



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT  
AND CULTURE

Culture, Creativity and Sport  
**Cultural Policy**

**ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP ON CULTURAL  
HERITAGE, 9-10 APRIL 2024**

**FINAL MINUTES**

Eleventh Meeting of the group as part of the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, 2018 (EYCH 2018). European Commission (DG EAC) chaired the meeting.

**EU Member States** attended (BE, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, MT, NL, AT, PL, RO, SI, FI, SE). Experts from Western Balkan countries (RS) attended as well.

**Stakeholders' Organisations:**

Architects' Council of Europe  
ACCR (Assoc. des Centres Culturels de Rencontre)  
Civilscape  
CAE (Culture Action Europe)  
ENCATC  
Eurocities  
Europa Nostra  
Europeana  
European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN)  
European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH)  
European Heritage Volunteers  
European Historic Houses Association

House of European History  
EMC (European Music Council)  
Federation for European Storytelling  
Future for Religious Heritage  
Interpret Europe  
Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)  
Michael Culture  
NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations)  
PEARLE

**International organisations:**

Council of Europe  
International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)  
International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)  
International Council of Museums (ICOM)  
Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)  
UNESCO

**European Parliament (observer):**

**Committee of the Regions (observer):**  
SEDEC Committee

**Individual Experts:**

KOLLIAS, Stefanos  
LEISSNER, Johanna  
STANOJEV, Jermina  
SELFSLAGH, Bénédicte  
BERTI, Eleonora

**European Commission:**

DG EAC (Chair)  
DG RTD  
EACEA  
EEAS (European External Action Service)  
DG ENV

**NB: All presentations made during the meeting have been circulated to the group.**

**Day 1, Tuesday 9 April 2024**

**(Head of Unit – DG EAC Cultural Policy unit introduced the new Deputy Director-General of DG EAC (DDG) and the new Team Leader for Cultural Heritage.**

### **Welcome address by Deputy Director-General EAC**

**DDG of DG EAC** firmly believes in the necessity to invest in culture, by following the right conditions and criteria. He emphasised the need to define better narratives, by placing the ‘cultural narrative’ within the myriad of EU priorities. He appealed to the expert group to help in this task, especially with the upcoming elections and a new incoming European Commission. Culture can improve territorial development and competitiveness. It is part of the EU identity, founded upon cultural and linguistic diversity, and should be a priority for the next European Commission (EC). € 5 bn have been allocated to culture through the social inclusion funds.

Cultural policy needs to be a strategy to attract tourism and develop new businesses, while supporting urban/rural cooperation. He expressed his hope to have more support for CH in different policy areas. He underlined the added value of EU intervention in this field: cooperation, knowledge sharing and funding.

### **Cultural heritage in regional policies**

**DG EAC – Policy officer** mentioned that DG EAC’s task is to mainstream culture in all EU policies, including regional policies. Hence today’s presentations by – amongst others - DG REGIO, and two regions (North-East Romania and Scotland) that are in the Cultural Heritage and Tourism Working Group of ERRIN (The European Regions Research and Innovation Network) and have been beneficiaries of European Cohesion funds, Horizon Europe, Erasmus + etc. The idea is to inspire others to find synergies between all available EU funding programmes that can fund CH projects.

### **Presentation by DG REGIO - Inclusive Growth, Urban and Territorial Development Unit**

Culture and CH can be supported by all the Policy Objectives (PO) of the Cohesion Policy, like any other economic sector. The Covid-19 crisis called for more support for culture and tourism, therefore a specific PO mentioning culture, cultural heritage and tourism was introduced even after the cohesion policy framework was already finalized.

Especially PO 4.6 presents a broad scope of action for using the tourism and culture investments, considering the need of culture and tourism sectors’ transformation and their future resilience, and therefore, emphasising their contribution to the green and digital transitions and fostering the role of culture in socioeconomic development.

Policy lines for programming under Cohesion policy include environmental, social and economic sustainability; broader access to culture; sustainability of investments; alignment with the policy lines of the different strategic frameworks; and development of quality principles to guide interventions (e.g., ICOMOS European Quality Principles, Davos principles, New European Bauhaus principles).

Programs are ongoing for 1 year. In the 2021/2027 ERDF, €5.4 billion have been allocated for direct support to culture and CH (including Interreg programmes), and indirect support is available e.g., through digitisation, greening, SME support, etc. 18 EU Member States have a cultural programme, mostly under PO 4.6, identifying synergies with Creative Europe, European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label.

The [European Urban Initiative](#) in support of sustainable urban development is an initiative that also supports innovation in urban areas, and capacity building (e.g., city-to-city exchanges platform open to every municipality/city within the EU and intended to address specific sustainable urban development issues). [A call is open without deadline.](#)

In terms of Innovative Actions (support of innovation at the urban level), EUI features a:

- 1<sup>st</sup> call for proposals in support of the NEB → approx. € 65.2 M
- 2<sup>nd</sup> call for proposals focusing on Greening Cities; Sustainable Tourism; and Harnessing talent in shrinking cities. → € 120 M (selection in June 2024).
- 3<sup>rd</sup> call to be published May/October '24 (energy transition and technology in cities) → € 90 M)
- Fourth call in 2025 (TBD)

[Portico](#) is a European urban knowledge platform to support cities and urban policymakers & practitioners at all levels. It has a knowledge hub (facilitating collection and access to resources, providing support and tools to cities when it comes to implementing sustainable development), which has a dedicated CH theme.

