



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

Culture, Creativity and Sport  
**Cultural Policy**

**TWELTH MEETING OF THE COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP ON CULTURAL  
HERITAGE, 21-22 October 2024**

**DRAFT MINUTES**

Twelfth 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.

**15 EU Member States** attended (AT, BE, CY, DE, ES, FI, FR, HR, IT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, SE). Experts from NO and Western Balkan countries (AL, BA, RS) attended as well.

**Stakeholders' Organisations :**

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

Federation for European Storytelling (FEST)  
Future for Religious Heritage (FRH)  
International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)  
International Council of Museums (ICOM)  
Interpret Europe  
Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI)  
Michael Culture  
Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)  
PEARLE (Live Performance Europe)

**International organisations:**

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

**European Parliament (observer):**

Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

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

**Individual Experts:**

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

**European Commission:**

DG EAC (Chair)  
DG RTD

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

**Day 1, Monday 21 October 2024**

**Political priorities of the upcoming EU Commission by Georg Häusler (Director for Culture, Creativity and Sport – DG.EAC)**

**Georg Häusler** welcomed the participants, explained that the European Union is in a transitional period, with political changes coming up. The first structural change is the newly elected EU Parliament. The EP's CULT Committee has 30 to 40% new members: some institutional knowledge might be lost, and the Commission will have to rebuild relationships with the Committee's members.

The second change is the new college of Commissioners to be appointed. Glenn Micallef from Malta has been entrusted with the role of Commissioner for Culture and Sport. All designated Commissioners will have to go through the parliamentary hearing process. His portfolio is smaller than the previous Commissioner Ivanova, who was also in charge of education, innovation, and research. This change is positive, in the sense that the new Commissioner will have a bigger focus on culture. Additionally, in the political guidelines of the President and the Mission Letter for the new Commissioner, there is a very strong reference made to culture, much stronger than we had in previous colleges. A particular reference important to this group, is to "make it easier for people, especially younger generations, to benefit from our rich and diverse cultural heritage". This gives a strong mandate for this new college. Discussions in this meeting will focus on this topic and it is important for this group to give a meaning to these political guidelines. It is certainly our intention to give a very strong narrative to our new Commissioner when it comes to cultural heritage.

In relation to younger generations, the Director made references to Discover EU, the European Solidarity Corps and the European Heritage HUB.

Other priorities for the Commission remain cultural heritage and climate change. At G7 and the G20 summit, culture has taken a prominent role. We remain dedicated to a standalone sustainable development goal for culture. Later this year we will have COP 29, and last week the European Council published [conclusions underscore the vital role of the cultural heritage sector in addressing climate change](#).

**Q&A**

**ITALY:** Thanked the EU member states who are part of G7 and the European Union for the results achieved at G7 culture summit. The discussion on Artificial Intelligence and culture was very important and the presence and contributions of the EU member states who belong to G7 and the European Union have been crucial.

**Answer (Georg Häusler):** Thanked the Italian Presidency for their effort to put culture on the agenda of G7 and G20. It is essential that culture remains a priority in the European agenda. A crucial aspect of the mission letter of the new Commissioner is the emphasis on AI and the need to develop a comprehensive strategy specifically for the cultural sector. In the recent EU legislation (AI act), the specificities of the cultural and creative sectors have been probably not sufficiently addressed. In the coming years, the Commissioner will focus on ensuring that the cultural sector, which is extremely important economically, has a strong voice.

**Culture Action Europe:** The current mission letter has a strong reference to culture, but there is no reference to the Creative Europe (CE) programme, whereas it was mentioned in previous mission letters.

**UNESCO:** There is a need to include more investment in the protection and promotion of culture and for strengthening international cooperation in the new MFF. Mondiacult (September 2025) in Barcelona will be a significant milestone, an important opportunity for international cooperation. We will organise regional consultations towards Mondiacult, which will provide a platform for further collaboration and exchange.

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** There is no mention of cultural and creative sectors in the Draghi report nor in an evaluation report of the Horizon Europe programme about competitiveness.

**Answer (Georg Häusler):** The Commission had no influence on the Draghi report, which states that in many economic areas Europe is lagging and is less productive and less innovative. He expressed surprise that the CCS were not mentioned at all, despite being an area where Europe is competitive. The report's intention was to ring the alarm bells in many other areas and probably the argument of the cultural and creative sector would not have helped since this is an area in which we are quite good. Our competitiveness in this area could serve as an example for other areas as well. It's not a given that we are taken seriously. It's up to us to fill the role which could be given to us, and to occupy the territory. We should also spread this news and Cultural Action Europe is an excellent platform to be very vocal. We will be asked to contribute, to make concrete proposals. We will be asked to make innovative ideas live etc. So, it's up to all of us, everybody in his and her respective role which we have to play.

Creative Europe (CE) is indeed not explicitly mentioned, which does not mean it is under threat. Other funding programmes are not mentioned either. The European Commission will make a proposal for the future Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) in the middle of next year, about where the Commission wants to put money in the future, and about the structure of the spending tools. There is a broader debate underway to dramatically reduce the number of instruments and simplify and harmonize them. He would be surprised if anyone were to seriously consider deleting the CE program, because that would be contradictory to the political guidelines, the priorities of the commission, and the mission letter of the Commissioner. CE has brought many benefits to many individuals and organisations across Europe, representing only a tiny fraction (0.2%) of the overall EU budget. Cutting CE wouldn't make any real savings, and it would send a devastating message to the whole cultural and creative sector in the EU and beyond in all the CE participating countries.

**Individual Expert (Bénédicte Selfslagh):** One more challenge I would like to add to the list of priorities is the increased polarization of societies. Several heritage professionals are absolutely convinced that cultural heritage allows us to deal with complex realities and to putting nuances which is extremely important in the current society, one example being The European Heritage Label.

