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To editors concerned

Press Release

The archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral (Geneva) among the winners of the "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage - Europa Nostra".

Geneva, 16 May 2008 – The archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral is to receive a medal in the "Conservation" category of the prestigious "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage" awarded by the European Federation Europa Nostra. Recognized for the quality of the excavations it has conducted over more than 30 years, the archaeological site is also congratulated for the important museographic improvements achieved during its new extension, open to the public since 2006.

One Single Swiss Award Winner

The organizations recognized by the "European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage" meet the highest quality standards in the area of the conservation of heritage, architecture, urban and rural planning.

This year, not less than **6 prizes and 21 medals** were awarded to institutions in 15 European countries. The archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral was the only Swiss institution to receive a distinction in 2008.

Official Ceremony in Great Britain

An official ceremony to present the awards to the winners will take place on **12 June 2008**, at Durham Cathedral in **Great Britain**.

Guillaume Fatio, president of the Foundation of the Keys of St Peter, and Jean Terrier, cantonal archaeologist, will receive the medal in the name of all the professionals who took part in the renovation of the archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral.

The European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage - Europa Nostra

This award was launched jointly in 2002 by the European Commission and Europa Nostra. The European Federation of cultural heritage and Europa Nostra work to preserve and display cultural heritage. It fulfils the role of representative among international bodies, in particular the European Union, Council of Europe and UNESCO. Europa Nostra's mission is to reward exceptional initiatives on behalf of Europe's cultural heritage; the restoration of monuments or sites, urban or rural restructuring, including the maintenance of prestigious art collections or scientific research projects.

The Archaeological Site of St Peter's Cathedral, a European asset

In 2006, after 30 years of excavation, the archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral inaugurated the new extension of its research facilities and an innovative, decidedly modern museography. This huge learning area is once again available to the public and enables visitors to familiarize themselves with Geneva's history, while situating it in the wider context of the origins of our civilization. Audiovisual means, films with synthetic images and the site's museography relies on all the recent advances in technology to give back to the public the spirit of the original site. The archaeological site of St Peter's Cathedral undeniably constitutes a world benchmark in matters of archaeology. Open to the public since 1986, it is one of the largest areas in Europe devoted to religious remains of the Middle Ages. Underneath St Peter's Cathedral lie the remains of the churches that preceded it, the oldest of which goes back to the IVth century. In the basement of St Peter's, there are also some pre-Christian remains of the occupation of this sector of the town built on the hill: wells, a wheat processing area, a cultural building, and an allobroge tomb. Numerous remains of old Geneva have survived, despite the continuous occupation of the site for over 2000 years.

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