The [Urban Agenda for the EU](#) included a partnership on culture and CH. It implemented 11 actions and produced [recommendations](#). Some actions might be continued under the [Ljubljana agreement](#). A 3-year partnership on Sustainable Tourism was launched in 2023. Finally, CH is a possible topic in two upcoming partnerships (Water sensitive cities and Housing decarbonization, local heating & cooling plans).

The New European Bauhaus is also part of cohesion policy through prizes; EUI/Innovative Actions dedicated calls; the mainstreaming of NEB in policy programming documents and financing tools; and the technical assistance to 20 small municipalities who developed a NEB Toolbox.

## Q&A

**Future for Religious Heritage:** religious heritage is important for citizens' well-being and social inclusion. They requested the list of MS promoting cultural or Interreg programmes. [This information is available in DG REGIO's presentation.]

**Jermina Stanojev (independent expert)** stressed the need for more holistic approaches to CH topics in circular economy and tourism strategies. She appeals for more targeted calls for these specific topics.

**ENCATC** informed that their 'Members Talk' on the cooperation of regions from the perspectives of education, research and policymaking is scheduled for 22 April. Recently a study was published on the topic.

**DDG** remarked the existence of several horizontal projects under different labels (e.g., NEB) and recalled CH can be an all-encompassing topic.

**EE** asked how to reconcile contemporary capitalism with heritage sustainability.

**DDG** replied that initiatives such as the NEB are not strictly profit-oriented.

**Jermína Stanojev** asked if and how the programming of smart specialisation strategies is put in place. **DG REGIO Policy Officer** confirmed the presence of these topics in policy programming and welcomed the suggestion to build on this topic. She also noted decision-makers need to be pressured from the bottom and the top to mainstream culture.

**Civilscape** mentioned the importance of: sustainability in CH policy making and narratives; funding for CH in regional policies; the role of the European Heritage Label.

### **Open floor**

#### **Presentation of the Athens regional hub (part of the European Heritage Hub) and Secretary-General Europa Nostra.**

**Europa Nostra** presented the Athens regional hub, working in liaison with Europa Nostra's Country Representation in Greece. The Krakow Hub liaises with Eastern Europe, Athens Hub covers South-East Europe, i.e. not only the Balkans, but also the Caucasus region.

**Athens regional hub** explained that 11 countries will be presenting national projects during the [Connecting Civil Society for Heritage Conference in Athens](#). Topics include abandoned buildings, water management, cross-border footpaths, crafts, schools, oral history, and educational tools etc.

**Europa Nostra** added that the support of civil society and local communities, as well as the city of Athens, is essential. A new framework agreement confirming Athens's commitment to promoting CH in integration strategies for the Southern Balkans was adopted. She also noted that during the [New Delphi Economic Forum](#) (10-13 April 2024), there will be a high-profile panel on culture-based climate action and a session on EU-Western Balkans relations. An agreement was signed with Nicosia for setting up a Hub in Cyprus, facilitating linkages with the Middle East. An agreement with Venice and Lisbon will follow.

On EU enlargement, the Hub is preparing policy recommendations for the new European Commission and Parliament, and in preparation for the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union (S2 2024).

#### **ERRIN: Presentation by the region of North-East Romania and Scotland**

**North-East Romania** presented [Discover North/East Romania](#), which promotes cultural heritage and the tourism sector. The 2021-2027 North East Regional Program gathers several stakeholders (NGOs, professionals, administrators), focusing on CH through urban regeneration projects, with special attention to cultural tourism. Some of the tourism projects are: Trace SMEs, Flavours of Europe (digitisation of rural gastronomic heritage) and Smart Village (rural tourism).

[Be.Cultour](#), financed through Horizon 2020, is a collaborative project about innovative and sustainable solutions for circular cultural tourism including a training programme with 6 pilot projects. 16 applicants have been selected to be part of a peer learning and knowledge exchange scheme. In the Romania/Moldavia cross-border region (route of Stephan the Great and Saint cultural route), the project focuses on a depopulated area featuring many neglected cultural heritage sites (mainly religious and natural heritage). Following the call for innovative solutions, two ideas were selected: the Bison lands heritage programme and the Digital Nomads platform.

**Scotland** presented a best practice example selected by Cultural Heritage in Action (EU-funded peer-learning project) titled [Rediscovering the Antonine Wall](#) (a transnational heritage site, part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire WHS). The wall runs through one of the most disadvantaged areas in the UK/Scotland. It led to different participatory-activities, also involving industrial heritage, aiming at enhancing the benefits of the Antonine Wall and its surrounding area for the local community.

[ADAPT Northern Heritage](#) focuses on Northern Europe heritage and its preservation in the face of climate change, by supporting local communities and authorities, in partnership with states from the Northern European Area. In Scotland, the project involved two areas/environments heavily affected by climate change (i.e. Inveraray and Threave Castle and Estate). The project led to a risk and vulnerability evaluation assessment, centring on the adaptation of CH to climate change and its associated natural hazards.

**Scotland** also mentioned [Scotland's UNESCO World Heritage Trail](#), which brings together diverse heritage sites (both natural and cultural sites), being also the first initiative of its kind in the world.

### **OECD: Space for Culture**

OECD has worked mainly on projects aimed at developing guidance for cities, property developers and creative sectors. It has relied on two lines of work: 1) innovation and productivity in CCS; and 2) Space for Culture - Guidance for cities, developers, and creative sectors. The second line of work focuses on the problem of limited creative space in cities since small CCS organisations and arts professionals are being spaced out from urban centres. OECD defends the principle that cities should support small organisations and create infrastructure for them. Lessons learnt include that affordable housing, workshop subsidised rents and business development services are essential to stop gentrification. Some case studies are being mentioned (San Francisco, London, Toronto, Helsinki, Sydney). The project also gives practical guidance to city administrators/stakeholders.

