



PRESS RELEASE

Strasbourg, 9 September 2016

European Heritage Days 2016: Celebrating the people behind the places

As custodians of local traditions, histories and values, Heritage Communities are the living transmission of Europe's cultural richness. Under the pan-European theme of "Heritage and Communities", this year's EHD events will bring together 50 European countries in a celebration of citizens' roles in promoting and sharing common European heritage. Throughout Europe, more than 50 000 national and local events, many of them free of charge, will celebrate Europe's true treasure – its communities and the people behind the places. Museums, galleries, historic archives, libraries and many other places will be brought into the spotlight to encourage active participation in heritage conservation and interpretation.

Being part of the EHD community this year means you can enjoy the first annual Porridge Making Championship taking place in Dyrsku'n, Norway's oldest marketplace, take part in storytelling tours in the cultural heritage landscape of Scotland's sacred mountains or try out your artistic skills in linocut in Ljubljana's ethnographic museum. If you are more interested in smugglers, spies and stolen plum pies, the EHDs have got you covered! Check out the newest play about the smuggling and trading shenanigans in the 18th century, around the Scottish town of Alloa. Or why not join a world-class jazz concert in a community-restored building in Germany, or a 24-hour pyjama party at the city library in the Hungarian town of Ózd?

In Bosnia and Herzegovina the library for blind and visually-impaired persons in Banja Luka will bring back from oblivion forgotten literary names and their legacies, whilst the 'Other Yerevan' virtual museum will showcase the city's architectural jewels dating back over the centuries and highlight the history of the town's urban heritage.

In celebration of its best-loved landscape gardener, Lancelot "Capability" Brown, England will be casting a light on secret gardens with a special story to tell, whilst up to 500 bell towers are set to ring in unison nationwide as a mark of this 400-year-old community tradition.

"Communities have a vital role in preserving and managing their cultural heritage. Each of them has its unique history and tradition, and this year's theme "Heritage and Communities" is a great opportunity to discover and promote this uniqueness and to

Council of Europe contacts:

[Gianluca Silvestrini](#) (+33 3 88 41 22 03) - Manager, European Heritage Days Programme, Directorate General of Democracy

[Giuseppe Zaffuto](#) (+33 3 90 21 56 04) – Media Officer

European Commission contacts :

[Emilia Appiou](#) (+ 32 2 29 55719)- Manager, European Heritage Days Programme, Directorate-General Education and Culture

raise awareness of how cultural heritage can be further developed. I am glad that the many events planned during the European Heritage Days offer European citizens, once again, the opportunity to explore, share and celebrate their heritage. Especially in the run-up to the European Year of Cultural Heritage, planned for 2018, this can further help all of us to fully appreciate the immense richness of European cultures and identities," said Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

This year's theme focuses on the role of people as carriers and inheritors of cultural heritage and highlights an important aspect of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) which recognises inter-relationships of people and their environments as critical for heritage research, interpretation and conservation initiatives. Focusing on the people whose work and knowledge help make a positive impact on European culture and heritage, the European Heritage Days provide a unique prism for interpreting our shared values. As the most widely celebrated cultural event in Europe, the European Heritage Days have a challenging task of finding new ways to engage millions of people in heritage exploration.

"Creating a climate which stimulates an appreciation of the rich mosaic of European cultures has led to a passionate community of people working together to encourage inclusive societies in Europe and beyond its national borders. Today, the European Heritage Days can be considered an essential instrument for fostering a tangible experience of European culture and history, in addition to raising the public's awareness about the many values of our common heritage and the continuous need for its protection." said Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General of Democracy, Council of Europe.

About European Heritage Days

Celebrated in 50 signatory States to the European Cultural Convention, European Heritage Days highlight the diversity of local skills, traditions, architectural styles and works of art that constitute shared European Heritage. Launched in 1985 in France, the festival has been organised as a joint initiative of the European Union and the Council of Europe since 1999. Enabling citizens to explore a wide range of cultural assets through a number of themed events organised for free, European Heritage Days help uncover hidden histories of people and places that have helped shaping the culture and heritage of Europe. In 2016, over 30 countries will participate in the programme celebrating "Heritage Communities" as carriers of cultural identity and heritage protection strategies.

The events will take place from late August to October, when local skills, crafts and traditions will be put into focus at cultural events all over Europe. The aim is to increase understanding of a shared European past, encourage appreciation of traditional values and inspire new heritage conservation and education initiatives. Cultural heritage is a priority under Creative Europe, the EU's programme for the cultural and creative sectors. The European Heritage Days receive €200 000 in support from Creative Europe and €200 000 from the Council of Europe, with most events being funded with national or regional backing.

To find out more

European Heritage Days Portal: www.europeanheritagedays.com

Council of Europe: [European Heritage Days](#)

European Commission: [European Heritage Days](#)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EHDays

Twitter: [@JEP_EHD](#)

To download the press release in pdf format, [click here](#).