



EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS 2026

Heritage at Risk:
Revive, Resist,
Reimagine

European Heritage Days
A joint programme of the Council of Europe
and the European Union



European Heritage Days
Journées européennes
du patrimoine

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe



EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS 2026

Heritage at Risk:
Revive, Resist,
Reimagine

European Heritage Days

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

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

The reproduction of extracts (up to 500 words) is authorised, except for commercial purposes, as long as the integrity of the text is preserved, the excerpt is not used out of context, does not provide incomplete information or does not otherwise mislead the reader as to the nature, scope or content of the text.

All correspondence concerning this publication should be addressed to European Heritage Days, Department of Culture, Nature and Heritage of the Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or by e-mail to jep-ehd@coe.int.

Cover design and layout: Publications and Visual Identity Division (DPIV), Council of Europe

This publication has not been copy-edited by the DPIV Editorial Unit to correct typographical and grammatical errors.

© Council of Europe, January 2026

Acknowledgements

Our special thanks to the European Heritage Days National Coordinators of the 48 participating countries for their collective insights and inspiration for this brochure, and especially to heritage expert Prof. Mike Robinson, for his contribution. You can get in touch with your National Coordinator by visiting our website: www.europeanheritagedays.com/contact

Photo credits:

Illustrations: Ouidesign

Cover : Ter Elst, Flanders, Belgium – Open Monumentendag – photo credits: ©LUCID

Page 7: Hotel Metropole – Restauration – Eberlin-Brunetta – photo credits: urban.brussels

Page 8: Moulin du Tiège (Walhain), Wallonia, Belgium – photo credits: SPWAWaP

Page 9: Photo credits: FunkyFocus via Pixabay

Page 10: The statue of Hryhorii Skovoroda in the museum memorial in Kharkiv region after a Russian shell hit the building – photo credits: Serhii Kozlov

Page 12: Young European Heritage Makers visiting the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France

Page 13: European capital of culture 2025, Nova Gorica, Slovenia – photo credits: Jernej-Humar

Page 14: Wall mural by Mauro Patta, a muralist from Atzara, in Badia di Lentini – photo credits: Francesco Quadarella and Nuccio Costa

Page 15: Visit to La casa Blanca de Segudet, Patrimoni Cultural Andorra

Page 15: Laurenskerk, Rotterdam, Netherlands – A musical and physical performance between monument, organ, piano and BMX freestyle artist – photo credits Eric Frecken

A DIGITAL VERSION OF THIS BROCHURE, CONTAINING LINKS TO ALL ONLINE RESOURCES MENTIONED, CAN ALSO BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.

Contents

INTRODUCTION	7
HERITAGE AT RISK: UNDERSTANDING THE THREATS TO CULTURAL LEGACY	8
REGIONAL AND MINORITY LANGUAGES: A VITAL PART OF EUROPE'S CULTURAL FABRIC	11
COUNCIL OF EUROPE: PROTECTING HERITAGE IN THE FACE OF MODERN CHALLENGES	12
EUROPEAN UNION EFFORTS IN PRESERVING HERITAGE AT RISK	13
PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS	14
HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED	15
EVENT IDEAS	16
RESOURCES	21



Introduction

The European Heritage Days (EHD), a joint programme of the Council of Europe and the European Union, are Europe's largest participatory cultural events, celebrated by millions across the continent. These pan-European celebrations bring people together, highlighting the shared values and rich cultural heritage of the member states of the European Cultural Convention. Each year, thousands of events take place to raise awareness of Europe's common heritage and the ongoing need to protect it. The EHD also create opportunities for shared cultural experiences, promote inclusiveness, and inspire creativity and imagination. Participating countries are invited to embrace a yearly theme that guides their programmes, connecting local activities with a broader European narrative.

In 2026, the European Heritage Days invite you to explore the theme, *“Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine.”* In a rapidly changing world, our shared cultural and natural heritage faces unprecedented challenges. This theme raises awareness of the various risks threatening our heritage – from a combination of environmental, social, and technological pressures – and encourages reflection on how we can safeguard and cherish what remains.

This year's theme also brings attention to the importance of intergenerational knowledge, the resilience of oral storytelling, and the power of cultural expression in times of crisis.

Incorporating the written and oral use of regional or minority languages in activities organised in areas where such languages are used strengthens this living heritage and contributes to safeguarding linguistic diversity.

It's a call to ensure that all voices – especially those historically marginalised – are heard and valued in shaping our shared cultural future.

