





# Handbook on the European Heritage Days for National Coordinators and Stakeholders

A first version of the European Heritage Days (EHDs) Handbook was prepared in 2009 by Michel Kneubühler, Ministry of Culture and Communication, Directorate General of Cultural Affairs of Rhône-Alpes, France. The 2020 revised version has been updated by Hakan Shearer Demir, with input from the EHDs Secretariat and National Coordinators.

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

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# European Heritage Days

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**D**emocratic participation in cultural life and the right to practise one's own culture is essential for the well-being of societies where multiple identities and narratives are important assets.

The European Heritage Days, a joint Programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, are the most widely celebrated participatory cultural events shared by people living in Europe. The pan-European nature of the events contributes to bringing citizens together and highlighting the European dimension and the value of cultural heritage in the 50 signatory States of the European Cultural Convention.

Tens of thousands of events are organised every year in order to help raise awareness of Europe's heritage and the continuous need for its protection, as well as to create shared cultural heritage experiences, promote inclusiveness and foster creativity and imagination.

This Handbook aims to facilitate the work of the National Coordinators and other stakeholders who all play an essential role in the successful organisation of the European Heritage Days.

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# Introduction





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## European Heritage Days

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The European Heritage Days (EHDs) are the most widely celebrated participatory cultural event in Europe<sup>1</sup>, with an outstanding capacity to reach out to and mobilise millions of people. The year-long process, managed by the Council of Europe in cooperation with the European Union in the framework of a Joint Programme, relies on the fundamental role played by the EHD National Coordinators, local organisers and volunteers, and culminates in the EHD celebrations in participating countries between August and October. As each event is unique and expresses the value of heritage, the strength of the EHDs comes from the collective spirit of participation that it creates across Europe each year, as well as the possibility of each activity finding its voice.

Initiated by the Council of Europe in 1985, the commitment and fruitful partnership of the Council of Europe and European Union since 1999 have made this Programme expand over the years under the motto “Europe, a common heritage”. This cooperation emphasises the shared values of human rights and democracy. The EHDs Programme indeed plays a crucial role in facilitating the expression of democratic culture and practices, encouraging participation of a wide range of inhabitants across Europe. The pivotal work of the National Coordinators bridges the institutional framework with actions developed at national, regional and local levels, engaging people in their heritage, and connecting events across the continent through the **European Heritage Days** portal.

Over the decades, the organisation of the EHDs has gradually evolved from opening the doors of monuments to the public, providing free access to heritage sites and raising awareness about local heritage, to offering interactive and community-owned public

events. These aim to celebrate heritage and to play a crucial role for the promotion and advocacy for diversity and social inclusion. Cultural heritage is certainly about monuments, historic centres, rituals, folklore, the celebration of isolated beliefs, but it also deals with multiple narratives in its social, economic and political construct. Heritage is a resource and its governance a concern, not only to authorities and experts, but also to inhabitants in a process of democratic participation.

This Handbook aims to offer support and suggestions for the organisation of the EHDs in order to promote the engagement of civil society throughout the year. It is further recommended for the organisers, national and local authorities, as well as institutions and other actors, to become familiar with the philosophy, operational needs, cooperation and partnership possibilities.

Acknowledging the value of diverse heritage, celebrating it and being tolerant to different viewpoints is an important process. It is essential to pay specific attention to vulnerable and marginalised groups who have limited opportunity to voice their opinions, carefully working with the changing demography of communities, regardless of the size of the representation. Multiple identities and stories should be able to find a space to express themselves. Such a possibility sets a common ground for mutual understanding and plays an important role in building and renewing relationships. The essence of living together is embedded in the philosophy of the Programme, raising awareness to the richness and cultural diversity of Europe. It creates a climate of appreciation of diverse heritages in a pan-European context for present and future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> The Parties to the European Cultural Convention are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.



# I. Presentation of the European Heritage Days

### 1. A brief history of the European Heritage Days Programme

At the 2nd European Conference of Ministers responsible for the Architectural Heritage organised by the Council of Europe in Granada, Spain, on 3 October 1985, the then French Minister for Culture, Jack Lang proposed to extend throughout Europe the Historical Monument Open Day that had been successfully introduced the previous year in France. A resolution on the promotion of architectural heritage in socio-cultural life recommended that states implement the broadening of the concept of architectural heritage and promote the general public's awareness of and access to its heritage. The subsequent years witnessed a number of countries following this proposal: the Netherlands (1987), Sweden and Malta (1988), Belgium (1989), Denmark, Scotland and Turkey (1990). This gradual increase in interest encouraged the Council of Europe to pursue its activities, with support from the Commission of the European Community, the European Cultural Foundation and the Dutch Government. It set up a coordination office responsible for helping countries wishing to introduce Heritage Days and facilitating the circulation of information and experience.

An initial conference with the representatives of the various partner countries in 1991 sparked further interest, leading to 18 countries taking part in the Programme in 1992, 23 the following year, 40 in 1996 and 46 in 1999. Fifty countries now take part in the European Heritage Days.

The European Heritage Days became a joint Council of Europe/European Commission Programme in 1999, with both institutions deciding that new impetus should be imparted

to the event. The participation of 250 participants from 42 countries at high-level events organised in Strasbourg and Brussels were indicative of the growing interest, as well as the challenges involved in organising the EHDs. The Programme adopted the motto "Europe, a common heritage".

Since 2008, the EHD Programme considers heritage in its wider context as a social, economic and political resource beyond the heritage assets themselves. With the Council of Europe's 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Heritage, and Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century<sup>2</sup>, the importance of an integrated approach to heritage has been emphasised, highlighting the essential linkages between social and economic value and the education and knowledge components, offering guidance on how to incorporate these components into heritage governance.

More recently, the European Heritage Days were highlighted as one of the key initiatives of the **2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage**, with an increased number of events celebrated under the theme of "The Art of Sharing". The aim of the Year was to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. A number of new European Heritage Days initiatives were launched and adopted as part of EYCH2018. The EHDs now aim to build on the successes of these initiatives through the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**, adopted in December 2018 to secure the long-term impact of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

<sup>2</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/16806f6a03>



## 2. Aims and principles

The European Heritage Days encourage public authorities and people to value local heritage in relation to other shared heritage in Europe, fostering intercultural dialogue. They create a platform for multiple narratives and heritage-led initiatives to be brought to public attention, and facilitate a pan-European network of stakeholders and initiatives.

