



General Meeting 2023

Friday 02 June

Autun, Town Hall

President's moral report

Dear Colleagues, good afternoon to you all,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Autun town hall for the opening of our 19th Annual General Meeting, which is being held in person for the first time after four years.

First of all, I would like to thank you for your active participation, particularly in the framework of the regular triennial evaluation of Destination Napoleon as Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

On 11th of May, I travelled to Luxembourg together with Director Eleonora Berti, to present Destination Napoleon's activities and strategies in front of the Governing Board of the Enlarged Partial Agreement, in order to renew the Council of Europe's Cultural Route certification, awarded to Destination Napoleon in 2015. The expert's report has already been sent to you, and we are awaiting the official confirmation of the renewal of the certification, which should not be long in coming.

Our Federation is working to strengthen the network through the following actions:

- working with member cities and territories;
- involving new members;
- strengthening our governance through the introduction of vice-presidencies for each country;
- reinforcing the involvement of the Scientific Committee members in the activities of the FECN-Destination Napoleon.

- **Governance of the FECN-Destination Napoleon**

The member cities and regions are at the core of the activities of the Federation.

All the cities are actively committed to highlighting their Napoleonic history and heritage, despite the perception of Napoleon, whether victorious or defeated.

We are all committed to promoting your activities and to reinforce those initiatives throughout national and European projects.

Our aim is to keep existing members and strengthen the network by welcoming new territories, towns, institutions.

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We have recently received applications from Lodi, Monza and Split Municipalities, and we look forward to welcoming them in the coming months.

In order to encourage and strengthen the governance of the Federation, we have introduced vice-presidencies for each country. The vice-presidencies are responsible for reporting on activities aiming at the enhancement of Napoleonic heritage, funding opportunities and European cooperation in their respective countries. They also facilitate the development of new activities in each country.

The Scientific Committee, composed by academics and experts in the fields of cultural heritage, tourism and sustainable development, is one of the bodies supporting our Federation.

The Scientific Committee plays a key role in choosing the theme for the Destination Napoleon European Week, is informed of new membership applications, and contributes to the exhibition created with Europeana.

Its members promote knowledge of Napoleonic heritage, and by consequence of our Federation and Cultural Route, through conferences, articles and publications.

- **European and national projects**

The strengthening of the FECN-Destination Napoleon and our visibility is also achieved through the participation of the Federation and our members in European and national calls for projects.

We are currently involved in consortiums linked to the following projects:

- ECRoss Creative Europe, where we are participating along with the European Ceramic Route (Italy), Iter Vitis - Spanish Section (Spain), Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route (Serbia) ;
- MAREMORE Interreg Italy-Croatia, among the partners there is Mali Losinj, the FECN-Destination Napoleon is associated partner;
- DIGITEU - Erasmus+ KA 220;
- Heritage Power - Erasmus+ KA 210.

In France, thanks to the funding from the Ministry of Culture, we are implementing the project *Destination Napoleon in France*, aimed at developing communication and visibility tools such as guidebooks, stickers, roll-ups and so on.

Due to its certification, Destination Napoleon is also part of projects developed at the national level, and involving the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes. This is the case of the app *Itinerarios Culturales España*, developed by the Spanish Ministry of Culture, which aims to give greater visibility to all the Cultural Routes certified by the Council of Europe crossing Spain.

- **Synergies with other networks and institutions**

Cooperations with other European associations and networks are under way.

This is the case of Europeana, a European Commission funded platform sharing and using digital cultural heritage. Our collaboration began in 2020, and takes concrete form each year through online exhibitions, published alongside Destination Napoleon's European Week. The first exhibition focused on town planning in the 19th century, while the second explored the theme of botany and Napoleon.

This year we restarted of initiatives and activities, after the pandemic.

On 6th of May, the conference *Archives and Libraries. From Napoleonic history to its narrative* was held at the Palazzo Reale in Milan. Among the speakers: Charles Bonaparte and Luigi Mascigli Migliorini, member of our Scientific Committee.

We developed and strengthened partnerships with local associations and study and research centres, in particular the Centro di Documentazione Residenze Reali Lombarde and the

Associazione Napoleone e Elisa, da Parigi alla Toscana, with whom we have signed cooperation agreements.

We also created synergies with schools. Excellent activities have been carried out in Portugal, and agreements have been signed with high schools in Italy, ensuring the translation of Europeana online exhibitions into Italian and the smooth running of the conference in Milan.

- **Urban and extra-urban itineraries**

Now, in order to consolidate Destination Napoleon at local level, it is important to continue to develop and plan urban and extra-urban itineraries, linking member territories and potential ones, while highlighting Napoleonic heritage. During 2021, the city of Plymouth (UK) created an exemplary itinerary to discover the heritage of the 19th century and the places where the memory of Napoleon's presence is still alive.

The province and Municipality of Lucca (IT) have launched an application produced as a part of the Gritaccess INTERREG project, which guides tourists through the city to discover sites of Napoleonic interest. Torres Vedras (PT), together with other Municipalities, has created a cross-border itinerary, the Linhas de Torres, which retraces the defensive line of the Napoleonic Wars.

- **Visibility**

Regarding the visibility of Destination Napoleon at a European level, we have launched and reinforced the European Destination Napoleon Week. Each year, during the week of the 5th May, our members are encouraged to envisage activities and events linked to a common theme, aimed at raising awareness and exploring less known aspect of Napoleonic history.

As a member of the Committee of the Regions, I have proposed to include the presentation of the FECN - Destination Napoleon in the agenda of the Culture Commission October meeting.

- **Touristic products**

We have started to work again on the tourism offer that our Route can provide, and a workshop on the creation of tourism products led by Professor Mariotti from the University of Bologna, will take place tomorrow morning. The exchange of practices among members will enable us to build a sustainable and attractive product together.

We want to resume our participation in European tourism fairs, such as ITB Berlin and FITUR Madrid.

This year, we drew up the Federation's first activity report for the years 2021-2022. The aim is to distribute it to potential members, so that they can better understand our missions and achievements.

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The main goal of our Federation is to contribute to the creation of Europe of responsible citizens who know their history, who are proud of their territory and who are ambassadors of Europe, of their town, of their country and of their past history, through culture, heritage, memory and education. Citizens who share passions and interests, capable of building bridges between themselves, between different towns and different countries.

I'm delighted that our Federation also brings together and collaborates with members beyond the European Union.

I'm keen to build bridges with countries that, for geographical or geopolitical reasons, are somewhat on Europe's fringes, such as Egypt, where we have opened a dialogue thanks to our Director Eleonora Berti, who took part in a conference on international tourism in Cairo, or with countries currently at war.

Charles Bonaparte has decided to take a step back due to his age, and we have offered him the position of Honorary President.

In my position as Mayor of Autun, I can assure you that the town will continue to play an active role in the French association Ville Impériale, of which it is a member, thus creating a link between these two networks.

I was very surprised when Charles, to whom I have a bond of friendship, asked me last year to take over the presidency of the Federation. I am very honoured and I will try to continue his work as far as possible, ensuring the involvement of the Bonaparte family, with whom we intend to write new pages together.

Thank you for your confidence, thank you to Eleonora Berti, Arianna Duri and Nicolas Bouillon, and to the Autun Municipality ; I can assure you that we have a team and members of an excellent quality.

Vincent Chauvet.