WHY? • OBJECTIVES
The European Year aims to raise awareness on the importance of cultural heritage for Europe through education and lifelong learning. This in part is being achieved through maximising the impact of Erasmus+ in the field of cultural heritage education and encouraging greater awareness of Europe’s rich cultural heritage in schools. Children and their parents are also invited to engage with cultural heritage beyond the classroom, through informal and non-formal learning, drawing on the experiences of elderly people (e.g. grandparents) and their local communities.

FOR WHOM? • TARGET GROUPS
School children (in particular 10-15 years old), teachers, parents, local communities.

WHAT? • CONTENT OF THE INITIATIVE
The initiative has several components:

COMPONENT I - VALORISING ERASMUS+ PROJECTS ON CULTURAL HERITAGE AND STIMULATING NEW INITIATIVES
E-Twinning has cultural heritage as its spotlight theme for 2018; this theme is central to most eTwinning campaigns and outputs during the year. These include the celebrations of the eTwinning Day on the 9th of May; the publication of the eTwinning book: “Learning from the past, designing our future: Europe’s cultural heritage through eTwinning”, a Professional Development Workshop and a conference focusing on cultural heritage in schools; as well as a special prize for cultural heritage projects. An Erasmus+ communication campaign is underway, putting a spotlight on over 120 projects in the field of school education, higher education, VET, youth and sport, which relate to cultural heritage.

KEY DATES:
• 9 May 2018
eTwinning day (across Europe)
• 25-27 October
eTwinning conference focusing on cultural heritage in Warsaw (Poland). eTwinning book on cultural heritage to be released
• End November 2018
Publication and dissemination of Erasmus+ success stories
• 7 December 2018
eTwinning Cultural Heritage Prize will be awarded during the EYCH Closing Conference by the EU Presidency in Vienna (Austria)

COMPONENT II - AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN: JOINT COMMISSION-UNESCO PROJECT AND A COMMISSION TOOLKIT FOR SCHOOLS
Awareness raising activities are being developed at two levels:

Raising awareness on intangible cultural heritage safeguarding in schools, a joint Commission - UNESCO project (part I – schools)
The project will be implemented with members of the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (about 2,000 schools in Europe). Teachers will be provided with guidance and tools to integrate cultural heritage in curricular and extra-curricular activities, with a special focus on intangible cultural heritage.
Development and dissemination of a toolkit for schools
In early September the Commission has published a cultural heritage toolkit for schools that combines class lessons and an online game. The toolkit is targeting teachers and pupils in primary and secondary schools and is being disseminated through existing teacher networks including eTwinning, the School Education Gateway and EUROCLIO - European Association of History Educators. The Year’s website and the Commission’s ‘teachers’ corner’ will provide teachers with additional material about the EU.

COMPONENT III - ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS
In the framework of the European Heritage Days (EHDs) the ‘European Heritage Makers Week Competition’ was launched in Spring 2018, encouraging school children to discover the European dimension of local heritage.

KEY DATES:
• 18 April 2018 (World Heritage Day): official start of the European Heritage Makers Competition
• November 2018 A visit to Strasbourg for the winners of the Competition

COMPONENT IV - STRENGTHENING EUROPE THROUGH EDUCATION AND CULTURE
European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions’ initiatives – empowering secondary school children and young people
The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) organised a debate entitled ‘Cities and regions as key drivers for strengthening European identity through education and Culture’.

‘United in diversity: a younger future for European culture’ is a European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)-led initiative that enabled secondary school pupils to visit Brussels, discuss the role of culture and cultural heritage in their lives and make policy recommendations. EESC members also discussed identity, value and cultural heritage in schools.

PARTNERS
• Within the European Commission, services dealing with culture, youth, sport and communication
• Erasmus+ National Agencies
• UNESCO
• eTwinning network, European Schools Gateway
• National coordinators for the European Heritage Days
• European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Committee of the Regions