The EHDs open doors to mutual understanding, cooperation, joint actions with an integrated approach to managing cultural heritage at all levels in the various countries. They take account of the need for the public to participate in the democratisation process, through people-centred and heritage-led actions, from the identification of heritage assets to their enhancement, through their protection and restoration and effective use for society.

### Aims

The specific aims of the EHDs are to:

- raise awareness of the richness and cultural diversity of Europe;
- create a climate in which the appreciation of the rich mosaic of European cultures is stimulated;
- counter racism and xenophobia and encourage tolerance in Europe and beyond national borders;
- inform the public and political authorities about the need to protect cultural heritage against new threats;
- invite Europe to respond to the social, political and economic challenges it faces.

### Principles

Working towards these aims, coordination should take into account the following common principles:

- the title “European Heritage Days” is compulsory for all countries or organisations wishing to be associated with the event;
- the EHDs logo must be included in all promotional documents published for the event;
- the motto “Europe, a common heritage” must be shared by all the countries;
- the pan-European themes selected by all countries should be incorporated in the programmes as much as possible, marking the specific theme each year;
- the flag bearing the EHDs logo is supposed to be flown on all buildings or sites associated with the event;
- the EHDs take place annually between August and October;
- the EHDs prioritise the opening of buildings and sites that are usually closed to the public;
- the EHDs may schedule visits to buildings and sites that are usually open to the public provided they propose activities that are different from the usual programmes (special guided tours, exhibitions, concerts, shows, conferences, games, etc.);
- admission to the EHDs must, as far as possible, be free of charge; otherwise, admission fees must be lower than usual and only charged to adult visitors; any request for contributions from visitors must be accompanied by explanations;
- the EHDs must encourage the participation of young people by organising family-oriented activities.

Compliance with these principles helps reinforce the international dimension of the



event, as well as every participant's feeling of belonging to a larger picture.

### 3. Target groups

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The European Heritage Days are often characterised by an expansion of the spectrum of groups who usually visit heritage buildings or sites. Traditionally, the activities have been organised around visiting specific sites. "Regular visitors" accustomed to visiting such places who are attracted by the prospect of discovering sites that are usually closed, are joined by "occasional visitors", who are attracted by the activities organised in their local neighbourhood, and "exceptional visitors", who are drawn to visit specific buildings or sites by the publicity surrounding the event or indeed the mobilisation and media coverage it has attracted.

Increasingly, visitors and participants are encouraged to take an active role in the process of organising and implementing, in contrast to what in the past was a more passive engagement model. This shift is essential for community building and ownership. An interactive element to activities tends to be more attractive, engaging and meaningful for the participants. The EHDs focus every year on a central theme in order to increase the unity of approach across the continent. Recommendations offered for activities are useful instruments to instigate actions at national, regional and local levels.

The activities proposed by the organisers are opportunities for mutual exchange between community members, local authorities, civil society, businesses, schools, etc. where new partnerships and joint projects emerge, both locally and internationally. They should take account of diversity of situations, narratives and willingness of actors to engage; proposing both the exceptional discovery of sites that

are usually inaccessible and the unprecedented enhancement of a site which is usually open to the public.

It is important that the initiatives for a specific area or topic should entice participants into buildings or events that are previously unknown to them. It is also necessary to pay attention to young people and marginalised groups who might feel excluded from certain activities or places. The EHDs can provide a special occasion for welcoming newcomers, individuals or groups of people who have recently moved into the area and for whom the discovery of the local heritage and sharing their own heritage in a warm and welcoming context of the European Heritage Days can facilitate integration.

The EHDs have the capacity to reach out to wide audiences and transmit significant social messages, encouraging people to become active in their own heritage governance, from awareness-raising to protection, conservation, education, maintenance, economic development and management, according to their interest and ability. In this regard, consideration of the EHD initiatives as a platform for non-formal education allows all stakeholders to centre around a specific heritage-led topic and address challenges faced from various viewpoints. It should be considered a joint effort to provide communities with a platform to celebrate their cultural heritage, utilising public space and shared heritage assets. Positive experiences of events such as these can have a transformative impact on people's lives.

National coordinators should ensure social inclusion and encourage solidarity among the community members. They should seek to be involved in joint actions beyond borders, whether this is inter-municipal or inter-regional cooperation within the same country or cross-border cooperation between countries.

# II. Cooperation and coordination of the European Heritage Days



The European Heritage Days do not consist merely of an isolated annual event with media coverage, but present a year-long process, identifying potential partnerships between local organisations, active community involvement in planning and implementing heritage-led initiatives. The coordination of EHDs can be labour-intensive. Events have more impact if they make the most of the skills and networks of several local organisations. Considering that in many countries the responsibilities may be assumed by one or more persons, cooperation becomes crucial. Accordingly, a regularly updated stakeholders map is a good first step. It should include all actors in the planning stage, at European, national, regional and local levels. National coordinators play a pivotal role in conveying the message of the EHDs Programme to the national and local stakeholders and in coordinating cooperation between all stakeholders. Involvement of stakeholders from the earliest stage of the process is more effective than asking them to participate solely in the advanced stages of the work.

## 1. At European level

At European level, the EHDs are coordinated by the Council of Europe, in close consultation with the European Union. The activities include:

- creation of a joint title (“European Heritage Days”), accompanied by a shared logo and slogan (“Europe, a common heritage”);
- definition and updating of common goals and principles;
- organisation of an annual Assembly on one or more topical themes relating to heritage interpretation and communication;
- management of the EHD web portal;
- organisation of the European Heritage Days Stories, Young European Heritage

Makers initiative and European Cross-Frontier Cooperation Projects;

- thematic workshops on issues defined by the National Coordinators;
- monitoring of ongoing events across participating states and communities and ensuring effective information sharing;
- support to National Coordinators;
- consultations with partner entities and programmes to determine future orientation of the EHDs and potential joint actions.

## 2. At national level

In view of the diversity of participating countries, in terms of political and/or administrative institutions, size, history, socio-economic aspects and public attitudes to heritage, the EHDs are organised in a wide variety of ways throughout the continent. In a number of countries, cultural heritage is a matter for central government, whereas in others the decentralised authorities hold this responsibility. In other countries, the coordination is entrusted to a private body, sometimes one specially set up for the purpose.

