



PRESS RELEASE

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ENTITIES AND PUBLIC POLICIES

THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME IN PARIS First assessment

In April 2019, the French national audit office, Cour des comptes announced that it would control throughout the whole rebuilding process, the fund-raising and use of donations made to the rebuilding of Notre Dame Cathedral, and would publish control reports on a regular basis. Among others, the first evaluation report shows that the use of the funds coming from an exceptionally generous outpouring of global support (825M€) is not transparent enough. Furthermore, the funding methods of the public institution in charge of the project management do not observe the legal provisions of the Act of July, 29th 2019, which organizes the national fund-raising campaign. In order to remedy this situation, Cour des comptes provides five recommendations, intended for increasing the contributors confidence, essential to realize the pledges.

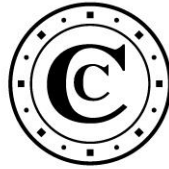
Complex management and tangled responsibilities

The management of the cathedral is characterised by fragmented jurisdictions, linked to the shared ownership of the site between central government and the *Ville de Paris*, and to its dual status as a place of worship and a monument visited by millions of visitors. The number and ownership of the objects contained in the cathedral thus remain uncertain. This fragmentation is also reflected in complex sharing of responsibilities relating to safety. The lack of forward planning at the start of 2019 for the expiry of the agreement organising fire safety between the *Architecte des Bâtiments de France*, the Rector of the cathedral and the *Centre des Monuments Nationaux*, and of the contract for fire safety services testifies to insufficient vigilance extended to these issues..

A very worrying state to be in at the start of a project planned over 10 years

Noting the very worrying state of the Cathedral due to the inadequacy of the work carried out to date, in 2016 the Ministry of Culture launched a €58 million restoration programme lasting 10 years. However, funding for this project, which was ongoing at the time of the fire, was not completely assured, despite the sponsorship commitments of the *Fondation Notre Dame*.

Mobilisation of central government departments after the fire but an unusual lack of administrative investigation



In the aftermath of the fire, the *Île-de-France* Regional Cultural Affairs Department and the various Ministry of Culture departments mobilised powerfully, and the project management was strengthened. However, contrary to the rules which apply to any administration after a serious disaster, no administrative investigation has been launched by the Ministry to determine possible failures in the organisation of the project owner and the running of the work by project management. This investigation appears all the more necessary since the restoration work has been entrusted to the same teams, and the Ministry has not organised in-depth feedback to learn the lessons from the disaster. Moreover, the Ministry was very late in bringing civil action in the ongoing judicial investigation.

A requirement for transparency in the use of funds to be observed

The national fundraising campaign launched on the evening of the fire raised €825 million from 338,086 donors (individuals and companies, in France and in nearly 140 other countries) as at 31 December 2019. By that date, €184 million had been paid and €640 million had been also pledged. These donations made it possible to finance emergency projects and to continue the safeguarding work, which was initially estimated at €65 million and now valued at €165 million.

The framework agreements between the Ministry and the four fundraising organisations designated by the Law of 29 July 2019 organising the fundraising campaign provide for the possibility of deducting from the donations management costs incurred by the Ministry to ensure collection, on the one hand, and the project management costs, on the other hand. These provisions contradict the the public authorities' commitments with regard to fundraising operations carried out gratis and, above all, the very terms of the Law of 29 July 2019 organising the fundraising campaign, which reserves the use of donations to be "*exclusively*" for the work itself, for the restoration of the movable objects belonging to central government and for training in heritage professions. Moreover, the overly general conditions provided for in these agreements do not guarantee that the fundraising organisations will be able to fulfil their obligations to inform donors with the required accuracy and compliance. This lack of transparency risks weakening the fulfilment of certain pledges in the context of economic crisis.

A public establishment financed by donations alone to conduct the work

The public establishment responsible for steering the restoration of the cathedral was established, under the proper conditions, on 1st December 2019. Its governance is marked by the weight, at all levels, of its executive chairman.

Its operation is entirely financed by donations, without any subsidies from central government budget appropriations, although it owns the monument. This total debudgeting appears contrary to the terms of the Law of 29 July 2019, which reserves the funds collected for work only. The agreement signed with the fundraising organisations despite the reluctance of some – one being totally opposed to it – and providing for charging project management costs to the donations is not enough to justify that all the establishment's current operating expenditure, around €5 million per year, are financed exclusively by donations. This funding method is all the less well founded as a quarter of its workforce is assigned to tasks with tenuous links to restoration work.


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