Special session on Brexit

Following the Brexit referendum, and the development of trends towards criticism of the ‘European (union) Project’, the Executive Board of the EAA decided it must create time at the Vilnius Annual Meeting for a Round Table. The Round Table will discuss and examine the potential impacts of the Brexit vote for European archaeology, for EAA members generally and especially for our UK colleagues, whom we always hold in the highest regard.

We felt that urgent reflection on this matter was required, because it directly affects the EAA profile and its founding principles. The idea is not to precipitate or hurry. We need to pause, reflect and to look forward with confidence. Remembering that all societies are composed of individuals and what they create, it is a time to bring to mind that inclusivity, solidarity and friendship build understanding and trust. Trust encourages integration and unity of purpose.

One of the main focuses of the Round Table will address how we can foster cooperation, define how cooperation can strengthen links and create supportive networks and define how those links and networks can produce enduring engagement and achievement. Archaeologists generally, and especially those within the EAA, have demonstrated a significant capacity to work creatively across borders and archaeologists (our members) have demonstrated the great value of fostering international, open endeavor and communities. We in the EAA are even more committed to this focus now. We will maintain our enthusiasm for imagining a more inclusive, solidary and stronger Europe and a more representative EAA in that context.

The aim of the Round Table will be to make room for the collective consideration of how EAA should react and respond. Discussion will aim to define how to position the EAA in this new and complex cultural, social and political environment, recognizing that recent events in the UK are reflective of more widespread processes in European societies that we must recognize. This is a moment when an organization such as ours needs to establish and align its position with clarity, drawing on the very significant intellectual capital of its members. We look forward to this important discussion at Vilnius. We look forward to keep our founding European projection in this challenging time.

Because of the immediacy of the decision to hold this Round Table, we are still organizing its format and speakers. However, we want to stress that everyone is welcome and we hope that members will contribute actively to the discussion. The EAA must be flexible but prompt to address this situation and its specific requirements, and this also means we must be practical and accept the risk. We do not see a risk in structuring awareness and discourse. Moreover, we thank the Vilnius local organizers for making possible to create space for this Round Table, when the whole of the academic program was organized and in place.

(Felipe Criado-Boado, EAA president, on the behalf of EAA Executive Board and Committees).”