Our heritage, both tangible and intangible, serves as the foundation of our identity, history, and traditions. From architectural marvels to storytelling traditions, from ancient monuments to cultural practices, each element constitutes the essence of our collective memory.

WHY “REVIVE, RESIST, REIMAGINE”?

The 2026 theme Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine reflects the urgent need for action and creativity in protecting our shared heritage. Revive highlights efforts to bring endangered traditions, sites, and stories back to life – through craft workshops, oral history projects, and cultural festivals. Resist speaks to communities standing up against threats like climate change, conflict, and overdevelopment, using heritage as a source of identity, resilience, and advocacy. Reimagine encourages new ways of engaging with heritage – digitally, artistically, or across cultures – to ensure it remains meaningful, accessible, and alive for future generations.



Heritage at Risk: Understanding the Threats to Cultural Legacy

Cultural heritage is increasingly at risk. These challenges come from various directions, often intersecting and exacerbating one another. Recognizing these challenges is essential for ensuring the long-term preservation and continuity of heritage, which holds deep significance for communities, nations, and global society.

In today's world, our heritage faces numerous challenges:

CLIMATE CHANGE

One of the most pressing challenges to cultural heritage is the impact of climate change. Historic buildings, archaeological sites, and natural landscapes are vulnerable to extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and environmental degradation. Climate change threatens living heritage as well by disrupting the cultural practices, traditions, and knowledge systems deeply tied to specific environments.

- ▶ **Physical Damage to Structures:** Historic monuments, especially those made of stone, wood, or clay, face accelerated erosion due to changing weather patterns such as intense rain, floods, and droughts. Rising sea levels threaten coastal heritage sites, while extreme temperatures challenge the materials and systems of traditional buildings.
- ▶ **Impact on Natural Heritage:** Cultural landscapes, including traditional agricultural practices tied to specific environments, are increasingly endangered. Ecosystems that communities rely on for sustenance, tradition, and identity are shifting or disappearing.
- ▶ **Climate and Intangible Heritage:** As ecosystems shift or degrade, communities may lose the natural and cultural settings that sustain rituals, oral histories, and artistic expressions. This leads to the erosion of intangible heritage – whether through displacement, loss of traditional practices, or weakening inter-generational transmission. Climate-induced migration is one example, but even communities that remain in place can experience cultural loss as their environments and ways of life are disrupted.



This urgency underscores the need for heritage professionals to adopt sustainable conservation methods, prioritize assets strategically, and implement resilience-building strategies for managing heritage sites. Protecting intangible heritage from climate change requires engaging communities, supporting displaced individuals to preserve traditions and mapping at-risk cultural practices.

DIGITIZATION

While digitization offers new opportunities for preserving and sharing cultural heritage, it also poses significant risks to intangible heritage – such as traditional crafts, music, language, and oral history.

- ▶ **Loss of Traditional Knowledge:** As digital platforms increasingly dominate cultural engagement, some forms of intangible heritage – passed down through in-person interaction – may be left behind.
- ▶ **Depersonalization of Heritage:** Digitizing heritage practices like local festivals and community events can strip them of their original context, weakening the community connection that sustains them.
- ▶ **Digital Divide:** Not all communities have access to modern technology. Marginalized or rural communities may struggle to preserve their heritage digitally if they lack the necessary resources.

Digitization also brings benefits – such as preserving fragile documents and expanding access to heritage – but it's essential to balance technology with the need to keep traditions vibrant and connected to their original communities.



URBANIZATION, TRADE, AND DEVELOPMENT

As cities grow and global markets expand, heritage sites and traditional practices often face threats from urban expansion, industrial development, and economic change.

- ▶ **Encroachment on Historic Sites:** Rapid urbanization can lead to the destruction or alteration of heritage sites. Historic areas may be lost to infrastructure projects.
- ▶ **Neglect of Cultural Landscapes:** As more people migrate to cities, rural communities and traditional farming practices face decline, risking both cultural identity and biodiversity.

Global Trade and Heritage: Globalization has broadened access to foreign goods and materials, offering cultural exchange but also placing pressure on local economies and environments. This dynamic endangers cultural heritage, as the loss of traditional crafts and skills undermines established business models and employment practices deeply rooted in cultural traditions. Traditional business and employment practices can be undermined. A balance must be found between modernization and heritage preservation. Strategies such as adaptive reuse and community-based planning can support development without sacrificing cultural legacies.



MIGRATION AND CONFLICT

Migration – whether voluntary or forced – often disrupts the transmission of cultural heritage. Similarly, armed conflict poses an acute danger to heritage sites and traditions.