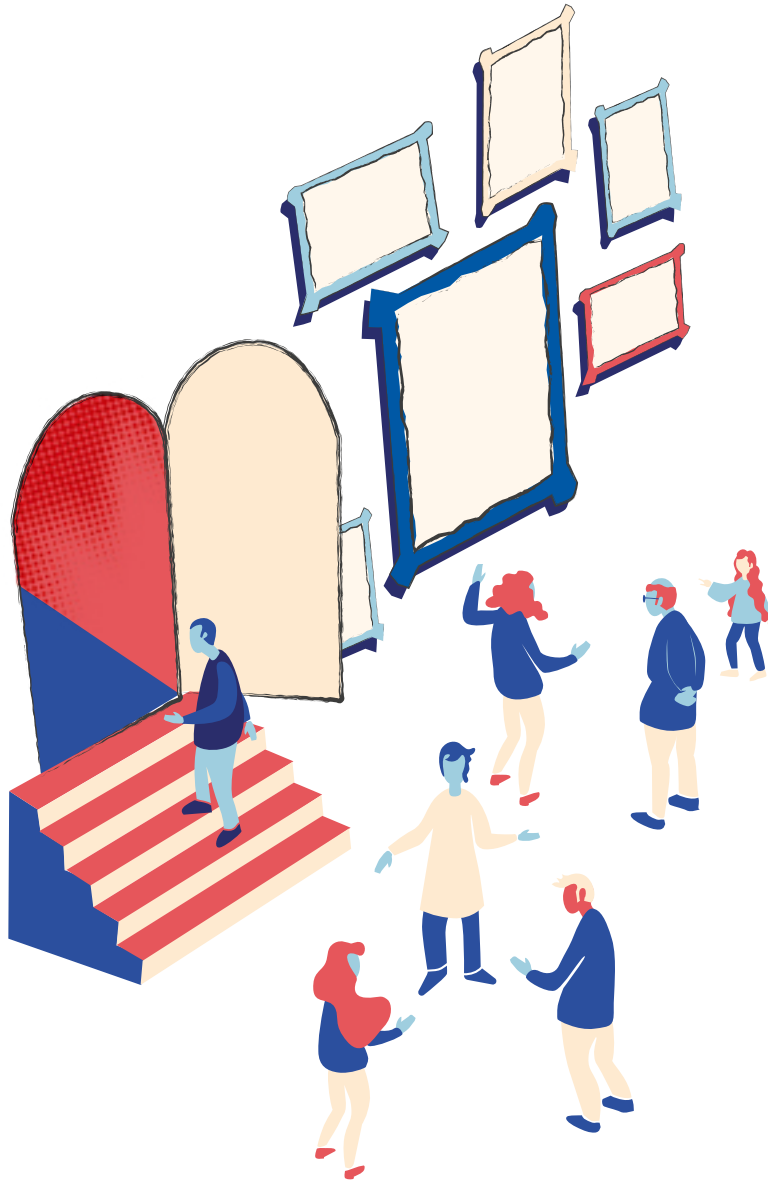
In all countries, however, proper organisation of the EHDs necessitates national coordination, to act as an interface between European coordination and the regional or local stakeholders. According to available resources and time, the National Coordinators may have to perform the following work:

- organise information meetings at national and regional and/or local level;
- decide on the national theme and provide the corresponding explanations;
- promote the event (press relations, production and dissemination of communication facilities and tools, management of a dedicated website, etc.);



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- identify national promoters and sponsors;
- foster cooperation among regional and/or local coordinating bodies answerable to them, or transfrontier or international cooperation agencies;
- advise regional and/or local coordinating bodies answerable to them;
- create specific products – relating for example to the theme adopted at national level - to support the regional and/or local initiatives;
- organise a national launch event;
- update the national EHDs archives;
- represent the country in the international meetings.

Regardless of the mode of organisation adopted, experience would suggest that if a national body is properly recognised and resourced, it can provide considerable added value for the organisation of the EHDs, from the angle both of the coherency and pooling of resources, and of the support provided for local organisers in terms of contents and tools. European cooperation in the EHDs focuses on encouraging national administrations to officially recognise and support the EHDs.



### 3. At regional and local levels

The EHDs rely on the dedication of volunteers. Each year, thousands of volunteers give their time. This enthusiasm, input and time invested is the bedrock of the EHDs. National coordinators are encouraged to acknowledge their value and contributions.

Regional and local coordination, which is based on dialogue and consultation, can be conducted in the following fields:

- a mapping exercise: demographic mapping of existing groups, associations, potential heritage assets to be involved in the EHDs, funding sources;
- jointly establishing European Heritage Days initiatives throughout the area in question;
- organising meetings on the theme adopted;
- liaising with all potential players;
- organising “circuits” or “routes” linking up several points in the area;
- harmonising the various initiatives in terms of time-tabling, content and promotion;
- producing unifying tools (publications, exhibitions, electronic files, etc);
- producing and disseminating promotional tools throughout the area (programmes/ documents, posters and flyers, prospectuses, dedicated websites, radio advertisements, etc);
- making voluntary workers responsible for public reception and information available to certain owners or managers of buildings or sites;
- setting up specialist information points in different locations around the territory;
- promoting the event in the national, regional and local national press;
- providing scientific and technical support for the activities organised;
- providing legal, technical or logistical support (negotiations with insurance

companies, public authorities, security officials, technical services, etc);

- devising a “self-evaluation” after each edition of the EHDs, to be circulated to all involved.

In addition, National Coordinators are encouraged to work with other regions by:

- facilitating the exchange of information;
- centralising requests regarding any communication/promotional materials on offer from the national coordinator, including EHD flags;
- establishing “shared coordination” with other regional or local coordinating bodies in order to pool certain tasks and reinforce programme coherency;
- developing contacts across borders and promoting international cooperation agreements.





**III.**

# **Organisation of the European Heritage Days**

The organisation of the EHDs in any given context requires systematic work at various levels and in coordination with multiple stakeholders. National coordinators are advised to take the following aspects into consideration.

### 1. Organisers

The success of the EHDs depends on the involvement of people in all stages of the process, in close coordination with stakeholders at all levels. This process is based on a wider definition of heritage, creating a positive and harmonious environment that should be a central priority. In parallel, it is essential that the organisers understand the objectives, their individual responsibilities and roles in the process, and the value of their action in a broader European context.