**Answer (Georg Häusler):** He mentions the 1st meeting of the CULT committee in September, where we saw that cultural heritage is being used to fuel a debate between cultural heritage and culture/living artists. He has seen this happen in several instances, e.g. in public meetings and festivals. The debate being very black and white, saying that cultural heritage is occupied by those who have a political agenda which want to use culture and cultural heritage in a "us vs. them" opposition. Political leaders need to be careful not to use cultural heritage to promote a particular agenda or ideology, especially with so many elections happening all over Europe. We risk creating two camps that are polarized and divided. This would be devastating for our cultural sector and a misunderstanding of our European cultural action.

**ACE:** Can you say a few more words about the Culture Compass?

**Answer (Georg Häusler):** The culture compass will probably be a top priority for the new Commissioner. Its purpose is to make sense of all the cultural action at EU level. There are many different instruments (including Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, but also the Cohesion funds) and political areas as well. There is a need to map these activities and identify areas where we can improve

consistency and coherence. It's important to have a comprehensive view of the actions undertaken at EU level. Then the 2nd part will obviously be to establish the gaps in our current cultural action and identify areas where we need to do more.

The compass will also address important political challenges of the moment like the working conditions of artists. There has been a [parliamentary report](#), a [comprehensive answer of the European Commission](#) to this report, which is kind of a list of commitments. There is a need for a comprehensive approach to artificial intelligence in the cultural and creative sectors. The compass will provide a clear direction for European cultural policy in the coming years.

What exactly the form and content will be, is under the authority of our new political masters. Some might criticize at the moment that we are probably a little bit too much driven by projects. I think the compass should be that guiding compass and that's the reason why the name has been chosen: to have a clear direction where European cultural policy wants to go in the coming years.

**Individual Expert (Bénédicte Selfslagh):** There is often a lack of knowledge of what is happening in the cultural heritage sector among project assessors of the different EU programmes, leading to the funding of projects carried out by less experienced partnerships and projects duplicating existing initiatives, some of which are financed by other EU programmes. At macro level, will the cultural compass look into the best ways to achieve the objectives set out for cultural heritage? E.g. if cooperation between or implementation in all EU member states is the goal, the initiative should bring all member states together from the start instead of launching a call for tender that creates competition between the member states and could generate lasting negative impacts.

**Director for Culture, Creativity and Sport (Georg Häusler):** Thanks all for your participation and engagement in this discussion. Share concrete proposals and ideas in this meeting.

## ***Cultural Heritage and Climate Change***

### **Update on G7 and G20 by Ministry of Culture, Italy**

The G7 cultural ministers' meeting in Naples in September resulted in a final declaration with priorities on promoting cultural identities, culture and creativity in the age of artificial intelligence, the global fight against trafficking of cultural property and strengthening the resilience of cultural heritage facing climate change and natural disasters.

The newly appointed Minister of Culture of Ukraine Mykola Tochytskyi was invited and attended. This was an opportunity to strengthen the message of support of the G7 to Ukraine. Italy will host the Ukraine Recovery Conference in 2025 and has proposed to coordinate and harmonize activities for the reconstruction in the framework of this conference.

The G7 cultural declaration includes principles and concepts such as the recognition of the long-lasting and irreversible effects of climate change on cultural heritage, the importance of culture in addressing climate change, and the need to mainstream cultural consideration in international climate policy. The declaration also includes specific actions such as fostering mitigation and adaptation strategies, improving the resilience of cultural heritage, and promoting culture-based solutions.

The G20 cultural ministerial in Salvador will take place in a few days, and Brazil will give a lot of emphasis to the relation between culture and climate. There will be a side event on the 4th and 5th of November in Salvador discussing the topic of culture and climate change, and the speaker will present the work of the OMC working group on greening culture and creative sectors.

### **Q&A:**

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** Congratulates Italy's efforts to promote cultural heritage in the G7 and G20. She highlights the lack of financial initiatives in the cultural heritage sector worldwide.

**ITALY:** Financial constraints are a challenge in the G7 and G20. There's always a lot of reluctance from the countries because it is more of a political forum.

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** It's a political topic, but there is a need to focus on this issue, by saying that we can't make progress without financial support.

**DG EAC (Deputy Head of Unit EAC D.1):** G7 is a restricted group compared to G20. One good thing is that the declaration can be used to support advocacy towards other ministries and entities. The group of friends for culture-based climate action will organize a second high-level ministerial dialogue for culture-based climate action at COP 29 in Baku, and they shared the invitation to register through the cultural affairs committee.

**State of play on the implementation of the recommendations of the OMC report “Strengthening Cultural Heritage resilience for Climate Change” by Johanna Leissner (former chair of the OMC group)**

Johanna Leissner reported on the progress made since the publication of the report of the OMC expert group (September 2022). The group had a follow-up meeting to discuss the progress, based on an online survey. Overall, very good progress was made especially in the awareness raising, both at the level of cultural heritage institutions, and also on a political level, whether it's national, local or regional level. 19 replies were collected in the survey.

One thing some members have asked for is to have more workshops in common events to foster exchange and report on the progress within the EU and also on global and national level. This is something what really should continue in the future: a kind of forum where we can exchange what is happening in Europe and elsewhere. Another way forward would be to continue collecting good practice examples. Maybe the European Partnership for Resilient Cultural Heritage and also the Cultural Heritage Cloud could provide opportunities here.

Some deficiencies include the topic of budgets and finances already mentioned earlier. How much money do we need for the adaptation of cultural heritage to climate change? Here we have not made a big progress.

**Q&A:**

**UNESCO:**

Protection of culture from climate change is very much on the agenda of UNESCO. We have partnered as knowledge partners with the group of friends for culture-based climate action (GFCBCA) that was set up at COP. It's an occasion for us to advocate and promote this agenda. We of course work within the framework of our UNESCO culture conventions. In 2023 the revised policy on world heritage and climate change was adopted. And now we work within this framework focusing on specific toolkits.