- ▶ **Displacement of Communities:** Migration due to conflict, forced displacement, economic pressures, or environmental degradation often leads to the weakening or disappearance of languages, practices, and social structures.
- ▶ **Destruction of Heritage Sites:** Conflict zones frequently see the targeted destruction or looting of heritage sites, depriving communities of their cultural identity denying future generations a connection to their past and the opportunity to learn from it.
- ▶ **Loss of Connection to Place:** Displaced people may lose access to physical sites and landscapes that hold cultural meaning.
- ▶ **Preserving Linguistic Heritage:** Regional and minority languages are among the most vulnerable aspects of intangible cultural heritage, often at risk of decline or extinction. As younger generations often do not have the opportunity to use regional and minority languages in all areas of life, move away, or assimilate into dominant cultures, the transmission of these languages can be disrupted.

International conventions such as the [UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property](#) (1970) and the Council of Europe's [European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage](#) (The Nicosia Convention, 1992) foster cooperation to combat the illicit trafficking of cultural property and protect heritage during conflict. More work is needed to protect the cultural identity of displaced populations and support the survival of their traditions.

[Virtual Museum of Stolen Cultural Objects](#) conducted jointly by UNESCO and INTERPOL offers an innovative platform to raise awareness about the illicit trafficking of cultural property, helping to identify, recover, and protect heritage that has been unlawfully displaced or stolen.

Regional and Minority Languages: A Vital Part of Europe's Cultural Fabric

Across Europe, regional and minority languages – distinct from dialects or migrant languages – are traditionally spoken by long-established communities in specific territories, often without official language status. These languages have shaped local identity for centuries, visible in place names, music, customs, and daily life.

Yet many are now endangered, as declining use and limited public presence put their associated traditions at risk. Preserving these languages is crucial to maintaining the intangible heritage they carry – from storytelling and songs to cuisine and craftsmanship.

The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1994) reflect the Council of Europe's commitment to promoting linguistic diversity and protecting national minorities across the continent. The European Heritage Days offer a unique opportunity to make these languages and the rich heritage they embody more visible, fostering awareness and encouraging long-term preservation.



Council of Europe: Protecting Heritage in the Face of Modern Challenges



To respond to these growing risks, the Council of Europe has established a series of conventions that offer frameworks for heritage preservation, community engagement, and cross-border cooperation. These include:

► **European Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe – Granada Convention (1985)**

Focused on protecting Europe's architectural heritage, this convention offers strategies to integrate heritage into urban planning and development while ensuring its conservation and sustainable use.

► **European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage – Valletta Convention (1992)**

By addressing the need for archaeological heritage protection, especially in the face of rapid urbanization, this convention emphasizes the importance of preventing damage caused by construction and development activities.

► **European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992)**

This Charter safeguards Europe's linguistic diversity by promoting the use of regional and minority languages in public and private life, especially in the fields of education, judicial authorities, administrative authorities and public services, media, culture, economic and social life, and cross-border co-operation. As language is a key carrier of tradition, history, and identity, its loss represents a major risk to intangible heritage. By supporting these languages, the Charter ensures that cultural communities can continue expressing their heritage across generations, reinforcing the social cohesion and diversity of Europe.

► **European Landscape Convention – Florence Convention (2000)**

While centered on landscape conservation, this convention plays a vital role in addressing the impacts of urbanization and development on cultural and natural landscapes, ensuring that these environments remain protected as part of Europe's cultural identity.

► **Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society – Faro Convention (2005)**

This forward-thinking convention highlights the societal value of heritage, calling for greater community involvement in heritage preservation and linking cultural heritage to human rights, democratic engagement, and social well-being.

► **Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**

Established in 1987, the European Cultural Routes Programme promotes transnational networks that highlight shared European heritage, fostering intercultural dialogue and sustainable tourism. Each route connects sites and traditions across multiple countries, emphasizing themes such as democracy, human rights, and cultural diversity.

► **Strategy 21: European Heritage Strategy for the 21st Century**

Strategy 21 offers a comprehensive framework for integrating heritage into public policies, focusing on societal, territorial, and knowledge-based challenges. It encourages participatory governance, sustainable development, and the transmission of heritage knowledge.

► **HEREIN: European Heritage Network**

HEREIN is a collaborative network of national heritage administrations that facilitates the exchange of information and best practices in cultural heritage management. It serves as a platform for policy development, comparative studies, and the promotion of innovative approaches to heritage conservation.