Organisers can be people from a wide range of backgrounds. They could, for example, be:

- public authorities or administrations that own buildings or sites which are regularly or exceptionally open to the public;
- associations or private foundations that neither own nor manage buildings or sites which are open for the European Heritage Days, but which are responsible for receiving the public or organising activities in them during the event;
- private individuals who own buildings or sites which are regularly open to the public;
- tourism offices or public services authorised by their umbrella authorities to receive visitors and organise activities during the event;
- public or private operators (tour guides, tour organisers, coach operators, etc.);
- individuals or associations that open up their neighbourhood and share their daily life;
- groups (farmers, industrialists, artists etc) who would like to share their heritage, practices and skills;

- indigenous groups that remind us of disappearing traditions;
- immigrant and refugee groups who would like to share their stories.

### Specific responsibilities

The organisers have the following responsibilities in common, regardless of their background, the nature and dimensions of the heritage they are proposing or the type of activities they intend to organise during the EHDs:

- display and circulation of communication materials supplied by the coordinating body(ies) at national, regional and local levels;
- compliance with the timetable and commitments to the above-mentioned coordinating bodies, unless unavoidably prevented;
- attendance at information and/or coordinating meetings taking place in their area;
- ensuring the event is welcoming and accessible for visitors (information, signposting, agreeability of the visit, services, security, disability access, etc.);
- organising specific activities, whether linked to the official theme or not, taking particular account of young people and the family dimension of the event;
- where possible, and as local legislative regulations allow, provision of public liability insurance in the event of accidents or other incidents;
- decoration of the building or site with the EHDs flag and/or promotional material (where it is supplied by the national coordinating body);
- provision for press relations and local promotional activities;
- replying to surveys and questionnaires on the overall assessment or results of the event.





### 3. Themes

European Heritage Days are one of the major cultural agenda items on the calendar at the start of every school year. In order to bring innovation to the programme of activities, a concerted effort is made by National Coordinators during annual meetings to select one shared annual theme.

Such an approach is useful for the renewed interest in heritage-led initiatives, as well as demonstrating the role of heritage in relation to societal challenges. Some further rationale for a thematic approach includes:

- renewing the range of activities, and therefore increasing the curiosity of visitors and journalists;
- reaching out to new networks and involving new partners;
- triggering the opening of new sites;
- permitting visitors to discover specific types of heritage or issues of heritage management;
- uniting different partners around a common project;
- building up permanent tools to raise public awareness beyond the two days of the annual event.

Such an approach highlights the importance of an integrated approach with a wide variety of heritage aspects, including, inter alia:

- a specific type of: religious, rural, industrial, seaside, railway, scientific/ technological, military or other nature;
- a specific artistic period and architectural style: Romanesque, Classical, Baroque, Neo-classical, Art Nouveau, Modern etc.;
- a given historical period: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Modern Era, the nineteenth century, the twentieth century, etc.;

- issues connecting heritage with themes such as citizenship, human rights, creation, literature, light, etc., or delving further into an aspect of heritage policy: restoration, reuse, protection, etc.;
- anniversaries or celebrations: artists, poets, specific days that have national or community value;
- specific practices (farming, fishing, etc.) that are important to the communities;
- representation of multiple narratives and identities and dissonant heritage.

Given the importance of the thematic approach, together with the National Coordinators, the EHDs Programme identifies specific themes several years in advance. These include a wide range of issues that are of common concern to participating states and are communicated on the EHDs web portal and supported by a number of activities to anticipate the preparation of the EHDs. The themes also encourage international and interregional cooperation.

**Since 2015, the following themes have been agreed:**

- Industrial Heritage (2015);
- Heritage and Communities (2016);
- Heritage and Nature (2017);
- European Year of Cultural Heritage: The Art of Sharing (2018);
- Arts and Entertainment (2019);
- Heritage and Education (2020);
- Inclusive Heritage (Heritage for Everyone) (2021);
- Sustainable Heritage (2022);
- Living Heritage (2023).





### 4. Specific initiatives

**European Heritage Days Stories** is an activity to identify the European dimension of heritage sites and heritage work undertaken by individuals or groups of people in Europe. By recognising their role within the framework of the European Heritage Days, it aims to give them a voice to tell their story where multiple narratives could and should co-exist. It is hoped that the past or existing stories that people would like to share can potentially develop into a project to further contribute to their communities.

[www.europeanheritagedays.com/Story](http://www.europeanheritagedays.com/Story)

**Young European Heritage Makers** aims to give a real and meaningful voice to children and young people by encouraging and identifying the future Heritage Makers of Europe. Inspired by an initiative developed in Finland in 2013, the activity has been recognised by the EHD Assembly as an innovative and sustainable opportunity to engage the youngest both online and in their immediate surroundings. It refers to the stories children and young people will explore and choose to tell as their own

interpretation of the heritage sites and objects around them. It is a creative opportunity for the youngest among us to actively explore and promote local cultural and historical landmarks.

**The European Cross-Frontier Cooperation Projects** initiative was set up in 2018, also as part of the efforts to support and boost the European Year of Cultural Heritage. It fosters the European dimension, supporting cross-frontier activities developed and led by the National Coordinators of the European Heritage Days programme.

Priority is given to projects which a) involve a minimum of three countries; b) actively develop policy for the European Heritage Days, particularly on future pan-European themes; c) promote diversity and inclusivity; d) promote education and youth involvement in heritage e) promote cross-border cooperation, particularly in post-conflict regions and/or with EU accession states; and/or f) highlight the European dimension of the European Heritage Days.

### 5. Budget and partnerships

The European Heritage Days promote partnerships and co-funding, as a number of stakeholders are involved through financial and in-kind contributions, as well as volunteer work. However, such large-scale events require a specific budget that needs to be secured in line with the planning.

At the local level, the EHDs enjoy help from many volunteers. However, some items require a specific budget: producing and circulating communication tools, renting materials, providing the special props required for certain activities, covering expenses for certain people involved, defraying possible entertainment expenses, and in some cases paying for caretaking and cleaning.

