

**Elery Hamilton-Smith, AM, D.App.Sci.**  
**Chair**  
**Task Force on Caves and Karst**

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**Open Letter Re:**

**Written Declaration on Protection of Caves as cultural, natural and environmental heritage**

I write in support of this declaration as forwarded to the European Parliament.

The extent to which karst and caves provide a heritage resource of outstanding value is not yet well enough recognised by many governmental agencies. In some European countries there is a long history of and an excellent program for the protection of such sites. This call for appropriate legislative and other action to ensure better protection across the whole of Europe must be commended for its vision and commitment.

The IUCN Task Force will be glad to provide expertise on any aspects of protection and management. We have long and extensive experience in World Heritage policies and issues. However, this must not be seen as enough in itself, but also as a model for areas of national value to also be accorded proper and comprehensive recognition and management.

We hope to see this initiative enacted and translated into practical strategies for protection.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elery Hamilton-Smith.' The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elery Hamilton-Smith  
Chair IUCN / WCPA Task Force on Caves and Karst

