



Europae Archaeologiae Consilium  
European Archaeological Council Conseil Européen d'Archéologie  
Managing Europe's Archaeological Heritage

# Making Choices

Recommendations of the EAC  
'Making Choices' survey December  
2016 – February 2017

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## Why a Survey on Making Choices?

Recognised at EAC annual symposia, leading to the publication of the **Amersfoort Agenda** in 2015 (available on EAC website)

Pressures remain on preventive or development-led archaeology – all interlinked:

- *Financial* – justification for public and private funding
- *Scientific* – evidence/data is not knowledge
- *Relevance* – public perceptions / political perceptions

And thus

- *Sustainability* – to maintain the fundamental value of Valletta



## What kinds of choices?

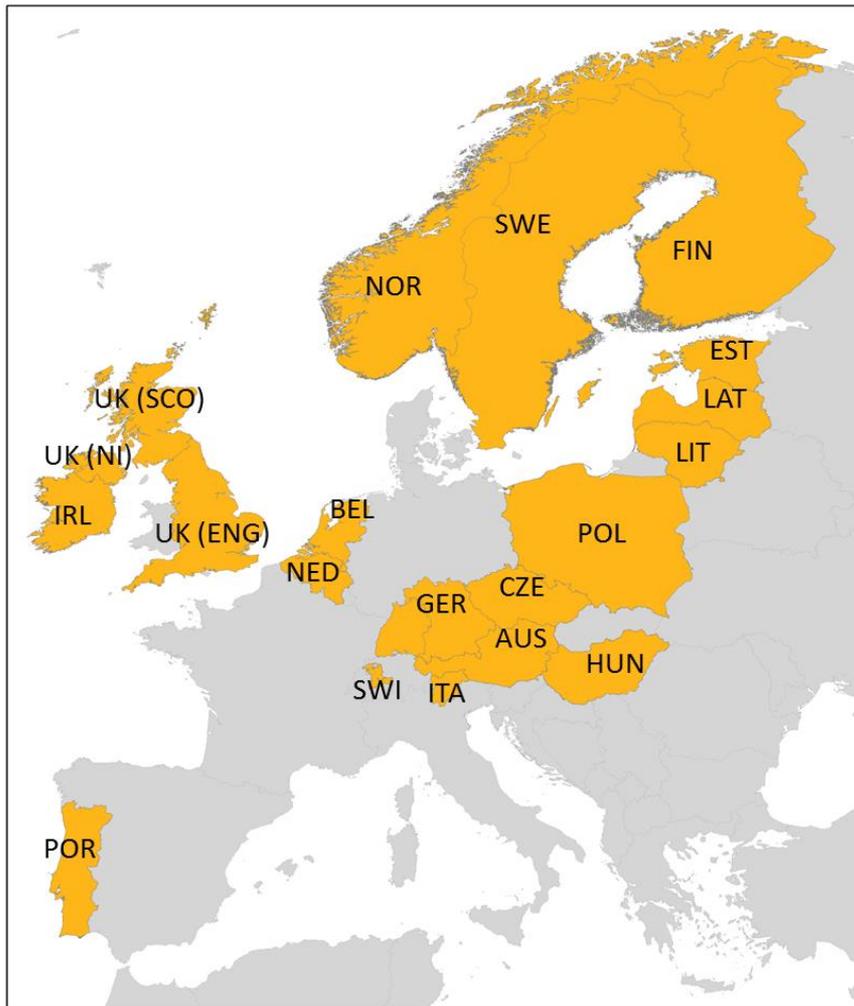
Valletta – implication of choices throughout:

- What to define as archaeological heritage
- When, how, and how much to excavate
- What questions to pose about the site, region, state
- How to capture the value of the research
- What to keep, how long for
- Who should pay and in what circumstances
- How far should communities be engaged in the decision-making

Aim to understand how archaeologists approach these choices so EAC can help develop coherence, consistency and best practice (within existing legislative frameworks)



## Snapshot of responses



Focus was on  
development-led  
archaeology

23 responses  
covering most of  
Europe



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 1. Articulating **significance** of archaeological sites.

- Broadly similar approaches to definition of sites within Valletta
- Legal differences influence the point of decision-making as to protection but less so the basis of choice
- Most states assign significance in some form, but the mechanisms, criteria and articulation are not consistent or transparent.
- **RECOMMENDATION: There is a clear desire and need for support to improve this. EAC role**



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 2. Managing **change** on archaeological sites.

- Most states evaluate locations with unknown potential, but criteria for decision vary by state
- In choosing whether to require an excavation, archaeologists do not attempt to balance wider social values of the development against the impact.
- Most states require only directly impacted archaeology to be excavated but implementation practice varies
- **RECOMMENDATION: There is a desire for support to improve consistency and have good case studies. EAC role.**



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 3. The **research process**.

- Most states require a research design for excavations
- Few states link these research designs to any national or regional research agenda(s)
- Decisions on sampling and retention of artefacts follow generic procedures rather than reflecting research needs
- There is therefore a risk that work is perceived by others to be undertaken in a research vacuum
- **RECOMMENDATION: There is a desire for support to develop research frameworks. EAC role.**



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 4. The **research benefit** – access to new knowledge.

- There is a general lack of criteria about what should get published and by what means.
- This is feeding a growing issue of lack of publication and synthesis of new knowledge and public access to that
- Decisions on sampling and retention of artefacts follow generic procedures rather than reflecting research needs
- Further work on archaeological archives, especially digital archives, is needed.
- **RECOMMENDATION: There is a need for far greater collaboration on synthesis, publication and archiving. EAC role.**



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 5. The issue of **public involvement**.

- Most states believe public involvement in decision-making about archaeology is through the spatial planning process.
- This shifts when monuments enjoying special protection are involved
- Direct public participation in development-led excavation is often limited by practical reasons
- **RECOMMENDATION: Following Amersfoort Agenda, there is still clearly a need to address this Faro issue with greater strength. EAC role.**



## Key observations and Recommendations

### 5. What states themselves saw as the greatest priorities.

- I. Guidance on **assessing and articulating significance** of archaeological sites
- II. Help in developing **national research frameworks**
- III. Help in **making the case** for development-led archaeology (supported by a robust choice framework)
- IV. Guidance on **managing (especially digital) archives** – to lead from current EAC Standard and best practice

**RECOMMENDATION: EAC should consider this as the basis for its action plan and seek support from member states and associated European and international bodies.**