European Union Efforts in Preserving Heritage at Risk

The European Union plays a pivotal role in addressing the challenges faced by heritage under threat. Through initiatives such as the [Creative Europe program](#), the EU funds projects that foster the preservation and promotion of cultural and natural heritage. Programs like [Horizon Europe](#) support research into sustainable conservation methods and climate-resilient practices.

The EU actively combats illicit trafficking of cultural property and promotes heritage protection in conflict zones, aligning with international frameworks like UNESCO's 1970 Convention. Campaigns such as the [European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#) have spotlighted the shared cultural identity of Europe, emphasizing the importance of cross-border cooperation, local participation, and sustainable tourism.

Through legislation, funding, and public awareness, the EU continues to support the preservation of Europe's diverse heritage in an era of rapid change.



Preserving Our Heritage for Future Generations

In an era of rapid change, the need to protect our shared heritage has never been more urgent. Climate change, digitization, migration, conflict, and urbanization present serious challenges – but also opportunities for innovative responses.

Change is a constant throughout history, and heritage teaches us that creativity and resilience are key to navigating new realities. Through international cooperation, community participation, and sustainable development, we can ensure that future generations inherit a rich and meaningful cultural legacy.

HERITAGE AS A STORYTELLER: NARRATIVES FOR THE FUTURE

Each heritage site, artifact, and tradition tell a story – of the people who built, created, and passed it on through generations.



- ▶ **Cultural Landscapes:** Vineyards, forests, and villages reflect agricultural practices and communal life, weaving history into everyday surroundings.
- ▶ **Architecture and Monuments:** From Roman ruins to medieval castles, buildings are physical reminders of artistic and engineering achievements.
- ▶ **Intangible Heritage:** Traditions, music, languages, and festivals form the intangible threads of heritage. Their preservation is key to community identity.



How You Can Get Involved

European Heritage Days 2026 invites everyone to take part in protecting and sharing our heritage:

- ▶ **Explore Local Heritage:** Visit sites, research local history, and share stories with others.
- ▶ **Engage with Intangible Heritage:** Attend cultural events, learn traditional skills, or support local dialects.
- ▶ **Support Sustainable Preservation:** Advocate for responsible development and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.
- ▶ **Participate in Awareness Campaigns:** Share knowledge, join events, contact representatives, or volunteer with conservation organizations.
- ▶ **Tell Your Story:** Share your personal or community connection to a heritage tradition or site – storytelling keeps heritage alive.

“Heritage at Risk” reminds us that our heritage is not static – it is a living, evolving part of who we are. By protecting it today, we ensure that future generations continue to be inspired, informed, and connected through the stories of the past.



Together, let us celebrate and protect our heritage – not just as relics, but as guiding stories for our future.



Event ideas

Climate Change and Heritage

1. Saving the Seas: Coastal Heritage Under Threat

Host guided tours and discussions at coastal heritage sites, highlighting the impact of rising sea levels and showcasing ongoing preservation efforts. Coastal heritage is particularly vulnerable, and is already likely to have undergone significant change over the years. Indeed, much coastal architecture was designed to mitigate against these risks originally. Investigate the history of the landscape where you live.

2. Extreme Weather, Extreme Measures

A workshop on sustainable conservation methods, featuring demonstrations of protective techniques for historic buildings against floods, storms, and drought.

3. Nature's Memory: Changing Cultural Landscapes

Organize nature walks or bike tours in endangered cultural landscapes, such as traditional vineyards or terraced fields, paired with storytelling by local farmers or guides.

4. Endangered Ecosystems and Local Wisdom"

Host talks or workshops led by local communities who rely on threatened ecosystems, discussing how traditional knowledge can contribute to modern climate resilience strategies.

5. Living Landscapes: Farming Traditions That Protect the Land

Farmers have often been the custodians of their land for many years, and know it inside and out. Are any local farmers able to offer guided visits of their land focused on how their traditional land management practices support the environment – you might even be able to help them out for a day!

6. Cultural Heritage Under Water

A virtual or in-person diving experience exploring submerged heritage sites, such as ancient ports or shipwrecks, coupled with discussions on the effects of rising sea levels.



7. Heritage Gardens in Peril

Guided tours of historic gardens showcasing the impact of climate change on traditional landscaping and plant selection, with tips on sustainable gardening practices.

Digitization and Intangible Heritage

8. Traditions in the Digital Age

Offer hands-on sessions where participants can experience traditional crafts, music, or storytelling while also learning how these practices are preserved through digitization.