### **Committee of the Regions: Opinion on "Promoting cultural policies in rural areas within the framework of development and territorial cohesion strategies and the 2030 Agenda"**

The opinion states that culture is an important starting point for social cohesion, and a driver of economic development and inclusion especially in problematic areas, improving the quality of life. It refers to the importance of the Green Deal. Concerning governance, policy in rural areas should be based on synergies with community-led initiatives and role-sharing. Regarding the CCS, cultural infrastructure in rural areas is an essential factor, as well as working on accessibility and promoting rural areas as places to live/work. The economic

impact of CH passes mainly through the tourist sector, as it creates jobs that are valuable for local economies. The CoR suggests increasing funding for CH, prioritising interventions designed to harness the potential of culture in rural areas and recommends that the local and regional authorities are systematically consulted in the creation of action funds supporting the CCS, especially in rural areas.

### **ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability: Toolbox for planning & designing New European Bauhaus projects**

The [NEB Toolbox](#) provides technical assistance to small/medium municipalities and boosts 20 projects across Europe, focusing on the dissemination of the approaches and values of the NEB. The toolbox aims at facilitating the replication of experiences linked to NEB and is geared towards different policymakers/authorities (e.g., municipalities).

### **Eurocities: Brief overview of current activities**

Eurocities was already partner of the [Cultural Heritage in Action](#) programme, and an online catalogue is available illustrating interesting experiences and conclusions. An ongoing project engaging with the local/regional dimension is [Living Spaces](#), a peer-learning programme designed for local and regional authorities to learn how to plan and implement high-quality architectural policies and projects. A first call for participants was launched. A second call for participants will open in April with 4 new cities.

As part of the European Heritage Hub, Eurocities ran capacity building activities and offered opportunities for cities and regions. Their participation included a now concluded call for good practices, an ongoing promotion campaign of 10 innovative practices from across Europe (not only EU) and a Call for Participants for peer learning visits, resulting in a series of recommendations.

### **UNESCO: Brief overview of current activities**

UNESCO mentioned discussions on a new operational project for the protection of underwater cultural heritage in the Baltic Sea region, with focus on archaeological explorative missions; a project funded by the Netherlands in relation to (renewable) energy policy and WHS's, a workshop in Belgium specifically on how to integrate windmills and WHS's and the [framework on culture and arts education](#) (Abu Dhabi) on the integration of culture related to skills in education.

2024 is the [70th anniversary of the Hague Convention](#), with a main event foreseen in the Hague in May.

Regarding Ukraine, Lithuania offered to host a conference on the recovery of the culture sector in Ukraine, to flag the impact of the war on the sector and to share data about the RDNA and the monitoring of CH sites, as well as an action plan developed in collaboration with all stakeholders.

[MONDIACULT](#) 2025 will be hosted in Barcelona, again a chance to encourage the inclusion of culture as a stand-alone goal in the post 2030 development agenda and its recognition as a global public good.

Finally, regarding the [International Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property](#), UNESCO [will host an event on 14 June 2024](#).

(NL) announced the UNESCO Conference (13- 15 May) on the [70 years of The Hague Convention](#) on the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict.

### **Social inclusion through cultural heritage**

**DG EAC** introduced two social inclusion projects, both recipients of the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Awards: La Paranza (Naples), awarded in the Heritage Champions category (2022); and Acta Vista (Marseille) awarded Grand Prix in the category Education, Training and Skills (2023).

#### **Cooperativa La Paranza (Naples)**

[La Paranza](#) transformed the Rione Sanita' neighbourhood (a ghetto in the city of Naples), with the motto "caring for cultural heritage is caring for people". Rione Sanita' suffers from pupils dropping out of schools at an early stage and high unemployment rates. The project initiated by Don Antonio Loffredo's (2001), tackled the degradation - material and human – of the neighbourhood and turned it in an opportunity for rebirth. La Paranza cooperative revived local traditions and heritage. By trusting the local youth and building on their abilities, the project positively affected the skills/qualifications and the working conditions of the locals. It also attracted new residents, in a way that also changed the perception of the neighbourhood. Applying the principles of the Faro Convention (in a disadvantaged territory), the project turned cultural heritage into a shared resource, as well as tackling the negative effects of gentrification.

La Paranza is funded by the private sector (e.g., San Gennaro Community Foundation), and has "returned" a total of 14,000 square meters of CH to the city. 10 churches previously inaccessible were reopened (e.g. Crociferi church, workshop of famous sculptor Jago).

One of Paranza operators shared his experience as an inhabitant of Rione Sanita'. He was part of a local musical ensemble and experienced the change that the neighbourhood benefitted from in the recent years. He was welcomed by the Paranza after dropping out of school and had a chance to regain confidence to relaunch his studies, improving his working conditions and regaining hope in the future.

#### **Acta Vista (France)**

[Acta Vista](#) is an organisation based in Marseille, a city deeply rooted in the Mediterranean culture and with a strong sense of belonging, but also with challenging realities, similar to those in Naples. Acta Vista is a non-profit organisation created in 2002, which uses built heritage as a tool to empower people, tackling the problem of the high unemployment rates of Marseilles (especially young people). Acta Vista also tackles the issue of the understaffed construction and restoration sector in France.

The solution they offer is to build bridges between social work and restoration sector. It is based on four pillars: 1) to entrust the restoration to locals; 2) to use CH sites as open-air schools; 3) to promote learning-by-doing training activities, leading to a recognised certification and 4) to bring CH back to life, by developing cultural education and mediation activities in the restored sites.