Regarding intangible cultural heritage and the 2003 convention: there's a thematic initiative that is dedicated to climate, and for two years now we've conducted research supported by expert group meetings and we will be presenting this draft guidance note on safeguarding living heritage and climate change at the forthcoming committee meeting in the 1st week of December. Last piece of information concerns a new fire risk management guide that we have developed, this is to protect cultural and natural heritage from fire. This is considering the devastating fires that have ravaged Latin American amongst others. We will be launching this manual at a meeting of Latin American

countries in Chile in November, but it's available in English as well and it will be translated into Spanish. We are publishing it in the upcoming days.

**CYPRUS:** Thanks Johanna and mentions the great experience to work together within the framework of the OMC group which has achieved a lot. Now we need to focus on increasing our resources. We accept that the cost of action for the protection of heritage against the impacts of climate change is lower than the costs of inaction, but we need to communicate that, and, we need to breach the sectors of climate science and cultural heritage.

We need to work towards awareness raising but also towards education of heritage practitioners, who are no climate experts. We need more education on this aspect amongst heritage practitioners.

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** On the education of heritage practitioners, the CHARTER project is addressing exactly this need, training of heritage practitioners in terms of climate change. The cost of action is lower than the cost of inaction, also for heritage this is still very valid. One thing which is not very costly is the continuous maintenance of heritage. Continuous monitoring and maintenance are the best ways to adapt cultural heritage against at least some extreme events, which are occurring more and more often unfortunately.

**ESTONIA:** I feel that very often we have the tools, we have the research, but often politically we are an afterthought, and this is why not enough money pours into our field. Can we do something more to raise awareness, influence the electorate in order to influence the politicians?

**ITALY:** Mitigation and adaptation should be part of the normal practice of intervention on cultural heritage. It is part of Italy's Recovery and Resilience Plan. But it is probably not advertised. If you look in detail into the projects, those elements are encrypted in the overall intervention on cultural heritage sites. Today we can't intervene anymore on cultural heritage without including those talks and those approaches. So maybe we should highlight also this when it happens already and has become a normal practice. What is also very important is the need for more visuals. We have addressed this in the OMC report: we need a climate heritage risk map.

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** Together with economic figures, this is quite a big task. In 2006, Lord Nicholas Stern presented the first Stern review on the economics of climate change. This report was an eyeopener for many political decision makers because it brought together the costs of inaction versus the cost of action. We need this kind of Stern report for cultural heritage, together with a climate heritage risk map. If we have those two in our hands, we could convince people on the political level much better.

## **Towards COP 29 by European Heritage Hub**

COP 29 is taking place from November 11 to 22 in Baku. Key actions relevant to cultural heritage and climate change in Europe: Firstly, he mentions that the European Heritage Hub hosted a forum in Venice last year, "*Reimagining the Anthropocene: Putting Culture and Heritage at the Heart of Climate Action.*" One of the conclusions was that global climate action is off track because it fails to take account of the social and cultural enablers and barriers to transformative climate action.

They are currently focusing on climate change not only as part of our mandate to safeguard cultural heritage from threats but also because the world needs to take account of the social and cultural dimensions to tackle climate change for all the planet. To address this, they launched the Global Call to Put Cultural Heritage and the Creative Sectors at the Heart of Climate Action, a global appeal to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to take the social and cultural dimensions of climate action to heart in global climate policy. Since then, thousands of organisations and cultural leaders have joined the global call campaign, including hundreds from Europe.

Four concrete actions that are relevant to cultural heritage, climate change in Europe:

1. Putting Culture at the Heart of Climate Planning and Policy: seeking a policy decision from COP 30 in Belem (Brazil) to create the first-ever work plan on culture for the UN climate agency.
2. Culture Workshop Request
3. Global Goal on Adaptation: Last year, COP adopted a framework to guide national governments in their climate adaptation planning, called the UAE framework for global climate resilience. This includes cultural heritage as one of the seven thematic targets.
4. Indicators for Measuring Progress: asking the EU and member states in the work program to support the finding that there is a gap in the existence of indicators for measuring progress in the adaptation of cultural heritage and help them get an effective indicator for measuring progress as part of the work program.

He mentions that there will be events in the Spanish, Italian and Greek pavilions, among others, across the blue zone and green zone.

## Q&A

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** Who is developing these indicators, and are there common indicators or are they specific to each country?

**EHH:** The decision taken by the COP last year launched a work program of the UNFCCC, called UAE – Belém work programme on indicators. This work program is ongoing, and it's being undertaken by the subsidiary bodies of the UNFCCC and the co-chairs of the subsidiary bodies. They recommended European experts to be included in the process, but unfortunately, they did not include any European experts in the cultural heritage group.

**Individual Expert (Johanna Leissner):** She mentions that this is shame since there was already some progress in integrating cultural heritage into adaptation strategies from the OMC report. But they still need to avoid maladaptation, especially when it comes to large infrastructure projects.

**EHH:** He agrees and mentions that the IPCC has found that there is a crisis of maladaptation, and one good strategy to avoid this is to take account of culture in the planning of climate interventions. He also clarifies, there will be a second annual high-level forum on culture-based climate action on 15 November in Baku, and he will be representing the European Heritage Hub at this meeting. However, the ministerial is not itself a meeting of the group of friends, and they are not sure which countries have been invited.

