



The Hague, 17 January 2018

Mr Eiki Nestor,  
Parliament of Estonia  
Lossi plats 1a  
15165 Tallinn

Subject: Patarei Sea Fort, Parliamentary discussions 22nd January 2018

Dear Mr. Nestor,

We write concerning the Parliamentary discussions scheduled for 22nd January 2018 on the future of the Patarei Sea Fort, in which we have a close interest and some concerns.

You may be familiar with Europa Nostra and its activities in supporting European heritage. You may also know of the European Investment Bank and its affiliate the EIB Institute, which amongst its other roles, is interested in culture and heritage issues.

In 2013 Europa Nostra and the EIB Institute combined to address the problems of endangered heritage and set up a programme to identify the “seven most endangered heritage projects in Europe”. This is a pro-active programme with the express intention of trying to assist these projects with a detailed review and recommendations.

In 2016 the Patarei Sea Fort was selected as part of this programme and a joint Europa Nostra/EIB Institute team of experts visited Tallinn in September 2016 and had discussions with those most directly involved, including at Ministerial level. The report of the team’s findings and recommendations was issued shortly afterwards and published on the Europa Nostra website “7mostendangered.eu” ([here](#)).

The report confirmed that the Patarei Fort by its location, architectural uniqueness and history was considered an exceptional heritage asset both nationally and at a European level. Action to preserve and renovate it is urgently required before further degradation occurs.

Serious concerns were expressed relating specifically to the strategy then proposed for a private sale to develop the site which was considered unviable financially and very risky to the heritage assets. Any such private sector initiative must be properly tested with a sound business case study and have robust protection for the heritage dimensions.

Recommendations were put forward to protect the heritage status within a properly planned development and to carry out further studies to improve knowledge of the state of the buildings, these being necessary before any long-term action is taken. Some preventive repairs were needed urgently.

A series of actions was outlined to advance the project including improved contacts with stakeholders and interested parties and a steering group was proposed with these entities involved to help to find acceptable solutions to the strategic and planning issues.

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The considerable difficulties associated with the development were clearly recognised including that of finding appropriate funding. Emphasis on grant financing, with a potential role for private contributions, seems necessary but also with a probable need for some Governmental contribution at least in the early stages.

If the project stays in the public domain as suggested then access to the EU Structural Funds becomes available, an important source of grants. These could be complemented by the private sector for specific sections of the development. More work is required on developing a sound financial case once the overall strategy of development is agreed.

Since the report some progress has been made on completing the Zoning Plan to set the guidelines for development. We have not seen the final conclusions yet but are in favour of such a structured approach to any development. Key points are to ensure that the cultural heritage of the site and the buildings are properly protected but also to allow a viable development to take place and one must accept that some compromises may be necessary. A strong management is also essential.

The adjacent Sea Plane Hangars and the conversion into a Maritime Museum is a wonderful example of how Patarei could be developed successfully and indicates the potential and benefits of such development.

The object of this letter is to encourage action on what is an exceptional cultural and architectural heritage on both a national and European level. This is particularly relevant now as 2018 is the European Year of Cultural Heritage and Estonia recently held the Presidency of the European Union, and this is a great opportunity to demonstrate Estonian concern about European heritage.

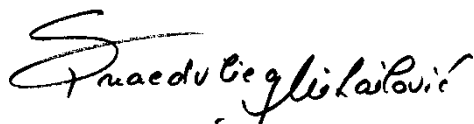
In summary we should like to:

- stress the importance of action at Patarei, to be undertaken in a structured manner;
- encourage a strategic vision which would protect the heritage while encouraging development;
- suggest a continuing role for the administration to ensure that the heritage is properly managed and with a consultative role for the public voice through NGOs such as Estonian Heritage, Europa Nostra's Estonian country representation, and Kalaranna Patarei";
- propose that a financial feasibility study is undertaken to assess the potential sources of funding (including EU grants); also when details become available that suitable business case studies are undertaken to assess viability;
- refer to the Sea Plane Hangars as an excellent and relevant example to follow.

We thank you for your consideration of these concerns in your future deliberations and wish you success in advancing the re-establishment of the Patarei Sea Fort to its former state.

We remain available to assist further as you or your colleagues may deem appropriate.

Yours faithfully,



Sneska Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic  
Secretary General

cc European Investment Bank Institute  
cc Estonian Heritage Society