

# Conference about the adaptation of heritage during the COVID-19 pandemic

*Five European regions discuss future-proof policy solutions to support rural heritage. A study about rural estates in Europe was launched.*

The mid-term conference of Innocastle was organized on the 24th of September 2020 with over 100 online participants from all over Europe and beyond. During the conference partners and stakeholders of the European project Innocastle discussed the impact of COVID-19 for the heritage sector, specifically for rural estates. In times of crisis they all need to adapt to challenges with a new way of working. Partners from each country presented different ways in which this new challenge can be tackled, such as crowd management systems, involving volunteers, digital tools for heritage management or the increased importance of green heritage.

*“There are lots of reasons for exchange and cooperation between the European regions. – – We are writing a new chapter in the history of castles and estates, with applications that belong to our time.” – Peter Drenth, deputy of the Province of Gelderland*

## Official launch of the Baseline Survey

An important project publication, the baseline survey, was launched at the Innocastle mid-term conference. The survey forms a basis of comp

arison between the four partner regions (Gelderland in the Netherlands, West Flanders in Belgium, Badajoz in Spain, and Center Development Region in Romania). It identifies five shared characteristics of rural estates across Europe and proposes 13 policy recommendations. ***The full document can be accessed here*** (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/innocastle/news/news-article/9780/the-innocastle-baseline-survey/>).

## Rural estates in challenging times

Key-note speaker, Dr. Ben Cowell, director general of Historic Houses Association from the UK, will look at various ways of adaption by country house owners in difficult times, in the past and now.

*“Normally, the Historic Houses in the UK would be welcoming 27 million visits every year, which is a significant number and it underlines just how important these places are for the economy in the UK. – – We estimate that 267 million pounds has been lost and revenue gone because doors have not been opened to tourists and visitors. And the consequence is that thousands of jobs either have been lost already or are at risk – –.” – Ben Cowell, Historic Houses Association*

## Five relevant topics discussed by Innocastle partners

Lastly, each Innocastle partner presented a short pitch about how heritage can adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pitches approached topics such as the digitisation and the democratisation of heritage, the increased value of green spaces, rethinking productive estates and rebuilding rural communities through heritage. All presentations can be found here. (<https://www.interregeurope.eu/innocastle/library/>)

*“ – The estates have seen harsher times, really hard periods such as expropriation, dereliction and wars. I hope for estates that COVID-19 will be merely a hiccup. ” – Paul Thissen, Province of Gelderland, Netherlands*



### Further information

The mid-term conference has been organised by the Province of Gelderland, Gelders Genootschap and Eurodite in collaboration with all the Innocastle partners. All partners, relevant stakeholders and all other interested parties are warmly welcome to send comments, feedback and inquiries to Elyze Storms-Smeets [e.storms@geldersgenootschap.nl](mailto:e.storms@geldersgenootschap.nl) (mailto:e.storms@geldersgenootschap.nl) or Alina Tomescu [tomescu@eurodite.eu](mailto:tomescu@eurodite.eu) (mailto:tomescu@eurodite.eu).

The full conference is still available via Facebook Live. (<https://www.facebook.com/Innocastle/videos/320042732429035>)

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### Innocastle – Innovating policy instruments for preservation, transformation and exploitation of heritage castles, manors and estates

European historic castles, manors and estates have the potential to become local catalysts for regional development and innovation. Innocastle is a project that aims to prepare them for the future by stimulating resilient policies for conservation, transformation and exploitation. The consortium of partners is composed of: National Institute of Heritage in Romania (lead partner), University College Ghent in Belgium, Province of Gelderland in the Netherlands, Province of Badajoz in Spain and the National Trust in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (knowledge partner). The project is financed by Interreg Europe, with a total budget

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## Who are we?

The Danish Research Centre for Manorial Studies is a collaboration between Gammel Estrup the Danish Manor Museum, Aarhus University, Aarhus School of Architecture and the National Museum of Denmark. The research centre was established in 2004 with the specific purpose of promoting research, education, documentation and interpretation on the cultural history and heritage of estates and country houses. It was the initiator of the

ENCOUNTER (European Network for Country House and Estate Research) and now holds the chairmanship in the steering group and the secretariat for this network as well as the secretariat of the Nordic Network for manorial history.

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## Newsletters

**Newsletter, ENCOUNTER - European Network for Country House and Estate Research**

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