A Marseille University impact study showed that the project went beyond the expectations and had benefits in terms of employment and social inclusion rates, thanks also to the opening of new training/education courses to the public. E.g., the project "Reprennez la

Citadelle” was based on an open consultation aimed at giving new life to the Citadel of Marseille as a cultural centre for the local community.

Partners comprise local networks and partnerships, but also both national and international organisations.

## **Q&A**

**Future for Religious Heritage** asks to spread these examples: they provide figures & testimony, reinforcing the idea that managing CH can change both the associated narratives and its perception by young people, when they are entrusted of its care. **DG EAC** called on the members to share the information broadly.

**ENCACT** emphasised linkages with supporting youth, rural areas and people experiencing hardship. These projects are valuable for people dropping out of school and are an example of how to bridge separate domains, with an impact on the social narrative.

**NEMO** noted that museums struggle to communicate to young people, asked La Paranza for advice. **La Paranza:** young people must be more involved in museum management.

The **European Music Council** asked both organisations about their relationship with other kinds of heritage and their funding strategy (why only private sector, in case of La Paranza?). They also asked how they recruit the trainers that transmit the knowledge. **La Paranza:** the team of La Paranza was “formed” in connection with the local Church. They started with religious heritage sites (especially the catacombs) but also expanded to other sites (e.g., creating a gym in a hospital). In terms of funding, they chose the private sector because of the agility of private foundations vis-à-vis the public sector. In terms of training, it is important to share knowledge but also to empower/build a new generation of heritage workers by spending time with them and making them feel proud of their heritage. **Alta Vista** has a sophisticated model offering qualified training and a limited salary to workers. They have a sponsorship department to raise private funds and they also receive funding from European programmes (Erasmus+, and have applied for Horizon Europe, Creative Europe). They hope to have extra resources deriving from the exploitation of the site once it’s open to the public.

The **OECD** emphasised the need to mainstream and upscale these kinds of projects, involving the ministries of labour and employment services. While there is more awareness about how CH can help tackle unemployment and other social issues, projects like these can help sceptics understand ‘how’.

**IT** expressed concern about the use of private funds instead of public funding. It is difficult for individuals to apply and respond to a public call, but it is also hard for the public sector to evaluate the applications. **IT** also emphasised the need to create a favourable environment for these initiatives. **DG EAC** proposed to revisit the discussion about private and public funding if the group finds it necessary.

**HU** noted these activities are not only preserving CH and communities but also knowledge. Maintenance shouldn’t be overlooked, and elderly people should be involved.

**EE** commended the projects based on their engagement of youth and expressed hope that the message is disseminated widely.

**ENCACT** observed that applications for funding should target not just calls specific for the CH sector, but broader topics. Other sectors have more resources, so CH needs to tap into those. These projects disprove the idea that CH costs money and show how CH can provide economic and social value.

**HR** remarked how CH can revitalise societies and contribute to social resilience.

**ENCACT** asked the projects if they follow the sectoral approach of Strategy 21, which is supported by the EU? **Acta Vista** replied that they are aware of the Faro Convention but refer more directly to the New European Bauhaus principles and values. They encouraged members to visit the site in Marseille to fully understand the project. **La Paranza** agreed that the best way to understand the project is to visit. They announced the upcoming re-opening of a Seminary in Fontanella.

**DG EAC** concluded by sharing her personal experience visiting La Paranza and encouraged others to visit and invite the projects to share their experience in other events.

**Cultural Heritage and Research** **DG EAC** introduced the initiatives to be presented, which are part of Horizon Europe (HE) Cluster 2.

### **Update on the European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage – Presentation by DG RTD**

The European Collaborative Cloud for Cultural Heritage (ECCCH) seeks to facilitate co-creation, re-use of data and new possibilities for research and innovation. The digital infrastructure is specifically designed for cross-disciplinary collaboration in the CH sector. The ECCCH doesn't exist in a vacuum (c.f., Europeana and the European Data Space, and the European Open Science Cloud being developed in parallel).

Currently, the ECCCH project has four parallel tracks:

- Development and implementation
- Acquiring long-term MS support
- Building a user community for the cloud
- Capacity-building and skills for users.

Three-phase support by HE: Phase 1 → Design and implementation of governance and architecture. Call published in 2023. Resulting projects will start in the summer. Phase 2 → Call in 2024 to make the cloud user-friendly by implementing a set of user tools. Phase 3 → Call in 2025 to develop real-world usages of the platform. First implementation is expected mid-2029. Political support will be needed to ensure long-term sustainability. Group members are invited to join the [user community for the cloud](#).

**DG RTD** also shared other updates from HE:

- A [booklet](#) is available with 45 projects funded in calls from 2021 and 2022. New edition in Autumn with the projects funded in 2023.
- A collaborative platform for a culture and creativity driven European innovation ecosystem, launched July 2023 ([EKIP](#))
- The new [HE Strategic Plan 2025-2027](#) was published recently. It includes the New European Partnership for Resilient CH.

### **Q&A**

**EE** expressed concern about the storage of digitised CH. Data space is needed outside the MS borders to store digitalised heritage. The Expert group on a common data space for cultural heritage sent out a questionnaire to see if other MS would be interested in this. 7 out of 27 MS replied (hence the need to raise awareness). Among them, DK, LT FI, PL, SL and BE expressed interest.

**DG RTD** agreed this is an important challenge and will be addressed. ECCCH will be a collaborative space, which can be complex due to the diversity of data. It will be based in Europe and governed by European legislation. It will be secure, but not ensured against military attacks, as this is not in the tender requirements.