As a common practice, local organisers find the requisite funds to run the event properly. In addition to their funds, they can ask for subsidies from public authorities, especially local ones, or contributions from sponsors. Often the national coordinating body provides organisers with the first-level communication tools (posters, programmes and online communication) publicising the fact that the local events are part of the EHDs. Although it is not promoted widely, in some cases, participants may be asked to pay an entrance fee, or preferably a “contribution” in order to cover specific types of expenditure. However, this is not recommended in the context of the EHDs and should be an exceptional practice.

In most countries, national, regional or local coordination is provided by a public office with a specific budget. Occasionally, the role might be delegated to another entity, which brings an additional cost to the coordination efforts. Regardless of who assumes the role, it is suggested that National Coordinators have a dedicated budget with an operational margin and network for additional funds from the partners.

The EHDs have a positive reputation that can attract sponsors, whose contributions may represent substantial budgetary input. Therefore, organisers and/or coordinators are strongly advised to look for such contributions:

- either in the economic field directly linked to the heritage sector (building or monument restoration companies, suppliers of specialised materials or equipment, professional organisations, etc.);
- or in any other field (retailing and distribution industry, banks and insurance companies, small and medium-sized companies established near the site, etc).

Beyond the traditional financial support of sponsors, in-kind contributions, offering of

skills and labour can be obtained from sectors such as the press, publishing, distribution, equipment rental companies, local businesses, as well as community members. For dissemination of information on the EHDs, partnerships can be negotiated with a wide variety of professional, cultural, socio-cultural and other networks capable of reaching out to enormous numbers of new audiences. At all events, concise and regular information/communication should be provided to all partners, ensuring their visibility through the logo of partners on all kinds of documents, quotes during interviews on radio and television, social media, online sources and invitations from officials to press conferences or public events.

## 6. Management of the activity

As the EHDs might be taking place in a number of locations simultaneously in a short time slot, sound guidance is highly desirable for effective and efficient outcomes. Ultimately, the implementation of the activity at national level is the responsibility of each country through its assigned institution. Recommendations made here could be considered as good practices and passed through these entities in order to accompany them during their planning and implementation.





### Forming steering groups

Many countries decide to set up steering groups at national, regional and local levels capable of creating the requisite conditions for information exchange and consultations. Such groups could be set up under the auspices of the body recognised as being responsible for coordinating the European Heritage Days in the relevant territory and could represent the whole range of stakeholders with an inclusive approach, paying attention to diversity, genuine interest and the willingness of each stakeholder to cooperate.

### Prospective members of a steering group

Such steering groups could ideally include, but not be limited to:

- public authorities and administrations;
- departments, associations or companies specialising in the heritage field;
- associations of building owners or managers of heritage sites;
- local associations or regional federations working in the social or socio-cultural field;
- schools, universities and research bodies;
- media companies and publishing houses;

- tourism offices;
- local security forces;
- civil society organisations, unions and cooperatives, heritage communities, artisans, artists, local businesses and others.

Only some of the foreseen members might be interested or be willing to take part. However, it is essential to keep them all informed to cooperate in various ways, directly or indirectly. An effective visibility campaign is key to raising interest in future activities.

### Tasks of the steering groups

As a guiding and consultative body responsible for devising the European Heritage Days strategy, the steering group can develop a road map and offer instruments for synergetic coordination of the network of national, regional and/or local actors. The tasks of the group could include:

- providing strategic guidance; assisting national, regional or local coordinating bodies in selecting themes, defining priority target groups, identifying priority means of raising public awareness;
- networking and increasing the event's impact, by mobilising as many different contributors as possible, in addition to bodies specifically dealing with the heritage;
- promoting proper coordination of the activities scheduled, by encouraging partners to harmonise their programmes and by establishing concerted efforts and joint activities;
- pooling technical resources and facilitating dissemination of communication materials;
- organising a national, regional or local information campaign, optimising press contacts or special relations with various networks, etc.



In its work, the steering group may ensure that:

- the leading person and groups are well-known and recognised by the general public, with good people skills, as they are responsible for issuing invitations, drawing up agendas, drafting and circulating minutes or conclusions of meetings, contacting those responsible for the activities adopted, and, where necessary, making sound decisions on several proposals;
- there is a clear division of labour with specific tasks, deadlines and shared responsibilities;
- meetings are planned in consultation with all group members, with proper preparation of the events and minutes or conclusions drafted and systematic circulation to all members;
- necessary support/coaching is provided by the network in order to support all efforts.

## 7. Timetable

The following timetable for European Heritage Days is recommended, spreading it over twelve months and ideally dividing it into quarterly work plans, overseen by the steering groups. Considering the EHDs events take place between August and October, with the majority being held in September, the suggested calendar follows the schedule from October of the current year to September of the following year:

- October: Announcement of dates and theme of the upcoming year; circulation of a “first assessment” press release; press announcement of the dates and themes of the upcoming year;
- October-November: Assessment of the European Heritage Days of the current year as they draw to a close; assessment

meetings and initial exchanges on the theme;

- January-March: local/regional meeting days firstly geared to planning upcoming projects, and secondly to taking stock of projects linked to the theme of the previous year (in order to facilitate possible cooperation processes);
- January-March: drawing up a database of addressees for the participation questionnaire in cooperation with the various networks involved – particularly those likely to be interested in the theme adopted for the current year;
- March-May: forwarding of the participation questionnaire (accompanied by the order form for the communication tools) and return to the coordinator concerned;
- April-June: processed questionnaires returned to the coordinator; re-contacting potential organisers who have not yet replied; suggestions for activities on which various organisers could cooperate or for programme harmonisation;
- June-July: preparation for sorting and mailing communication tools; finalisation of the programme and information documents; drafting and circulation of a “pre-programme” press release;
- July-August: printing of information documents; finalisation of specific products (exhibitions, publications, e-files, etc.) linked to the current EHDs and/or the theme adopted; circulation of the various documents and communication tools; sending out of invitations to the launch event; “tailor-made” replies to questions from the press; sending of the questionnaire/overall assessment to organisers;
- September-October: launch event (possibly several events, depending on the size of the area in question); dissemination of the press file (in hardcopy and/or electronic versions); private viewings of the exhibitions and public presentation of works created for the occasion;

- September-October: acknowledgment letters to those involved in the EHDs, informing them about the upcoming year schedule and theme.
- September-October: where possible, organise visits with public figures with a press release, invited journalists/ photographers and use of social media. If possible, a reception after the events would be a nice gesture to thank the organisers, operators and volunteers.