9. Virtual Villages: Heritage Through Technology

Create virtual reality experiences of disappearing heritage sites or cultural practices, allowing attendees to interact with them in a new and engaging way.

10. Bridging the Digital Divide

A community project to document and digitize local heritage, providing training and resources for rural or marginalized groups to share their traditions online.

11. 3D Preservation: Printing the Past

A live demonstration of how 3D scanning and printing are being used to replicate endangered artifacts and structures, allowing attendees to handle and explore these replicas.

12. The Soundtrack of Heritage

A digital music workshop focusing on recording, preserving, and remixing traditional songs, creating a bridge between old and new.

13. Virtual Heritage, Real Connection

Create an immersive online museum featuring digital reconstructions of endangered or lost heritage sites, accessible to attendees worldwide.

Migration, Conflict, and Heritage

14. Heritage on the Move

A storytelling event featuring refugees or migrants who share their cultural traditions, offering insight into the heritage they brought with them and how it's being preserved in new contexts.

15. War's Toll on History

An exhibition showcasing artifacts, photos, and stories of heritage lost or displaced by conflict, coupled with discussions on international efforts to combat cultural destruction.

16. Restoring the Broken Pieces

A participatory mosaic or art installation symbolizing the rebuilding of cultural identities disrupted by migration or conflict, involving contributions from local and displaced communities.

17. Crafting Connections

Collaborative workshops where displaced artisans teach their traditional crafts, fostering cultural exchange and highlighting the value of preserving these skills.

18. Heritage in Exile

A panel discussion featuring historians, anthropologists, and community leaders about how displaced communities maintain cultural heritage in diaspora settings.

19. Lost Treasures, Global Stories

An interactive map exhibit tracing the journey of artifacts displaced during conflicts, showcasing international efforts to repatriate and restore these treasures.

URBANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

20. Balancing the Past and Present

Host urban walking tours highlighting examples of adaptive reuse – heritage buildings repurposed for modern needs – and discussions on sustainable urban development.

21. Cityscapes in Transition

A photography competition and exhibition capturing the juxtaposition of historic and modern architecture, sparking conversations about preservation versus progress.

22. Rural Roots, Urban Futures

A showcase of traditional rural practices, foods, or crafts in urban settings, demonstrating how city dwellers can reconnect with endangered cultural landscapes.

23. The Heritage Detective Trail

A family-friendly scavenger hunt through an urban area, focusing on hidden or lesser-known heritage sites under threat from development.

24. Heritage-Friendly Cities

A public seminar showcasing successful examples of urban planning that respect and integrate historic sites, inspiring local initiatives.

25. Skyline Stories

A rooftop event where historians and architects share stories about how urban skylines have changed over time, reflecting the tensions between heritage and modernization.

INTANGIBLE HERITAGE: TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES

26. Taste of Tradition

A culinary heritage festival where attendees can learn to cook traditional recipes from endangered cuisines, preserving intangible food heritage.

27. Dance Through Time

A dance festival featuring endangered folk dances, with live demonstrations, lessons, and historical insights into their origins and meanings.

28. Storytelling Circles: Passing Down Oral Traditions

Host community storytelling sessions where elders share folk tales, myths, and legends passed down through generations, fostering intergenerational connections and preserving oral heritage.

29. Craft Revival Workshops

Organize hands-on workshops teaching traditional crafts – such as weaving, pottery, or embroidery – highlighting techniques unique to specific regions or communities.

30. Seasonal Festivals and Rituals

Celebrate traditional seasonal festivals or rituals with public performances, demonstrations, and participatory activities that reveal their cultural and historical significance.

31. Traditional Games and Play

Invite families to learn and play traditional children's games from different regions, connecting younger generations with cultural heritage in a fun and interactive way.

32. Oral History Recording Booths

Set up booths where community members can record their memories, stories, and personal experiences related to local traditions and customs, creating an audio archive for future generations.

33. Heritage Dance Workshops

Offer beginner-friendly workshops in endangered folk dances, combining live music, storytelling about the dance's origins, and opportunities for participants to perform.

34. Culinary Storytelling: Recipes with History

Host cooking classes where local chefs or home cooks share recipes tied to cultural traditions, explaining the stories and rituals behind the dishes.

LINGUISTIC HERITAGE: VOICES AT RISK

35. Words That Bind Us

Interactive workshops or storytelling sessions where participants explore endangered regional or minority languages – learning common phrases, hearing local legends, and reflecting on what's at stake when a language fades.