**Bénédicte Selfslagh (independent expert)** expressed concern that only one consortium will win the call to build the platform. Given this is a topic of interest for all MS, what strategy does the Commission have to ensure the architecture of the platform is useful for all users, and there are no tensions within Europe, especially with the other applicants that didn't win the tender? **DG RTD** replied that there will be several calls to work on different aspects of the ECCCH. The award procedure is determined by the HE standard procedure (independent experts). The call for establishing the platform requires applicants to engage a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from MS. The call also asks applicants to ensure the platform can work for institutions with fewer resources.

**Stefanos Kollias (independent expert)** asked how the ECCCH plans to work in the multi-national, dynamic and expanding environment of cultural data. **DG RTD** acknowledged the complexity and stressed the intention to work with existing initiatives.

**Civilspace** noted there are also non-professional users, and information will be lost if they cannot access these kinds of platform. Some countries have already established a digital strategy involving non-professionals. **DG RTD** replied that the ECCCH is directed to CH researchers and professionals. It is not meant for all citizens or companies of Europe. The question of how to take onboard users, which requirements will be asked of them etc. needs to be decided by the governance structure and is not prescribed by the Commission.

**Europeana** clarified the different but complementary scope of the ECCCH and the Data Space. The Cloud will be a collaborative space for professionals, whereas the Data Space deployed by Europeana can also be accessed by educators, creatives etc. Europeana is collaborating with DG RTD colleagues to ensure synergies and complementarities in terms of capacity-building and inter-operability between the different initiatives.

### **Presentation of the European Research Infrastructure on Heritage Science (E-RIHS) – Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche**

E-RIHS is an interdisciplinary community across Europe where humanities and hard sciences join their competences with equal importance to improve the understanding of heritage. E-RIHS is organised into national nodes (labs, cultural institutions, universities etc.) that share resources with scholars and practitioners working in CH. All activities of national nodes are overseen by the central hub, based in Florence. The budget is €54 million.

They are currently working towards long-term stability by establishing themselves as a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). They have 14 founding members, two observers and ICCROM as permanent observer. 9 MS have confirmed their financial

commitment. ERIHS is also working on enlargement by reaching out to countries outside the EU. In 2015, E-RIHS was recognised as a research infrastructure of global interest.

E-RIHS focuses on tangible heritage and gives access to 140 facilities coupled with expertise. Their features are ARCHLAB (archives), FIXLAB, MOLAB (mobile laboratories), DIGILAB (under development, and will contribute to the ECCCH and the European Science Cloud). All these activities are based on a co-creation process to facilitate the analysing of heterogeneous data.

E-RIHS is now celebrating 20 years of access and have had the opportunity to study masterpieces all over the world (e.g., Herculaneum papyri carbonised by the Vesuvius eruption). Their user-base is diverse (also geographically) and multi-disciplinary.

In addition to access services, they also provide inter-disciplinary training. They are currently elaborating a statement to define the role of heritage scientists. Their work has scientific, environmental, economic, and societal impact.

### **Q&A**

**DG EAC:** what is the procedure for small, local museums to use E-RIHS tools? **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche:** access is covered by European funds, and we launch calls for access. We are discussing other means for access (e.g., market-driven access), as well as to how to reach local communities and smaller institutions.

**HU:** how is E-RIHS dealing with different languages? **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche:** we hope to adapt to different languages in the future. Each national node has its own website in their own language to facilitate outreach to users.

**DG EAC:** what is the role of regional and local authorities? **Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche:** local authorities are involved in the regional strategic advisory board. As we develop the strategic agenda, we try to match the needs of E-RIHS with European regional and structural funds.

### **Update on the Candidate Partnership on Resilient Cultural Heritage – Presentation by DG RTD**

The proposal for a Candidate Partnership on Resilient Cultural Heritage has been endorsed by the Commission and is now part of the Strategic Plan for HE 2025-2027. The 1st draft document is expected in July. The partnership hopes to address limited research regarding adaptation strategies and impact of climate change on CH + how CH can inform our policies and guide implementation measures.

Budget forecast: 70% from national sources and 30% from EU budget. They envisage €100m from Cluster 2 budget over the last three years of HE (2025-2027), but this depends on how much MS are willing to commit. They have an overall objective of €150m from MS/ACs for 2026-2032, complemented with a €50m-equivalent for additional activities.

A letter from Commissioner Ivanova will be sent to Permanent Representations asking for financial commitments by MS/ACs, with answers expected by mid-September. This will allow to calculate the budget for the work programme of 2025. Due to the change of the College of Commissioners, the WP will be published in 2025, the call in the second half of

2025, and the first activities can be expected in 2026. The potential partners' draft proposal will be released on the EC website in July 2025.

Group members are asked to share this information with their relevant counterparts. **DG RTD** expressed hope to reach other ministries (such as Research, Culture, Environment, Regional Development etc.).

### **Q&A**

**DG EAC:** can partners join the Partnership after national commitments have been defined?

**DG RTD:** Yes. Non-EU Member States and non-state partners will also be able to join.

**DG EAC** asked to inform members of the group when the letter from Comm. Ivanova is sent.

**UNESCO** inquired about the role of international organisations. **DG RTD:** they can be partners and support the partnership with their financial contribution.

**Jermína Stanojev** asked to ensure the OMC report “Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change” is taken on board. **DG RTD:** the Partnership is based on the work of the OMC group, and also the [ARCHE project](#) amongst others.