## Links shared by EHH:

G7 Ministerial Declaration on Culture (see page 8-9 re climate action):

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ug1-qk0uRWynIn42q5yhPLJP\\_gFtIF18/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ug1-qk0uRWynIn42q5yhPLJP_gFtIF18/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Membership of Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action (GFCBCA):

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1omLW-53Cz-Dmtz7AxBzqVQPoiVU39\\_81/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1omLW-53Cz-Dmtz7AxBzqVQPoiVU39_81/edit?usp=sharing&oid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true)

14 Oct EU Council Conclusion on COP29 (see para 52 re CH and climate action):

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14459-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

Our Policy Ask for COP29 (culture workshop request):

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ozos8ib5KXVJDpjGQVZPp4LkTsnxotg1/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Join the Heritage Adapts to Climate Alliance (HACA):

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePRd\\_GCe5MmnDOFo1QZ4bJFGuhmriz89KI7Jmq2D\\_NcZoHww/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSePRd_GCe5MmnDOFo1QZ4bJFGuhmriz89KI7Jmq2D_NcZoHww/viewform?usp=sf_link)

Our Policy Ask for the Global Goal on Adaptation cultural heritage indicators:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1l6XJyDc0olb2cINXW3rFLvHpatSJErY-/view?usp=sharing>

Culture and heritage events at COP29 (list in progress):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fIC3Rk5t5kuuBWSHcVeY3142JEusR9JC/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=117166681810772555982&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Global Call Campaign to put Cultural Heritage, Arts and Creative Sectors at the Heart of Climate Action:

<https://www.climateheritage.org/jwd>

## **OPEN FLOOR**

### **Actions undertaken by the Department of Antiquities, in conjunction with the initiative of the Republic of Cyprus on the impacts of climate change on cultural heritage in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East by Cyprus**

The presentation highlights Cyprus' proactive stance in addressing climate change's impact on cultural heritage, in the context of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative (EMME-CCI) launched in 2019, and the Conference organised by Cyprus Institute in 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, in which many local and international stakeholders came together. This initiative unites regional efforts, focusing on mitigating and adapting to climate threats affecting both tangible and intangible cultural assets. The presentation outlines key inquiries such as the direct and indirect impacts on cultural heritage and the role of heritage in societal and economic life during climate transition.

Key strategies include using local knowledge while fostering regional collaboration, integrating heritage into green economy plans, and promoting education and public engagement. Priority actions involve mapping, risk assessment, and monitoring of heritage sites with advanced technology to support effective mitigation. Furthermore, Cyprus recognizes the importance of aligning its efforts with international frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals to enhance cultural heritage resilience.

## **UNESCO**

Brief update on the activities of UNESCO in Brussels, including the outcomes of the subgroup meetings and recent international conferences:

In June, an international conference was held in Lithuania, in partnership with the government of Ukraine and the European Commission, to discuss the recovery of Ukraine's cultural sector. During the conference, a call for action was adopted by more than 30 countries and international organisations, recognising the role of UNESCO in coordinating and mobilising efforts to support the cultural and creative sectors in Ukraine.

This conference was also linked to the Ukraine Recovery Conference that took place in Berlin, which included a panel on cultural heritage. Their team, along with colleagues from the group, participated in this panel to discuss the protection and preservation of Ukraine's cultural heritage.

They are now starting the process of preparing for regional consultations, which will take place in Brussels and online next month. They will be involving the European Commission, civil society organizations, and UNESCO chairs and other international organisations in these consultations. The two main subjects during these consultations are artificial intelligence and culture for peace.

### **An initiative of the Greek AI Factory - based on the Supercomputer Daedalus - Stefanos Kolias (individual expert)**

The European Commission has issued a call for AI factories, which are instruments that will provide access to European supercomputing facilities. This is a great opportunity for companies and organizations to generate new creative and innovative products in various domains, including cultural heritage. The target of AI factories is to generate new creative and innovative products using artificial intelligence and generative AI. This can be done in collaboration with AI factories, which will provide access to large infrastructure and capabilities.

The benefits of AI factories include:

- Access to large infrastructure and capabilities
- Ability to create new products using artificial intelligence and generative AI
- Opportunity to collaborate with other organizations and companies.
- Potential for funding and support for projects

AI factories are also connected to the European data space for cultural heritage, which provides access to data and infrastructure for cultural heritage organizations. AI factories are also connected to the cloud for cultural heritage, which provides access to data and infrastructure for cultural heritage organizations.

Greece is currently in the process of setting up an AI factory, which will be one of the most powerful in the world. This will provide opportunities for Greek and European stakeholders to use AI models and create new products, such as virtual exhibitions, cultural preservation projects, and more.

The next call for proposals for AI factories will be in February, and the results will be announced in December. They hope to provide more information on the opportunities and benefits of AI factories in the next meeting.

### **Conference that ACE and Europa Nostra are co-organising, on the theme New European Bauhaus: *Heritage & Transformation* - President of the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)**

A call for ACE-Europa Nostra Conference taking place on 28 of November 2024 in Krakow, Poland. The public conference jointly organized by the Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) and Europa Nostra, focusing on the intersection of cultural heritage and the New European Bauhaus initiative. The event will explore how heritage can drive transformation and sustainability within the New European Bauhaus framework.

The goal is to raise awareness of the challenges facing Europe's built heritage, particularly in relation to the Green Deal, the Renovation Wave, and the decarbonization of the existing building stock.

Discussions will focus on barriers and enablers for scaling sustainable practices and fostering innovation in this field.

ACE has integrated a work group on heritage, which will create guidelines and recommendations for maintenance, conservation, adaptation, and reuse of modern heritage. They also have a work group on urban issues and housing, which will focus on the cultural heritage and adaptive reuse of buildings and landscapes in Europe. This is particularly relevant in the context of the housing crisis and the upcoming new commissioner on housing.

The conference is supported by ICC Krakow, Europa Nostra Heritage Hub, the European Heritage Hub, and co-funded by the EU's Creative Europe programme. Further details, including the full program, will be available soon on the ACE website: [www.ace-cae.eu](http://www.ace-cae.eu).

### **Brief update on ICOM activities**

ICOM was represented at the G20 cultural working group meetings by ICOM Brazil, with support from the ICOM secretariat. They highlighted the key role of museums in culture and cultural heritage, and underlined the importance of documentation, fighting against illicit trafficking, and education in museums.

