using the possibilities offered by new technologies and digital and interactive means and by seeking synergies with other European initiatives.

The organisation of artistic and cultural activities which foster the mobility of European culture professionals, artists and collections, stimulate intercultural dialogue and encourage linkage between heritage and contemporary creation and creativity is to be welcomed whenever the specific nature of the site allows this.

(c) Candidate sites for the label must submit a work plan which includes all of the following elements:

- (i) ensuring the sound management of the site, including defining objectives and indicators;
- (ii) ensuring the preservation of the site and its transmission to future generations in accordance with the relevant protection regimes;
- (iii) ensuring the quality of the reception facilities such as the historical presentation, visitors' information and signposting;
- (iv) ensuring access for the widest possible public, inter alia, through site adaptations or staff training;
- (v) according special attention to young people, in particular by granting them privileged access to the site;
- (vi) promoting the site as a sustainable tourism destination;
- (vii) developing a coherent and comprehensive communication strategy highlighting the European significance of the site;
- (viii) ensuring that the management of the site is as environmentally friendly as possible.

2. As regards the criteria laid down in points (b) and (c) of paragraph 1, each site shall be assessed in a proportionate manner, taking into account its characteristics.