### **European Heritage Label – Presentation by DG EAC and EHL Bureau**

The EHL Distinction list will be published next week. The purpose of the label is to establish a community of practice, highlighting sites for their significant role in the history and building of the European Project. The EHL is not the end of a journey but the beginning of a new chapter for the awarded sites.

Latest developments:

- 2022 was a year to rethink the EHL: there were calls for a EHL Bureau to raise visibility of the label.
- In 2022, the EHL Awards ceremony and 10 years Forum took place.
- 2023-2024 → consolidation of the EHL actions.
- 2025 → end of current legal basis.

**EHL Bureau** presented the EHL Bureau mandate and activities. It was set up last year and its mandate lasts until 2026 (for now). It has 3 objectives:

- Make the sites and the label more visible
- Build the capacities of the sites
- Develop synergies between the sites.

The vision is for EHL to become a longstanding community of practice. The strategic approach involves:

- Working with the sites to develop operations and a governance structure. Currently they have 60 sites in 22 countries (255 counting sub-sites), which they hope can get to meet each other.
- Communication activities to raise the profile of the label and attract an ever-growing audience + capacity-building activities for the sites (training, peer-to-peer learning) + support project co-creation activities + financial support activities (sub-granting possibilities).

### **Q&A**

UNESCO emphasised the importance of synergies between UNESCO World Heritage Sites and EHL sites. **EHL Bureau:** we prioritise internal synergies before going beyond the EHL community, but we have started to engage with some networks, such as Europeana. **DG EAC:** synergies already exist as some EHL sites are also WHS. We also hope to expand into intangible cultural heritage.

**Europeana** noted that EHL network sites are very interested in digitisation. Attention is drawn to the [TwinIt! Initiative](#).

**Jermína Stanojev** suggested the European Heritage Awards also get visibility in the group and proposed that some sites are invited to the group. **DG EAC** replied she would be glad to address this in future meetings.

**End of meeting day 1**

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| <b>Day 2, Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b> |
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**Welcome remarks + introduction –DG EAC – Deputy Head of Unit, Cultural Policy**

**DG EAC** introduced the EU funded pilot project European Heritage Hub, launched in May 2023 (duration 2 years). Several partners of the Hub are members of this expert group.

**European Heritage Hub Updates and latest developments – Europa Nostra**

At COP28 the Hub advocated for a [Group of friends of culture-based climate action](#) which was then launched under the chairmanship of UAE and Brazil. This is a major achievement: culture is often forgotten in international policymaking. The HUB is working towards more concrete results in COP29 and COP30.

The Hub launched a [community of practice and community of interest](#). The community of practice is where practitioners of heritage can meet physically or virtually. The first forum was held in Venice at the end of September 2023. The second forum will take place in the Autumn. It will be organised by Europeana and focus on the digital transformation. The third forum (2025) will be organised by ICLEI, focusing on the social transformation.

**Europa Nostra** presented the [heritage library](#) (a database of tools, resources of all kinds) which centralises all relevant content in one place, with a short description, recommended reading sections etc. The criteria making content eligible is aligned to the 5 pillars of the [European framework for action on cultural heritage](#). Members are encouraged to submit their content to the heritage library. In the future, there will be a ‘top picks’ feature and interview series. Regarding the social forum, it will be launched in the next few days as a social media platform for cultural heritage professionals. Members are also encouraged to subscribe to the newsletter.

[Eurocities launched a call for best practices](#), with the purpose of identifying 10 best practices (out of some 40 candidatures) of cities that have successfully combined cultural heritage and the triple transformation. Results were announced last week, and two peer-learning visits are being organised. The third peer-learning visit will take place in a Caucasus country. 20 participants will be selected through a call.

**Europa Nostra** presented the [policy monitor](#), which seeks to map and monitor policies that impacts CH all across Europe, while also feeding this data into the drafting of a set of academic papers and policy recommendations to be published by the HUB. The monitor has been live since February 2024. Policies can be searched according to several categories and/or using an interactive map. For now, they have information on 17 EU countries. A second round of countries will go live in May, and a third round in September. In addition, this week they will publish the first quarterly report.

Europa Nostra mentioned the [small grants schemes](#) for heritage-related projects led by Civil Society in EU neighbouring countries, made possible thanks to additional support given by the EU and ALIPH. They have received more than 600 applications. 37% of applications come from Ukraine.

Finally, an advisory council to support the HUB was created with 50 international experts.

## **Q&A**

**Europeana** (partners of the HUB) announced a capacity-building webinar with Eurocities, focused on the digital transformation, and the second Heritage Forum in Bucharest during the European Cultural Heritage Summit 2024.

**ICOMOS** asked how the different kinds of information are being integrated. **Europa Nostra** explained they are reaching out to many organisation and reassured members that they are working on capitalising on the work already done. She reminded participants that this is a pilot project with 1 year left. She expressed hope for an extension.

Regarding the policy monitor, **Europa Nostra** reassured participants they are not trying to duplicate what has already been done, but simply to bring the information together. The monitor is based on the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage.

**PEARLE** asked whether the Hub is only accessible for partners of the Hub. They have access to historical material from theatre technology – could there be a connection with the Hub? **Europa Nostra** agreed dramaturgy is part of heritage and would be happy to discuss ways to collaborate.

## **Updates from the European Commission**

### **Reporting from the sub-group ‘Safeguarding CH in Ukraine’**

DG EAC – Cultural Policy Unit recalled that the sub-group was set up in June 2023, has met 3 times and has 26 experts.