ICOM is a member of the group of friends of culture-based climate action, they pay attention to this issue and make sure that it's mentioned in the resolutions. They are monitoring a lot of emergencies related to climate change, including catastrophic floods that have affected at least 20 countries worldwide. They keep in touch with national committees and share resources to help museum professionals and cultural heritage professionals across the world.

Three red lists are going to be published in the coming months: for Greece, Turkey, and Afghanistan. The Afghanistan red list is an update, and we'll share it once it's ready.

ICOM is also a partner in the ANCHISE project (Horizon Europe), applying new solutions for the protection of cultural heritage. Their role is to demonstrate new tools that bridge the gap between new technologies and end users. The first demonstration of the ANCHISE project took place in September in Greece, bringing together over 100 participants from 10 European countries. They will be evaluating this demonstration and speaking to end users to figure out what works well and how it can be improved.

To learn more about the first ANCHISE demonstration: <https://www.anchise.eu/post/the-first-anchise-demonstration-was-a-success>

### **MUSE-IT: Multisensory, User-centred, shared cultural Experiences through Interactive Technologies (HEurope -2022 - 2025): project focusing on inclusion of those of us with disabilities in cultural experience. Presentation of the first policy brief – Michael Culture**

Michael Culture presents a multidisciplinary Horizon Europe project led by the University of Sweden. The project is built on the observation that there is a lack of accessibility for all, particularly for those with disabilities, due to technological advancements.

Virtual Exhibition: One of the project's outputs is a virtual exhibition incorporating multimodal representations of cultural assets. This will showcase technological advancements and provide a platform for cultural institutions and organisations to work with people with disabilities.

Their policy brief is the last output of the project, and it aims to analyse the situation at the European level in terms of policies for cultural participation for people with disabilities. They started from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and specifically article 30, which highlights the importance of cultural participation for all people. They shifted the perspective from a medical view of disability to a social view, recognising that disability is socially constructed and perpetuated through discrimination and public policies.

**Key EU Policies:** They analysed key EU policies, including the EU Disability Card, the European Access CT Awards, and the implementation of the Treaty of Accessible Europe. They also looked at the European Accessibility Act, which provides a framework for harmonising accessibility requirements across the EU. They identified gaps in EU policies, including a lack of a multi-sensory approach to fighting obstacles for people with disabilities. They also found inconsistent application of universal design and sustainability risks due to the reliance on individual practices rather than institutionalized strategies. They also realised that there is a lack of data collection on cultural participation and co-creation of culture by people with disabilities.

He concludes that technological innovation, particularly with a multi-sensory focus, can enhance the situation and provide new opportunities for cultural participation and co-creation and encourages everyone to read the policy brief: <https://www.muse-it.eu/>

## **ENCATC magazine**

Latest issue of ENCATC magazine titled "Résonances", a phrase that evokes the idea of cultural places and people coming together across time.

The **first topic** explores how culture and democracy intersect, with a reflection on the European Cultural Convention and the Director of Democratic Participation at the Council of Europe, emphasising the crucial relationship between culture and democracy. The second topic examines how regional identity, and heritage can be shared and celebrated, with a focus on UNESCO World Heritage sites. The EHL Label is mentioned, as a cornerstone of the European Union's efforts to protect and promote cultural heritage. With 67 sites recognised across Europe, the action celebrates the unique cultural identity of each region, while acknowledging the shared values and history that unite Europe. The importance of music and heritage is also highlighted for the third point, including a world-famous festival, the *La Folle Journée* music festival, which expands to Tokyo in Japan. The fourth topic focuses on cathedral heritage, including the examples of the restoration efforts at Notre-Dame de Paris, exploring woodworking from forest to Cathedral, and the preservation of the polychromed portal at Saint-Maurice Cathedral in Angers. [https://encatc.org/media/7449-encatc-magazine\\_issue-7\\_2024.pdf](https://encatc.org/media/7449-encatc-magazine_issue-7_2024.pdf)

## **Q&A**

**ENCATC:** Comments on the current situation in Israel and the impact on cultural heritage. Asks if the organisation will take any actions or make a statement on the issue and notes that there is currently no official response from the European Commission

**DG EAC (Deputy Head of Unit EAC D.1):** Acknowledges the concern and notes that the protection of cultural heritage in conflicts and crisis is under the responsibility of the European External Action Service Indicates that the DG EAC has been following discussions at the level of the European Council and foreign ministers and takes note of the comment.

**ENCATC:** Suggests that the topic may be addressed with colleagues from the external service or others working on this area. She thanks Deputy Head of Unit EAC D.1 for her response and notes that the issue may be revisited at a future meeting.

**DG EAC (Deputy Head of Unit EAC D.1):** She notes that there will be a new update at the next meeting. She says that the group on Ukraine is finalising recommendations, which will be published soon and reported at the next meeting.

## Day 2, Tuesday 22 October 2024

### ***Enhancing Resilience of Cultural Heritage***

Two projects funded by the European Commission through the Creative Europe programme have trained cultural first aiders in Ukraine and aim to train a larger group in Creative Europe countries.

### **Training of Cultural Heritage Professionals in Ukraine by ICCROM - International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property**

The aim of this one-year project was to create a national team of cultural 1st aiders in Ukraine. The training was conducted in five phases, including pre-course online training, in-person training, and follow-up consultations. Now this team consists of 25 multidisciplinary heritage professionals from various oblasts in Ukraine. The priorities of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine were at the centre of the entire project planning.

### **The READY project *Safeguarding Cultural Heritage from Disasters, Extreme Weather Events and Complex Emergencies* by ICCROM - International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property**

The READY project aims to enhance capacities for protecting heritage in Europe from catastrophic risks, by establishing a proactive network of cultural 1st aiders, disaster risk management professionals, civil protection personnel, and emergency responders. The project will be implemented in three years, with a focus on movable and intangible heritage in the first year, immovable and intangible heritage in the second year, and advanced training of trainers in the third year.