## 8. Accessibility

Physical accessibility is fundamental and should be ensured for all groups with a greater consideration of their ability, as well as socio-economic, class, race and gender background. Going to a cultural activity over the weekend and evening can also be problematic for some people. Consequently, accessibility should also be considered in terms of having the possibility to share multiple narratives - including uncomfortable ones. It is not simply about having access to what is presented, but also to decision-making in terms of what and how the information is presented. This is essential for acknowledgement and social inclusion.

The European Heritage Days activities should be free of charge. This is an important and symbolic aspect of the activity, attracting large crowds to become familiar with specific heritage assets. The pedagogical and long-term effects of such platforms should have a priority in public life. In the case of public or private sites which are usually open to the public, expenditure payable by the organiser can generally be absorbed and incorporated into the annual budget as a “publicity investment”; in fact a number of studies have shown that visitors to sites often come back in the ensuing weeks or months, paying admission fees, sometimes even subscribing for their families or friends.

However, some activities are too expensive to be run free of charge, such as shows or concerts given by professionals, occasional on-site meals and the public transport required for some tours. Moreover, some organisers, especially in the case of sites which open specifically for the European Heritage Days - particularly private properties - are unable to cope alone with the cost of catering for visitors and organising activities: expenditure on communication, caretaking, cleaning, and remuneration for persons involved in certain activities.

As with any event, organisation comes with a specific cost. Despite the input from public subsidies and private and voluntary contributions, additional funds might be needed to ensure free entry to sites and participation in the events. Accordingly, a few recommendations below could be taken into consideration:

- with the capacity of European Heritage Days to attract large groups, the organisation of many events with an integrated approach might bring cost effectiveness, while offering services and products that might subsidise the entry costs. Moreover, special agreement with certain public and private entities could facilitate free entry during the European Heritage Days, issuing participants with tickets marked “This visit is provided free of charge by X municipality... or Y company...”, possibly also providing social messages;
- where visits and activities cannot be made completely free of charge, it is recommended that visitors should be charged a lower rate of entrance fees than usual (in the case of a site that is normally open to the public) and, as far as possible, to allow children under a certain age in free of charge;
- in the case of sites opened specially for the occasion, it is better to use the “contribution to expenses” formula than the more commercial “rates” or “entrance fees” approach (for example, some sites invite visitors to make a voluntary contribution towards expenses rather than a compulsory fixed one);
- in any case, it is vital for the request for a financial contribution to be accompanied by an explanation about this in order to appeal to the visitor’s generosity;
- lastly, care should be taken in all cases to clearly and explicitly inform people that entrance is charged for certain visits or

activities (on all information and communication tools);

- moreover, a well-planned preparatory phase with an extended network could offer possibilities for cost-sharing exchange of labour and skills.

## 9. Security

Security is imperative for any event, especially for one as large in scope as the EHDs. In order to avoid incidents and attacks in public spaces, precautions must be taken in close cooperation with the local security forces and local authorities. Assessment of the sites to be included in the programme is therefore fundamental. Regarding security, there are some points for particular attention, including:

- those usually open to the public are generally better equipped on the security front than sites taking in visitors on an exceptional basis;
- public buildings, again as a general rule, are better equipped to face security problems than private residences;
- some sites, e.g. companies, industrial sites, mines and military installations, have very strict security constraints which require stringent measures to deal with visitors (quota systems, specialist equipment, visitor escorts, etc.);
- sites that were abandoned and still lack the necessary physical security, however, use EHDs to bring them to public attention and seek support for future works;
- some sites must be adjusted for persons with special needs.

Furthermore, accessibility of the sites for ambulances, security forces, fire trucks, etc. as well as evacuation routes in times of emergency should be discussed in detail with the relevant authorities and departments.



## European Heritage Days

A joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Union



In any event, it is necessary, before any visitor enters a site, for the owners, regardless of their status, to give their written agreement. Whenever possible, it is advisable for the various parties involved – the owner, the organiser (where these are not the same), and sometimes also the visitor – to have taken out a prior insurance policy to cover any damage resulting from incidents or accidents.

A number of precautions should be taken to guarantee the safety and security of both the participants, organisers and the site owner or manager:

- provision, prior to the European Heritage Days, of public information on any quota systems for visits or special arrangements (visits not open to children under a specific age, special mandatory equipment, etc);
- imposition of a pre-booking system for visits where strict quotas are in place;
- clear and adequate signposting on the site showing emergency exits, prohibited or reserved entrances, direction of the visit and even dangerous passage ways;
- crowd-control measure, including imposition of a roped-off or barrier-controlled queueing system;
- prior training for persons responsible for welcoming and informing visitors: it is important for all voluntary staff to be

familiar with site layout and the programme of visits;

- availability of drinking water;
- availability of toilets and handwashing facilities;
- availability of cloakroom or locker facilities on sites where backpacks or handbags are strictly forbidden;
- systematic closure of all access points not authorised for the public;
- locking up of all fragile or valuable items;
- constant surveillance of the most sensitive areas.

In the case of sites attracting a large number of visitors and participants, site and public safety/security requires a specialist team equipped with special facilities (walkie-talkies, fluorescent jackets, etc) and clearly identifiable badges, experts who are familiar with procedure in the event of an incident or accident (evacuation routes, emergency numbers and first aid). Provisional first-aid posts can also be set up. It is also recommended that the risk prevention efforts be extended to the area surrounding the sites (eg. local road traffic arrangements, signage, etc.).

## 10. Visual identity

Visual identity should reflect the mission of the EHDs and evoke the feelings and experiences of our shared values.

Raising awareness about the importance of our common European heritage, and the events that celebrate it, is one of the main goals of the EHD programme. To ensure that the EHD brand maintains a consistent and easily recognisable look and feel, standards must be strictly adhered to.

The EHD logo is the most recognisable component of the visual identity and is designed to put the spotlight on the European dimension of heritage. The logo was originally designed for the 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year, which was launched under the motto “A Future for Our Past”. Devised as a means to raise awareness of Europe’s shared treasures - as well as of the dangers which threatened them - the Year promoted the preservation of well-loved monuments that people often took for granted. The logo of the Year was adopted in 1985 by the European Heritage Days programme, and has been in use ever since.

