

The Hague, 24 July 2008

Excmo. Sr. D. César Antonio Molina
Ministro de Cultura
Ministerio de Cultura
Plaza del Rey, 1
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SPAIN



EUROPA
NOSTRA

Fédération européenne du patrimoine culturel
Pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage

Présidente / President
S.A.R. La Infanta Doña Pilar de Borbón

Président exécutif / Executive President
Andrea H. Schuler

Re: Appeal for the safeguarding of Numancia and its cultural landscape

Your Excellency,

On behalf of Europa Nostra – the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage based in The Hague which represents some 250 NGOs bringing together millions of citizens committed to the safeguarding of Europe's cultural heritage, I wish to express grave concern about the irretrievable loss of cultural and natural heritage that would be caused by the projected development of a new industrial zone next to the ancient city of Numancia and in the immediate vicinity of six other areas declared to be of significant cultural interest in Soria.

Europa Nostra thereby joins its member organisation Hispania Nostra and numerous other institutions in Spain and abroad, such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, who have already protested against the proposed intervention for the industrial zone Soria II in the area of El Cabeza, due to the serious, detrimental and irreversible impact it would have on the landscape and on numerous irreplaceable cultural and natural heritage assets. Apart from Numancia, the Roman military encampment around of Garray, and the Church and Cloister of San Juan de Duero, the construction of this industrial zone will also affect the following property declared to be of cultural interest: the Walled City the left bank of the river Duero; the Cloister of the Church of San Pedro; and the Co-Cathedral of San Pedro.

A bastion of Iberian resistance against the Romans, Numancia was finally taken and destroyed by the Roman consul Scipio Aemilianus in the long and brutal siege of 134 BC. It is also closely linked with the Machado literary tradition and Cervantes. Furthermore, the Monastery of San Juan de Duero located in the threatened area is one of the first to have been built in the Romanesque style. The significance of the heritage of Numancia is clearly demonstrated by the fact that both Numancia and San Juan de Duero were the first monuments declared to be of significant artistic and historical interest by the government in 1872, upon proposal of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. For these reasons, Numancia and its cultural landscape constitute a prime symbol of truly European significance

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Europa Nostra considers the ancient city of Numancia and the adjacent areas of historical interest to be a most valuable part of Europe's common cultural heritage deserving the highest possible degree of protection. It contributes greatly to enhancing the status of Castilla y León as an extremely attractive destination for cultural tourism in Europe. **Europa Nostra therefore urges you to do all in your power to find an alternative location for the proposed industrial zone and to ensure the preservation of Numancia and its cultural landscape for present and future generations.**

Similar letters have been addressed to Mr. Juan Vicente Herrera Campo (President of the Junta de Castilla y León), Mr. Antonio Silván Rodríguez (Councilor for Public Works, Junta de Castilla y León) and to Mrs María José Salgueiro Cortiñas (Councilor for Culture, Junta de Castilla y León).

Europa Nostra will continue to monitor very closely the developments around the safeguarding of this site of exceptional importance. In the meantime, the Europa Nostra International Secretariat, particularly its European Policy / Heritage at Risk Officer, Mrs Eléonore de Merode (Tel. + 31 70 302 40 52; policy@europanostra.org), remains at your entire disposal for any consultation you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Andrea H. Schuler
Executive President

Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage, is the representative platform of over 250 heritage NGOs active in 45 countries across Europe. It is the voice of this vast movement of European civil society active in the field of heritage towards international bodies concerned, in particular the European Union Institutions, the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Europa Nostra is dedicated to putting heritage and its benefits in the mainstream of public consciousness and to making heritage a priority for public policies both at European and national levels. Its specific objectives are to promote, at a European level, high standards of quality in the fields of heritage conservation, architecture, urban and rural planning and to advocate a balanced and sustainable development of urban and rural, built and natural environment.

Europa Nostra supports national and international campaigns for the preservation and rescue of Europe's heritage at risk. It encourages exemplary initiatives in favour of the conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage by recognising outstanding heritage achievements, in particular through the running of the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards. Through its various activities, Europa Nostra seeks to highlight the importance of cultural heritage as a building block of European identity and as a contribution to the strengthening of the sense of European citizenship. www.europanostra.org