Pigeon building, called “Palomar”, Amayuelas de Abajo, Spain. (Photo: Natalia Jorquera)
Conclusion

Terra [In]cognita project contributed with an overview of the state of art of earthen architecture in the European Union. The principal aims of the research project were restructured for a profounder and richer impact and a real contribution to knowledge. Therefore, the project was organised in three complementary stages of work: a Scientific axis; an Educational and Dissemination axis; and a Networking axis.

Scientific axis

To integrate scientific procedures in the research project was fundamental to define a more accurate methodology of work, with more consistent and systematic outcomes. This was possible due to different undertakings:

Scientific missions

The institutional partners undertook scientific missions to the 27 European Union countries. Their assignments were:

- The definition of an earthen architecture state of art, in terms of available expertise regarding earthen heritage and contemporary architecture, conservation and related training, education and academic research, professionals and producers, etc.
- To identify accurate earthen heritage data in order to establish an up-to-date cartography of each country.
- To identify key-contacts (experts and institutions), contributing to earthen architecture awareness. The missions were assisted by a comprehensive questionnaire developed to systematise findings. Scientific missions had a definitive impact networking experts (e.g. Belgium and Romania) to unite efforts in a national and European level.

Scientific publication

The TERRA EUROPAE - Earthen Architecture in the European Union is a scientific publication dedicated to selected outcomes of the two years of research. The book's content starts with a photography overview, followed by 27 articles from 50 authors from all European Union countries, overviews of 7 European regions and to complement this extensive and inclusive publication, a 2011 map of earthen heritage in the European Union. An intensive and valued teamwork generated maps and texts from the selected regions and countries. The outcomes were systematically and consistently combined to create a relevant overview of the state-of-art of earthen architecture in Europe.

European atlas of earthen architecture

As a result of the scientific missions, an accurate cartography was developed. The European atlas brought more clarity to earthen architecture presence in several geographic areas, where it had never been acknowledged. It also established that there is earthen heritage in all the European Union countries.

Educational and Dissemination axis

Improving educational knowledge, raising awareness and providing information regarding earthen architecture in each European country, defined this axis.

European symposium

Project findings were presented on the 4th and 5th of May 2011, in Marseille (Conseil Régional de Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur), France, during the European symposium organised by Terra [In]cognita partners and ICOMOS-France. The first day was dedicated to earthen architecture in Europe and the second day was committed to earthen heritage preservation. 37 experts and researchers discussed from heritage and its conservation to material innovation and its contemporary application. The symposium received 160 participants, representing 23 countries, from which 17 were European Union countries. Digital proceedings of the symposium were also prepared and distributed during the event.

Website

The website (http://culture-terra-incognita.org) has become an important tool for contact, a platform for communication and contribution of all the
findings: availability of photos from each European country (under 'Photo Gallery'); down-load of the scientific exposition; access to questionnaires; reports per country of each scientific mission (key-people identified; key institutions identified; key-people contacted; sites identified; sites visited; contributors to cartography; notes), information concerning the European symposium; data regarding European Label; etc.

**European label**
The Award for ' Outstanding Earthen Architecture in Europe' was a distinctive recognition of earthen architectural quality. Three categories were established:
- Buildings with archaeological, historical or architectural interest;
- Buildings subjected to a remarkable and relevant intervention (restoration, rehabilitation or extension);
The initiative received a considerable number of candidacies from 15 European countries. An international jury of 9 members appointed by ICOMOS-ISCEAH (International Scientific Committee on Earthen Architectural Heritage) and the different project partners awarded the label to 42 European buildings. The award initiative brought an insightful perspective of the existent earthen heritage, significant earthen heritage interventions and earthen contemporary architecture.

**Scientific exposition**
An important contribution was made by a scientific exposition with an educational and academic purpose. The exposition was developed based on the findings of each European region. Additionally, an important illustration overview of the variety of European earthen building cultures enhanced the exposition. This synopsis was most relevant to understand the contribution of each region to the diversity of earthen architecture in Europe. The exposition is available for free download, on the Terra [In]cognita project website.

**Photography exhibition**
The exhibition was the outcome of a photography campaign on earthen architecture made by the Belgian photographer, Pierre Buch, who travelled through Normandy and the South-West of France, Andalusia and Castile in Spain, Alentejo in Portugal and Piedmont in Italy. The selected images are the subject of an itinerant exhibition focusing on public awareness.

**Booklets for general dissemination**
Two booklets were published: a photography catalogue named 'A photographer's look at earthen architecture' (Terre en vues: Regard d'un photographe sur l'architecture de terre) - an overview of Pierre Buch's photography exhibition; and the label catalogue dedicated to the 42 awarded buildings, recognised as Outstanding Buildings for their architectural quality.

**Networking axis**
To strengthen the existing partnership and to extend it to a national and European platform for knowledge exchange were the main aims for this axis. On the 6th of May, following the Symposium, a formal reunion was organised by the project partners to create a European network on earthen architecture. The 80 participants, originated from 18 European countries, recognized the importance of launching a European Federation or Association. This could well sustain the work of research and reflection undertaken by the project, and ensure in the long term, an exchange of knowledge and experience in preservation and new construction, as well as earthen architecture standards and regulations. This structure will encourage an intensification of professional and scientific exchange, and the sharing of technical expertise and joint projects dedicated to earthen architecture.

**Overall Contribution**
The project not only resulted in an exchange of information, but also brought together specialists who, until then, believed there was just a few interested in earthen architecture in their country. The project contributed to create awareness for their country's heritage and an inspiration to start research, to go beyond and to discover an unrevealed earthen heritage. The research project also provided the opportunity to identify European institutional partners for future research and consultancy, for professional projects or networking. It brought acknowledgment of other experts, academics and professionals involved in the field and a real interest for national collaboration and European networking. This will result in more coordinated efforts to establish research projects and continued scientific research responding to actual challenges. It is undeniably that the outcome that Terra [In]cognita research project brought was an important contribution to knowledge. This was possible due to the general commitment of the project partners; due to their perseverance to carry through the project and to present more results than the initial aimed and especially, due to their demand for higher quality and exceptional results. The involvement of all the authors, key-contacts and key-institutions made this project a reality with relevant findings. We thank all for their contribution, it definitely made a difference.