

Statement on Inclusion – July 2016

In response to reports of racist rhetoric and abuse around the country following the result of the EU Referendum, UK museums have pledged to continue to provide a safe, inclusive and egalitarian space for all members of the communities they serve. Oxford's museums, libraries and gardens are trusted and social spaces: warm and welcoming to people of all ages and backgrounds and to visitors from all over the world. The objects in museum collections, interpreted by skilled staff and volunteers from all walks of life, help people make sense of an increasingly confusing world, providing joy and inspiration as well as a platform for debate. Museums have a key part to play in promoting a tolerant and diverse society and UK museums are committed to continuing this vital role.

The UK's national and regional museums have benefited hugely from working with EU partners and colleagues over recent decades on a wide variety of projects. These have ranged from the digitisation of collections to staff training and exchange, and from exhibition loans to large-scale projects that rethink the role of museums in creating a more inclusive society. The benefits – for our visitors, for our staff and for developing museum practice in general – have been great and long lasting.

The decision to leave the EU will have a significant impact on many museums, with uncertainty over existing and future projects and programmes, loss of access to European funding, and potential implications for the large number of EU citizens working within the UK museum sector. However, it will not mean the end of museums' international co-operation and exchange. The UK's national and regional museums, as represented by the membership of the National Museum Directors' Council, wish to ensure that the relationships built up over many years with European partners at both the institutional and individual level continue over the long-term. Accordingly, NMDC members have committed to work together and individually to continue existing partnerships, to develop new ones,

and to secure the resources that ensure working in Europe remains a key element of our work.

Paul Smith, the director of the museum, says that “the University of Oxford’s museums, libraries and gardens contain objects whose origins span the globe and cross all cultures. The same is true of our many visitors, who we will continue to welcome very warmly to our inspiring buildings and collections.”