**Subgroup members** presented the first draft of the sub-group’s recommendations, framed by overarching principles, and grouped into 4 priority areas: recognition of cultural heritage; documentation, monitoring and data collection; risk management; and recovery. Their recommendations are addressed to the EU, but the EU Commission should coordinate their actions with government and Ukrainian local authorities. Recommendations include integrating risk management in CH into the national disaster risk management strategy at all levels of governance, fostering capacity-building, data collection and monitoring, disseminating good practices through information-sharing and establishing a broader definition of cultural heritage, recognising its human dimension.

## **Reporting from the sub-group ‘Dialogue with the Art Market’ – Presentation by CINOA**

DG EAC introduced the sub-group, created in the framework of the Action Plan against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods, which sees the art market as a key partner. The sub-group serves to discuss applicable legislation and non-legislative tools, to understand the art market and the challenges they face. 25 experts were chosen, and they met for the first time in December. There was also a high-level event organised at the end of January 2024.

CINOA presented the structure of the group. It’s a diverse group and members don’t always have the same views. They broadly agree on the following:

- EU art market is shrinking
- There is a lack of proper statistics regarding illicit trade
- Disproportionate attention is given to antiquities
- They appreciate the expert group as a platform for constructive dialogue.

Their expectations for the group are:

- To enhance the EU institutions’ understanding of the art market
- Focus on flagging issues and concrete actions
- Voice concerns on EU legislation and policies
- Discussion on ethical aspects (ICOM, UNESCO) and interactions with other groups.

The main issues discussed in the sub-group include: the need to clarify definitions and terms, as well as the need for proportionality to align legislation with market realities and the lack of consistent evidence linking money laundering/terrorist financing to the art market. The sub-group was also presented the EU Import of Cultural Goods regulation, and they were able to flag some of the problems regarding the rules and challenging requirements.

In terms of future topics, the sub-group hopes to discuss improved collaboration for data collection, a consultation on the 4<sup>th</sup> Supranational Risk Assessment (SNRA) on the prevention of money laundering (ML) and terrorist financing (TF), and measures to improve the traceability of cultural goods sales.

CINOA read out the impressions of another group member, who couldn’t attend the meeting due to sickness: the group member remarked on the diversity of panel members and challenges faced, as well as the discussion on misuse of evidence and non-verified facts that can damage the trade. The group member also flagged that academics would like more focus on ethics and expect a contribution from UNESCO. Finally, CINOA expressed her opinion that the group had allowed for a constructive discussion but may not lead to significant impact. She expressed hope to establish a more solid platform for cooperation that not only focuses on illicit trade but serves as a platform for cooperation more broadly.

## **Q&A**

NEMO emphasised the need for the sub-group on UA to work with existent networks, such as [OMBIN](#). **Group members** replied that they are doing so. OMBIN is preparing a [conference in Berlin this May 2024](#).

**Michael Culture** would be happy to have a working session with CINOA and other bodies to understand their needs and challenges, and how to best support the trade developing tools against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. They highlighted the question of data and the

need for quality statistics. They also raised the need for interoperability between the databases, a common format and shared standards.

**Johanna Leissner (independent expert)** asked whether the sub-group on UA is using Copernicus satellite data to assess damages. She also noted there were no mentions of climate change in the policy recommendations from the sub-group. **Group member** replied they lack specialists to use satellite data, which in addition requires inter-structure cooperation (including the army). They are prioritising other things in times of war. Regarding climate change, **Group member** replied these are shortened versions of the recommendations. She argued sustainability features in the recommendations, but phrasing could be modified to make the connection more explicit.

The **Council of Europe** underscored the need to pay more attention to the first stages of criminality which are not related directly to the international art market. The Nicosia convention is helpful/relevant for this.

**Europeana** asked whether the UA sub-group is working with UNESCO's Work Plan for Ukraine, and if they are considering digitisation of CH. She argued movable heritage in Ukraine is less than 1% digitised. Therefore, digitisation is a pressing need. **Group member** replied that the post-Soviet structure doesn't classify libraries as CH. Archives are mostly digitised. Museums are 40% digitised. They are taking digitisation into account, but digitisation in Ukraine is developed and has allowed identification of looting.

**IT** emphasised the importance of quality principles, to ensure CH in Ukraine is restored using EU funds in a proper way. IT also stressed the importance of ensuring these recommendations are passed on to UNESCO. Regarding the art market, this is a hot topic in Italy, and is important to have reliable data and information - especially now the discussion starts to touch on AI. Is the private sector willing to share information? **CINOA** replied that the art market can share some data, but not on illicit trade because they are not involved in criminal activities.

**UNESCO** underscored the need for cooperation with big tech platforms. UNESCO participated on the high-level event on a Dialogue with the Art Market (December 2023) and is committed to an effective implementation of the 1970 Convention. Regarding Ukraine, participants are reminded about the [Ukraine Recovery Conference](#) on 11th and 12th June. **Group member** reassured members that the subgroup includes UNESCO, and the recommendations build on the work done by UNESCO. **CINOA** also expressed support for UNESCO's endeavours to fight illicit trafficking, even if they don't always align with the trade on the means.

**Michael Culture** described themselves as an aggregator for museums working with Europeana and would be happy to discuss with UA stakeholders the digitisation of museums and how they could support them.