The project aims to strengthen resilience and bring in an added module on climate risk assessment. The project will be aligned with previous European initiatives and the findings of the OMC group on climate change. Of the 40 to 50 professionals that have been trained in the first two years, 20 will be selected to be trained as trainers in order to ensure the legacy of the project.

### **Q&A**

**UNESCO:** Acknowledged the work done together in Ukraine on assessment and developing assessment forms adapted to the context of Ukraine and flag two works currently undertaken by UNESCO: Guidelines for sensitive debris removal in conflicts and post-conflict situations; Rapid damage and needs assessments (RDNAs) with a chapter on culture.

**CYPRUS:** She mentions that programmes of ICCROM connects people, practitioners, and those at risk and provides a tangible example of how to proceed with methodology, concerns, limitations, and capacities.

**ICCROM:** She notes that ICCROM has developed detailed build guidelines for rubble and salvage management, including numbering of objects and moving building parts. She discusses the importance

of recognizing the need for emergency intervention in heritage and the need for coordination mechanisms with local 1st responders and state emergency services.

## **OPEN FLOOR: Access to culture and cultural heritage, especially for younger generations**

### **BELGIUM, Flanders: Best Practice called 'Neighbourhoods with heritage.'**

In the Flemish region, the "Neighbourhoods with Heritage" project aimed to reconnect schools with their local heritage, promoting environmental education and awareness. The project found that schools rarely utilised their own neighbourhood's heritage as an educational tool, due to a lack of knowledge and connection to the area.

The project involved:

1. Collaborations between teachers, grandparents/parents, local heritage professionals, and cultural/nature experts.
2. Schools were encouraged to explore and develop a heritage project about their own neighbourhood.
3. Facilitators were trained to disseminate the project and organise it for primary and secondary schools across the region.
4. A workbook for teachers was compiled, containing tips and methods for implementing the project.

The project emphasised the importance of: Environmental education and awareness; Involving students in the process of discovering their own heritage; Encouraging critical and creative thinking and exploring the story behind local heritage; Fostering connection to the environment and appreciation for diversity and interculturalism; Developing a sense of community and citizenship.

The project has grown since 2022, with a network of coordinating partners (including heritage organizations and Flemish authorities) meeting regularly. The project aims to inspire others to adopt similar approaches. The methods and principles of the project can be adapted and applied in various contexts, promoting a deeper understanding of the connection between people and their environment.

### **SWEDEN: Equal access to culture**

The Swedish National Heritage Board has been working to promote children's participation in cultural activities and ensure equal access to cultural heritage for all children, aligned with the Convention on the Rights of the Children.

To achieve this goal, the National Heritage Board has been working closely with museums to develop a platform for capacity building. The "Culture Heritage in School" webinar series was launched to provide museums with the necessary knowledge and skills to work effectively with schools. The webinars cover topics such as outreach, partnership development, and supportive structures.

The webinar series has been well-received, with over 45 episodes covering various topics. A survey conducted in January 2024 found that the webinars have inspired and educated museum professionals working with school programs, providing them with a deeper understanding of the conditions and needs of schools. The webinars have also helped museums develop programs that are relevant and useful to schools, as well as basic digital skills.

The Board is developing a model for collaboration between museums, archives, and teacher training institutions to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to integrate cultural heritage into their teaching practices. This includes developing digital resources and training for teachers. This initiative has the potential to inspire other countries to follow a similar approach, promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage among children and young people.

### **AUSTRIA: Cultural participation of young people in Austria: “Kunst ist Klasse”**

The Austrian Ministry of Culture has launched a programme called “Kunst ist Klasse” to promote cultural education and participation among young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The program aims to provide equal opportunities for cultural participation and to make art and culture accessible to all.

Key Elements of the Program are to:

1. Provide equal opportunities for cultural participation among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
2. Make art and culture accessible to all, regardless of social and cultural background.
3. Promote cultural education and competencies among young people.
4. Attract new groups of visitors to art and cultural institutions

The program has two funding calls with a total budget of €1.2 million. The deadline for the second call is next week, and projects can receive funding ranging from €5,000 to €30,000. The program supports participatory projects that promote cultural education and participation among young people.

The program has funded a range of projects, including:

1. "Touching Time" - a project that uses artistic approaches to deal with the heritage of a former concentration camp.
2. "Memory Walk 316" - a project that focuses on preserving the memory of victims of national socialism through innovative media.
3. "Diversity of Urban Spaces" - an interactive project that involves pupils in the design and use of open spaces.
4. "Building Blocks of the Past and Future" - a project that provides pupils with a deep insight into the history of a migrant group and promotes an understanding of labour migration, ecological aspects, and sustainable construction.

### **Committee of the Regions and President of Harghita County Council.**

The President highlights the importance of cultural policies in driving sustainable development and fostering inclusivity in rural areas. He mentions the importance of cultural activities in rural communities for creating job opportunities, boosting civic participation, and enhancing the quality of life. However, he stresses that rural populations, particularly in Romania, face significant barriers to accessing cultural activities due to geographical constraints and infrastructural deficiencies.

He also emphasised the need for cultural policies to be inclusive, especially engaging young people, which encourage them to actively contribute to their communities. In Harghita County, the resilience of cultural heritage is noted as a crucial element of local identity. He also advocates for prioritizing the preservation of architectural heritage and cultural landscapes for their potential to drive cultural

tourism. Addressing misconceptions about heritage conservation, he argues for a deeper understanding of the economic and social benefits that heritage sites can offer. He points to the need for investments in local cultural institutions and organizations to foster a vibrant cultural ecosystem, with special attention should be given to marginalised communities.

In his concluding remarks, he emphasises the Committee of the Regions' commitment to supporting cultural heritage as part of cohesion policy post-2020 and advocates for a holistic approach that recognises the multi-faceted value of investing in cultural assets.

