

Future for religious heritage

The European network for historic places of worship

FRANCE – Heritage suffers from budget cuts



The French magazine *Valeurs Actuelles* recently published an article detailing the threats the recent budget cuts on Culture pose to France's cultural and religious heritage.

The article mentions examples of recently demolished churches, such as the church of Saint-Jacques in Abbeville, whose demolition cost 800.000 euros and replacement with a parking lot 2,6 million euros, leading the **Observatoire du patrimoine religieux** to conclude: "the municipality had the means to renovate this building."

Even in Paris, religious heritage is under threat. At least ten buildings are in very bad shape, requiring at least 500 million euros for renovation. Between the first and second term of mayor Delanoë, the budget for religious heritage conservation decreased by 27%, while the total budget of the city grew during those twelve years. The current mayor Hidalgo has promised to invest 80 million, which will not be sufficient.

Nevertheless, the French are very much attached to their religious heritage, and object to its destruction, as recent referendums show. And not only Catholic French citizens; even atheists or Muslims protest the sight of abandoned or ill-kept churches.