### **Open floor**

### **NEMO – Outcomes and recommendations of the conference on Museums and AI**

The [conference on Museums and AI](#) was organised two weeks ago with partners in Brussels. Museums want to proactively address AI considerations, but so far there has been little exchange and cooperation. The conference looked at the importance of critically reviewing

AI technologies and their impact on CH and museums, the need to consider the sociocultural and sociotechnical implications of its implementation, and the responsible and transparent use of AI. From the conference, the following recommendations emerged:

- There needs to be a political vision for museums in an AI-driven society.
- Financial investments are needed in the public cultural domain
- Establishment of a European AI Innovation Hub for Museums and Cultural Heritage

### **PEARLE – Musical Instruments and Europe’s cultural heritage**

PEARLE is working in collaboration with CSFI (Chambre Syndicale de la Façure Instrumentale). Instrument-makers are facing a multiplication of regulations, especially disproportionate large number of administrative requirements relative to the low quantity of wood they use. This poses challenges for makers, restorers, and musicians. PEARLE advocated for simplified rules to remove obstacles for the trade and asked for the help and support of the group in light of the [Parliament resolution \(September 2015\) regarding an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe](#) (article 21). PEARLE and CSFI are willing to collaborate with DG ENVIRONMENT to make progress on this issue.

### **Sweden - Actualities concerning cultural heritage and security and defence policy**

The Russian aggression has had profound effects on Sweden’s security and defence policy – upscaling actions with relevance for CH: the National Heritage Board set up a council for the protection of CH, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency identified CH as a vital function and critical infrastructure for the prioritisation of resources and actions, and museums and other institutions have been advised to set up their plans for preparedness. Work on preparedness planning is now ongoing to identify threats to cultural heritage. Finally, as part of the 2024 Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers, Sweden will organise a Conference on this topic.

### **Romania – The International Institute of Heritage.**

Offsets are product or service delivery obligations incurred by a defence contractor to its government contract customer. The contractor must agree to provide some additional value to the government to secure the right to consummate the primary sale, in the form of goods or service needed. Romania presented the Offset provisions in Romania and advocated for the introduction of CH and culture within this framework. Defence budgets are rising, and this poses an opportunity for CH to tap into these resources. However, Romania explained there is a gap of communication, and proposed to create a group of interpreters (heritage communicators) that connect the different stakeholders in a ‘clover model’.

### **ICOM – The Object-ID, an effective tool for documenting and inventorying cultural goods collections.**

ICOM highlighted the importance of good documentation and inventorying, as an imperative preventive action for the protection of cultural goods against illicit trafficking. The Object-ID is a tool to facilitate the identification of stolen cultural goods, in line with the EU Action Plan Against Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Goods. It’s an internationally recognised documentation standard and seeks to become a solid basis for all documented inventories, tapping into other databases (e.g., INTERPOL database for stolen works of art uses the Object ID format). Object-ID has been recognised as an effective inventory tool among museum professionals.

ICOM international projects now include training in Object-ID implementation. Other relevant actions include the revision of the Code of Ethics for Museums; Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk (Greece and Afghanistan); ICOM Observatory of Illicit Trafficking.

### **UNESCO – Updates**

- UNESCO open calls: call for site managers to participate in the WHS Management Forum in New Delhi.
- Development of a digital platform (2025) that will work in the field of awareness raising for the general public - Immersive 3D experience of WHS.
- World Heritage Young Professionals Forum (New Delhi during the WHS Management Forum).
- The virtual museum of stolen cultural objects (announced at Mondiacult 2022), to be launched in 2025. UNESCO has joined forces with INTERPOL, design by eminent architect Francis Kéré.
- In April 2024, the Ocean Decade Conference will gather 1500 participants in Barcelona to agree on lines of action to safeguard the seas. This will lead to a high-level UN Conference on Oceans this summer.

### **Council of Europe – Updates of related CoE activities**

2024 is the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Cultural Convention. The [4<sup>th</sup> Summit](#) of Heads of State and Government of the CoE took place in May 2023 in Reykjavik. The [final declaration](#) highlighted political relevance of CH and artistic freedom.

In 2023, the CDCPP (Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape) organised a [thematic session on education on democratic values in culturally diverse societies](#).

The CoE recently adopted the [LINKED guiding principles for an integrated approach to culture, nature and landscape management](#).

On AI, at the 2022 Conference the ministers of Culture asked CDCPP to work in cooperation with professional associations and other partners on developing guidelines given the latest technological developments. A working group was set up last year to advance on this topic. Ms Redondo Alvarez also shared the AI – Digitisation best practices call. Extensive use of AI and digitisation can support the CoE's Strategy 21 and help CH operators. In addition, there is a [Strategy 21 Massive Open Online Course](#) which provides heritage managers with the knowledge and skills to implement Strategy 21 recommendations.

Finally, the CoE announced a new recommendation adopted in April 2023 on [library legislation and policy in Europe](#), which is relevant for the access to archives in the digital age. Members of the group are encouraged to refer to the slides for other announcements, including new ratifications of the Faro Convention and the '[Nicosia Convention in 10 questions and answers](#)' brochure.

### **Interpret Europe – Learning Landscapes Initiative**

The [Learning Landscapes Initiative](#) seeks to transform UNESCO-designated properties into visitor interpretation centres. The aim is to involve residents and visitors in interpretation and mediation, as well as to offer capacity-building training, while being in line with SDG's.

### **Michael Culture – The action group ‘Digital & AI’ set up by Michael Culture and Culture Action Europe**

The [action group](#) seeks to bring the CCSI perspective into the EU AI and digital policy agenda. They also advocate for a more human-centred approach. The goal is to unite the needs of the different stakeholders and adopt a holistic approach to find a common language, shared objectives and erase silos. The first workshop has been held and they have started developing a survey that will be disseminated among the sector. They hope to approach newly elected European officials using the recommendations from the survey.

### **Closing words and end of meeting –DG EAC**

DG EAC closed the meeting reminding participants to make use of the newsletter and encouraging them to share their suggestions for the future work of the Cultural Heritage Expert Group.