Europe is represented within the logo by the easily identifiable 12 stars in an outer circle and heritage is depicted by outlined historic buildings in an inner circle. To keep the logo identifiable, the following rules should be respected:

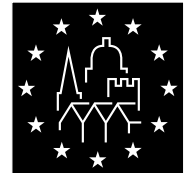
- the logo colours should not be changed;
- the logo elements should not be altered (for example, adding effects such as drop shadow, bevel, lighting etc), or unproportionally scaled;
- changes in the text part of the logo should not be made without prior authorisation;
- the use of the logo in four colours is mandatory on four colour backgrounds.

1. Positive Full Colour



European Heritage Days  
Journées européennes  
du patrimoine

2. Positive Single Colour



European Heritage Days  
Journées européennes  
du patrimoine



3. Reversed Full Colour



4. Reversed Single Colour

## Colour references

	CMYK	Pantone	RGB
Blue	100; 80; 0; 10	7687C	3; 70; 148
Yellow	6; 0; 90; 0	395C	247; 236; 22

The typeface within the logo is Helvetica Medium Condensed.

Whilst the logo is most commonly used in the English/French language combination, other language combinations are available. These can be downloaded from the EHD portal: [www.europeanheritagedays.com](http://www.europeanheritagedays.com)

If your national language is not available, please enquire with your National Coordinator or contact [jep-ehd@coe.int](mailto:jep-ehd@coe.int)



## 11. Communications

When communicating information related to the EHDs, a message needs to maintain a certain voice which, together with visual identity, will shape the EHDs' identity. All communication activities, products and materials should work in harmony to achieve the main communication goal – raising awareness and participation of audience. An important key to growing the EHD audience is the ability to know and understand the targeted audience, ways to bring their attention to the original content and the content of the EHD communities and stakeholders.

### Channels of communication

To be able to determine which platforms are best for communicating EHD messages, profiling of targeted personas is required. Without defining targeted personas and their preferred means of communication it is not possible to choose the right channels and techniques of communications.

Audience personas can be created through research, surveys, and interviews of target audience.

## Tone and Voice

Voice should be lively, celebratory, engaging, informative and educational. EHD public relations persona should be friendly and inspiring, using simple language. Tone should be direct and honest.

## Social media

Social media is all about building communities and expanding the existing ones. Since one of the main goals of the Programme is promotion of the EHD communities and European cultural heritage overall, content should be constructed and communicated with that in mind. Social media opportunity to have a two-way conversation should be exploited for gathering the reaction of the audience and using it to revise the communications strategy. Besides producing the original content for social media channels, special focus should be on the content of the communities. Social media should be considered as their voice. Using curated content from the communities and stakeholders will also give the additional visibility to the EHDs communities.

## 12. Gathering of events data

The European Heritage Days are multi-faceted events that embrace a large number of both urban and rural sites and communities, offering an enormous programme across 50 countries.

For the purpose of good planning and implementation, timely data collection, management and dissemination are required in order to ensure smooth coordination at all stages. The intensive amount of information available at multiple levels calls for a sound data-gathering strategy. Considering the timing of the events, which take place shortly after the summer holiday period, as well as



the large number of organisers involved, the production and communication of an accurate events programme can present a number of challenges.

Sharing of up-to-date information is one of the key factors in the effective organisation of the EHDs. From data gathering to dissemination (whether in brochure or electronic form), communication of this kind requires consistency, rigour and precision. This is why cooperation is needed at all possible coordination levels – national, regional and local – to ensure that the public can receive reliable, comprehensive and uniform information.

A tried and tested method is to gather events data at national (or regional) level using an online form. Such a form can either be custom-made (depending on the policy of and IT facilities available in the national agency), or can be produced using an online tool such as Google forms or SurveyMonkey.

A typical online events questionnaire might ask for some or all of the following information:

## Location

- Name of property/venue
- Photo of property/venue
- Name of event
- Name of organising association
- Full address of property/venue, with postcode
- Organiser contact details (e-mail address, telephone number)
- Date(s) of event
- Time(s) of event (start and end time)
- Capacity / maximum number of people
- Is pre-booking required? If so, by which means? (E-mail / Telephone / Website ?)

## Type of event

- Brief description (eg exhibition, workshop, performance, guided tour, self-guided tour, interactive activity)
- Type of heritage (tangible, intangible, natural, digital)
- Open especially for the European Heritage Days?
- Celebrating annual theme?
- Family-friendly
- Pet-friendly