## **Council of Europe**

13th Advisory Annual Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, (Visegrad, Hungary 25-27 September). The topic of this year's Forum was "Transmission and innovation: Fostering youth participation along the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe". The aim was to highlight the importance of youth engagement in cultural heritage, particularly through the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes program. The event brought together 350 participants from 46 member states and 48 cultural routes, focusing on how to pass down cultural traditions and involve young people in heritage conservation and innovation.

The two main themes explored were "transmission" and "innovation." Transmission referred to the passing of cultural traditions and knowledge across generations, emphasizing the need to actively involve young people. Intergenerational dialogue and youth participation were deemed crucial for preserving Europe's cultural diversity. Innovation, on the other hand, revolved around using digital tools, social media, and interactive experiences to make cultural heritage more accessible and engaging for younger audiences. Several routes showcased youth-led activities, and the forum featured a session called the "Walk the Talk" seminar, where young cultural heritage professionals walked along the Cultural Routes in Hungary. This hands-on approach, supported by the European Youth Centre of Budapest and the Council of Europe's youth mobility program, aimed to engage youth in a practical way with the heritage sites.

A key feature of the forum was its emphasis on high-level dialogue sessions that included active participation from young people. Many of these young participants came from the European Committee on Youth of the Council of Europe, as well as various NGOs and youth organizations across Europe. The outcomes of these sessions were described as positive and impressive, reflecting the active role of youth in shaping cultural policies.

The forum also included the certification of new Cultural Routes, with a specific criterion now being the engagement of youth in cultural activities. Council of Europe stressed that youth activities and co-management are priorities for the Council of Europe, as part of its broader focus on ensuring that young Europeans have an active role in decision-making processes related to cultural heritage.

## **UNESCO**

The first initiative UNESCO discussed was its proposal to establish a *Day for Underwater Cultural Heritage* on August 21st, which marks the day of a significant event related to underwater archaeology. This day would be dedicated to promoting access to underwater cultural heritage, with a strong emphasis on youth engagement. The aim is to raise awareness and appreciation for this often-overlooked aspect of heritage by launching educational programs targeting students and the general

public. It highlighted the importance of fostering a deeper understanding of underwater cultural sites and their significance, particularly among younger generations, who will become the custodians of this heritage.

The second topic centred on the 70th anniversary of the *1954 Hague Convention* for the protection of cultural property during armed conflict. It mentioned the various celebrations of this milestone and pointed to new initiatives launched during the event, including the development of a military-civil alliance and a new focus on the judiciary. These initiatives seek to strengthen the protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones by involving military personnel and judicial authorities. UNESCO has already implemented this approach in Ukraine, organizing the first joint training session in August that brought together military, judiciary, and cultural heritage experts. This training emphasized the specific care required when dealing with cultural property during emergencies and armed conflict, highlighting the military's role in safeguarding cultural sites and documenting violations for potential judicial action.

Finally, it underlined the importance of sensitizing military and judicial forces to the protection of cultural heritage, particularly in conflict regions where civilians may not have access. It also emphasized the significance of holding those responsible for war crimes against cultural heritage accountable through judicial processes. This initiative represents a new and comprehensive approach to heritage protection in crisis situations, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved even in the most challenging environments.

### **European Heritage Volunteers**

Presentation of the European Heritage Volunteers' mission and the organisation's activities carried out since more than three decades. The speaker emphasised the European Heritage Volunteers' mission, emphasising its role in connecting young people with European cultural heritage through hands-on, non-formal education. The initiative operates across more than 30 countries, offering opportunities for participants to engage in cultural preservation while gaining practical skills. The program includes projects in countries across Europe, with recent additions such as North Macedonia, and potential expansions to Slovenia and Hungary.

Key Program Activities are practical conservation of heritage sites, traditional skills transmission, and enhancing community involvement. The speaker highlighted projects related to traditional crafts (wood, stone, plaster) and cultural landscapes, particularly in the context of climate change. This initiative strengthens cultural identity, empowers communities, and enhances visibility for heritage conservation. Participants develop practical skills, complement academic learning, and build international connections. Additionally, the involvement of young volunteers fosters intergenerational knowledge exchange and collaboration between different stakeholders.

Looking Ahead (2025 and beyond), the speaker outlined future plans, focusing on expanding the program to additional countries and heritage sites, with emphasis on rural and less developed areas. Climate change, traditional techniques, and non-academic engagement will remain central themes. Institutional cooperation will also be strengthened, notably with the European Heritage Label and educational institutions offering vocational training.

The 2025 program will be published in February, with projects taking place from July to November.

### **FRH (Future for Religious Heritage)**

FRH presented a movie of one of the initiatives they did in reference to music, international spirituality and pilgrimage routes - a string of pearls and concerts specifically touching also upon youth and inviting them to participate. He emphasised the importance of culture in bringing people together, especially in the face of current political polarization in Europe. He highlighted the belief that culture is a powerful tool for promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, key to fostering understanding in today's challenging political climate.

A joint initiative with another FRH's member was introduced, which involves the famous pilgrimage route, the Camino de Santiago, in Spain. This initiative included a music festival called "Caminos que nos unen", where artists from various countries and traditions performed in religious heritage sites.

FRH highlighted how the festival showcases religious heritage sites as valuable spaces for fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Through music and performance arts, the project brought young Europeans closer to cultural and religious diversity, emphasizing the role of these venues in uniting a multicultural society. The music festival demonstrated the universal appeal of music and performing arts in breaking down barriers between cultures and religions. The activity not only underscored the importance of religious heritage and natural landscapes but also illustrated the strength of music in connecting young people across different backgrounds. FRH showed a short video after his introductory talk. (<https://caminosquenosunen.com/>).

### **MCA - The PITCHER project (Preventing Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Heritage - Educational Resources (2021-2024 Erasmus+))**

PITCHER Project, is an Erasmus+ initiative designed to create, and test open educational resources (OERs). The project focuses on improving the skills of educators, such as teachers and professors, in preparing learning experiences aimed at combating the looting and illicit trafficking of cultural goods.

