



PRESS RELEASE

6 October 2022

PUBLIC THEMATIC REPORT

THE NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS CATHEDRAL CONSTRUCTION SITE

On 15 April 2019, a fire broke out at Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, destroying part of the monument and threatening its survival. Following this disaster, a wave of solidarity made it possible to raise the funds necessary for its preservation and restoration through a national contribution. This momentum has continued with the confirmation of pledges, 98% of which are now contracted. As such, cash donations totalled €841.5m at the end of 2021, plus donations in kind and in the form of skills sponsorship worth at least €5m. These help to reduce the financial cost of the work and cover part of the missions on public information and promoting heritage professions. A specific public agency was created by law and since 1 January 2020 has been in charge of the work, the aim being to reopen in 2024. In accordance with the commitments made by the Court of Accounts when it published its first report in September 2020, a new audit was conducted at the end of the conservation work – as the restoration work got under way – on the conditions under which it was carried out and its financing. The Court has made seven audit recommendations, following those suggested in 2020, aimed at ensuring the restoration of the entire cathedral and preparing for its reopening, drawing on the lessons of the past, both in terms of safety and the quality of reception.

Protection work completed under a lead pollution constraint

Work to protect the cathedral was completed in 2021 at a cost of €151m, slightly less than the budget revised in 2020 to take into account the consequences of the pandemic and lead pollution. Although this pollution was successfully treated, the lack of precise regulations led to provisions on lead intended for housing and industry being applied to the site, which were partly unsuitable for work on historic monuments. With discussions on this subject ongoing for a decade and additional expenditure potentially incurred as part of the restoration, the Court calls for the urgent definition of a legal framework applicable to heritage sites faced with the presence and use of lead.

Restoration work should continue to treat issues that predate the fire

The estimated cost in May 2022 for all of the work required to reopen the cathedral, including provisions and the enhancement of the site and its expertise, is €552m, as well as the €151m for the conservation phase. In addition to this work, the donations received should make it possible to undertake a comprehensive restoration of the cathedral and address the issues that predate the fire. To ensure the project's continuity, the assessment of these issues and the prioritisation of emergencies must be carried out before the 2024 deadline, in order to assess the cost and define the

financing methods between central government, foundations and the sponsors whose agreement needs to be obtained.

A public agency suited to its missions and respect for the provisions on the use of funds received from public generosity

The public agency is suited to its mission; the strong executive presidency written into its founding decree has not prevented the proper functioning of the various particularly active bodies, which, structured around the board of directors, ensure the proper use of the funds received. A cost accounting system ensures the traceability of expenses, and regular information is provided to donors by the institution and the foundations in compliance with the texts governing the appeal to public generosity. The risks to the timetable have been analysed in detail and monitored regularly, and the conditions to ensure that the cathedral reopens in 2024 now appear to be in place.

Clarifications needed to ensure the reopening under satisfactory conditions

The public agency has obtained, on a temporary basis, the transfer of state management of the cathedral. While the latter has undertaken studies to plan ahead for its technical management when it reopens, the responsibilities of the various stakeholders at that time – the Diocese of Paris, the Centre des Monuments Nationaux, the Bâtiments de France architect – must be defined as soon as possible, and in particular the organisation of security, which cannot be postponed beyond that date. The Court reiterates that the complex situations inherited from the past must be resolved and that there must be compliance with the legislation on religious buildings. The matter of the quality of reception must also be planned, as this monument welcomed 12 million visitors before the fire. These large visitor numbers, which could increase by two million from 2024, could be seen as a liability, as work will still be under way (restoration and development of the forecourt). The Court therefore calls on central government to reflect on the management of these visitors in a wider area, together with the clergy and the City of Paris, in order to develop a new reception framework commensurate with the prestige of this monument.


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