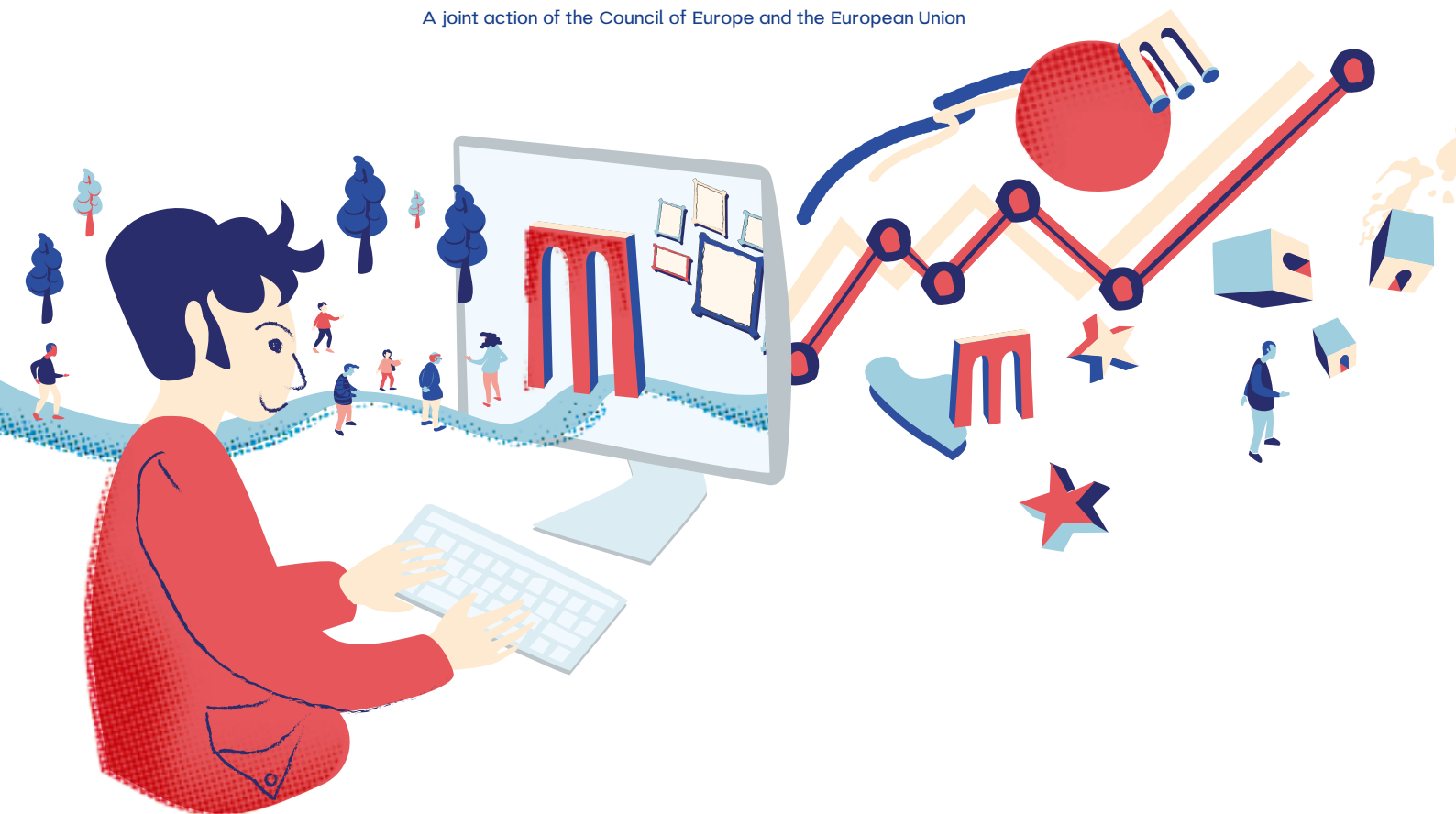
## Access

- Geolocation code
- Link to map
- Car parking facilities
- Bicycle parking facilities
- Nearest public transport stop

## Accessibility

- Assistance available
- Wheelchair accessible
- Service dog accessible
- Hearing loop available
- Number of steps to climb
- Disabled car parking available
- Walking distance from car park to venue





### Facilities available

- Toilets / baby changing
- Cloakroom / left luggage / lockers
- Refreshments provided / available to purchase

The information provided online can then be uploaded onto the national website and/or merged into a hardcopy brochure. Certain countries take advantage of this electronic data to produce regional or municipal brochures in order to better reach the local population.


It is advisable to use a range of partnerships for dissemination (social media, press, professional or voluntary networks) in order to maximise the territorial impact, while the EHD web portal is key to having access to the pan-European network.

### 13. Online portal

The EHDs website

[www.europeanheritagedays.com](http://www.europeanheritagedays.com) provides all stakeholders with an opportunity to give visibility to their heritage and to celebrate and explore it together as an expression of a common European heritage.

The Portal has a straightforward content management system that allows National Coordinators to share their events with an international audience. It also helps to create cross-frontier links between events and facilitate partnerships. Using mapping technology, which features a map of all states participating in the EHDs, the public has the opportunity to discover all EHD events together in one place. As soon as an event is added, it is marked on the map. Visitors to the website can explore events in the country of their choice. It serves as a central reference point for information about the EHDs across Europe each year.



The website also functions as a platform for sharing news about the programme in the form of news articles. These cover topics from general policy news in the field of European heritage, to updates about the EHDs in participating countries, both before and after the events take place.

### 14. Results and evaluation

As with any event, mobilising large numbers of stakeholders with relatively large resources in addressing significant societal issues, the European Heritage Days should be the subject of an annual assessment of both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the events. The outcomes of this process of reflection and evaluation should be shared in a transparent way, in order to build confidence and set the ground for further cooperation. It is important to consolidate efforts and understand their effectiveness in meeting public expectations.

An annual assessment should be carried out based on an analysis of the programme and data directly supplied by the organisers in the weeks following the events. This provides the steering group with quantitative data on which to base possible strategic adjustments or reorientation:

- numbers of sites open to the public;
- numbers of activities organised;
- number of visitors to the activities and sites;
- site typology;
- percentage of sites open on an exceptional basis;
- percentage of sites open free of charge;
- percentage of sites accessible to persons with disabilities.

The assessment also provides the group with qualitative information:

- organisers' opinions on visitors'/ participants' uptake of the activities on offer;
- organisers' opinions on the experience of visitors / participants;
- organisers' opinions on coordinating activities;
- organisers' opinions on the theme adopted for that year, communication, visuals, media partnerships, etc;
- inclusion of diverse groups in planning and implementation.

Such data can be collected via a short online questionnaire (for example, using sites such as SurveyMonkey or Google forms) which should be sent by e-mail to the organisers in the weeks leading up to the event. This will give the organisers an opportunity to prepare for the collection of data during their events, and to introduce a tally system for counting visitor numbers, be it using a 5-bar-gate system, a manual clicker or a digital smartphone app.

After this data-collecting phase, the coordinator should draw up a detailed assessment of the year's activities and transmit it to the steering group. In order to provide all the organisers with feedback on this work, the assessment, or at least the summary, should be made available online or, if possible, through a meeting organised to discuss the main results.

Beyond the inherent usefulness of such an annual assessment to the coordinator, its production clearly represents a valuable tool for mobilising the various organisers, negotiating resources for the upcoming European Heritage Days with the authorities, as well as attracting new partners or sponsors.



# Conclusions

**T**he EHDs Programme, with its extensive network and ever-growing outreach capacity to an estimated 70 000 initiatives and 30 million people across Council of Europe member States, plays a crucial role in informing people, identifying distinctive initiatives and using the voice of its network to inspire and enable further action.

Throughout this Handbook, a number of suggestions have been provided for National Coordinators and stakeholders. Regardless of the size and motivation of the activities, the European Heritage Days are an essential part of a process of societies taking a look at their past and present, opening themselves to multiple narratives and identities and making predictions for the future, as heritage makers in their own context. With the changing face of Europe today, heritage plays a pivotal role in building future societies from the past.

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