The project includes a diverse range of partners, including museums and schools, with Greece as a notable participant. It employs various educational formats, including e-learning and escape games, encouraging interactive and hands-on activities to engage both teachers and students in the fight against illicit trafficking. The project contributes to the broader European strategy against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, highlighting its alignment with European efforts to address this issue through education.

MCA mentioned the project's final event, which brought together practitioners and policymakers to explore how educational tools can raise awareness. The project produced open educational resources, guidelines for practitioners, and policy recommendations.

He also shared policy recommendations, emphasizing the need to strengthen cultural heritage preservation education in school curricula. He stressed the importance of encouraging collaboration at national and European levels, along with the modernisation of regulations to protect younger generations and cultural heritage. ([The Pitcher Project / Policy Recommendations / Open Educational Materials](#))

### **ESACH**

ESACH, a network of students and young professionals in the cultural heritage field, with approximately 350 members. ESACH is run entirely on a voluntary basis, and they are in the process of formalizing their registration to gain better recognition and standing. ESACH has been involved in

several activities at both national and international levels. Their main strategic partner is Europe Nostra, but they also collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders.

The key focus of ESACH's talk was the position paper it published a year ago in Venice. The paper was developed during the European Year of Youth and resulted from a collaborative process involving partners like Europe Nostra, "The Future is Heritage" initiative, and ISA. The process included online surveys and interviews, and the document provides recommendations for incorporating youth in cultural heritage initiatives and ensuring the sustainability of the sector.

The position paper outlines five main principles for involving youth in heritage-related activities. The focus is on collaboration, knowledge exchange, and creating a future-oriented, resilient heritage sector. Popovic emphasized that the paper should not be seen as merely a youth appeal but as a meaningful contribution to the sector's sustainability.

ESACH has initiated a spin-off event scheme, inviting members to use the position paper as a foundation for discussions, activities, or performances. These events are platforms for exploring good practices and improving the implementation of the paper's principles. Additionally, the speaker highlighted the upcoming *Youth Heritage Days* conference, a youth-led event within the European Heritage Hub framework, scheduled for March next year.

### **European Heritage Hub: Update on latest and upcoming developments by Europa Nostra**

The speaker mentioned the importance of integrating youth into cultural heritage initiatives, aligning with the Letter mission to strengthen connections between young generations and cultural heritage.

Europa Nostra emphasised the European Heritage Hub's aim to "avoid a "fortress Brussels" mentality by fostering decentralization and empowering regional organizations and voices across Europe". This approach encourages diverse participation from different regions and cities.

#### **Regional Hubs Development:**

**-Krakow:** The first regional hub established, with a conference planned in collaboration with the Architects' Council of Europe focused on the New European Bauhaus.

**-Lisbon:** Recently created in partnership with the Central National De Cultura and local authorities, highlighting the city's historical connections and its role in cultural exchange.

**-Nicosia:** The latest hub, focusing on building bridges with civil society in the Eastern Mediterranean and addressing the impact of geopolitical issues on cultural heritage.

Europa Nostra announced the public launch of the European Cultural Heritage Summit in Nicosia, aimed at fostering dialogue and collaboration in light of current challenges. The summit is intended as a platform to unite different stakeholders around shared heritage goals.

**Small Grant Scheme:** The European Heritage Hub has launched a small grant scheme targeting eleven EU neighbouring countries to support civil society-led heritage projects. This initiative aims to fill funding gaps for smaller projects, with 14 projects selected out of over 600 applications, amounting to a total allocation of €250,000. There are hopes to secure additional funding to expand this effort.

A European Heritage Hub Social Forum has been established to facilitate connections and discussions among stakeholders. The forum includes in-person meetings and virtual gatherings to foster collaboration, learning, and the sharing of best practices.

### **Hub Forums and thematic Focus:**

The second Hub Forum, held in Bucharest, focused on the responsible digital transition for cultural heritage. It emphasized the need to prioritize cultural heritage in the EU's digital agenda and to develop ethical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in the sector.

Upcoming forums will continue to address social transformation and inclusion, with a focus on best practices in various local contexts.

**Peer learning visits:** the speaker mentioned the importance of peer learning visits to share best practices among cities and local communities. The next visit is planned for November in North Macedonia, with future activities also scheduled in the Caucasus region.

**Call to Action:** The recently released European Heritage Hub Call to Action focuses on championing responsible digital transition in cultural heritage. The speaker encouraged attendees to read and disseminate this document widely, stressing its relevance for future EU policies. [European Heritage Hub Call to Action / Join the Hub Social Forum](#)

### **Q&A**

*Discussion and arguments about youth accessibility to cultural activities:*

**Germany:** proposed adapting the existing model of a Cultural Pass, which provides young people with access to cultural activities, to a European level. He mentions that “countries like Germany, France, Spain, and Italy have had great experiences with the so-called Cultural Pass for young people”. He emphasised the importance of introducing young people to European cultural heritage and democratic values, especially considering current social and political challenges. This pass would also provide them with the opportunity to experience the culture in these countries, by visiting cultural heritage sites or attending festivals. The specific design of this pass would need careful consideration, but he sees great potential in complementing the existing program DiscoverEU with a cultural component.

**Council of Europe:** He supported the idea and mentioned the Council of Europe's Youth Card, which provides discounts on cultural activities and travel for young Europeans.

He explained that while the Youth Card operates on a discount model, it has been highly successful across member states. It offers young Europeans discounted rates on travel, especially for mobility options like railways, and many young people appreciate the 20% discount they can get on their travels and cultural experiences. So far, millions of cards have been distributed. He also highlighted the complementary role the Youth Card plays in promoting youth engagement with cultural heritage. This youth card differs slightly from the cultural pass, which it seems to give to young Europeans a cash credit of twenty, thirty, or even fifty euros from the governments of France, Italy, or Germany when they turn eighteen.

----- End of meeting -----