Incorporate the written and oral use of regional or minority languages in all European Heritage Days activities organised in the areas where such languages are used. This supports linguistic diversity and reinforces living cultural expression.

36. Two-Language Trails

Create bilingual walking or cycling routes on the edge of areas historically tied to regional or minority languages. Feature dual-language signs highlighting the history and culture reflected by the regional or minority languages, place names, and heritage landmarks along the way.

37. Sing It Loud

Celebrate linguistic diversity through concerts or song contests featuring music in regional or minority languages. Include both traditional pieces and contemporary songs from countries or regions where these languages thrive.



38. Language on the Menu

Partner with local food businesses to present traditional dishes with their names in regional or minority languages and stories. Organise tastings where the language is savoured alongside the food.

39. Hidden Inscriptions

Lead explorations through neighbourhoods or old town centres to find historical inscriptions, fading shop signs, and street names in regional or minority languages – culminating in a photo exhibit or Instagram collage.

40. Alphabet as Art

Host craft sessions where participants create art pieces inspired by distinctive letters or words from regional or minority languages – turning linguistic features into jewellery, cards, or souvenirs.

41. Voices from the Archives

Offer museum or archive-based workshops where participants can decipher old family documents, letters, recipes, or records written in regional or minority languages, with help from translators and local historians.

42. Reading the Unheard

Work with libraries and bookshops to curate a shelf of literature in regional or minority languages. Highlight contemporary titles and host bilingual book readings or literary meetups.

43. The Language of Names

Invite school groups to explore the origins of local family or place names in regional or minority languages, tracing how they've changed and what they reveal about history, migration, and identity.

44. Screened Stories

Collaborate with cinemas to host film nights focused on stories told in regional or minority languages or about the people who speak them – followed by audience discussions or expert panels.

45. Language Spokespersons

Mobilise volunteers to record audio guides, museum labels, or public service announcements in regional or minority languages, giving these voices a place in the public sphere.

RAISING AWARENESS AND ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

46. Young European Heritage Makers

Encourage children's participation in the [Young European Heritage Makers](#) initiative – a platform that empowers young people to share their creative projects inspired by Europe's cultural heritage, fostering engagement, innovation, and cross-border connections.

47. Participation in the Call for European Heritage Days Stories

Encourage existing event organisers to submit stories related to their heritage activities during the European Heritage Days. Selected contributions in the [Call for European Heritage Days Stories](#) may be awarded grants to support further heritage projects, helping to amplify diverse cultural narratives and enhance heritage preservation efforts.

48. Heritage at Risk Film Festival

Screen documentaries or films that address the challenges of preserving cultural heritage, followed by panel discussions with experts and filmmakers.

49. Voices of Heritage: Community Storytelling Festival

Invite individuals from diverse backgrounds to share personal stories about their connection to endangered heritage, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.

50. The Heritage Crisis Timeline

A visual and interactive timeline installation in public spaces showing how various heritage sites have been impacted by modern challenges over the decades.

51. Art for Awareness

Collaborate with local artists to create public art installations highlighting the risks faced by nearby heritage sites or traditions.

52. Heritage at Risk Youth Summit

A conference for young people to discuss and propose solutions for safeguarding cultural and natural heritage, culminating in a pledge or action plan.

CROSS-CULTURAL COLLABORATION

53. Shared Stories, Shared Solutions

An international exchange event where representatives from different countries share successful strategies for protecting heritage under similar risks.

54. Heritage Without Borders

A collaborative exhibition showcasing artifacts or traditions that have transcended borders, emphasizing shared responsibility for preservation.

55. Echoes of the Past

An audio installation or podcast series featuring oral histories from various European communities, focusing on heritage under threat.

56. Joint Cultural Heritage Festivals Along Council of Europe Cultural Routes

Coordinate festivals along the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe that bring together communities from different countries to celebrate shared traditions, crafts, music, and stories, highlighting the interconnectedness of European heritage and promoting sustainable cultural tourism.

57. Heritage Language Exchange Workshops at European Heritage Label Sites

Organize language and cultural exchange workshops hosted at European Heritage Label Sites, where participants from different regions or countries teach and learn each other's regional or minority languages, strengthening cross-border ties and celebrating shared heritage.

CREATIVE APPROACHES

58. Heritage Photo Restoration

A hands-on workshop where attendees learn to restore and digitize old family photos, linking personal memories to broader heritage conservation.

59. Build the Past, Save the Future

A model-building workshop for kids and families, reconstructing historic sites and discussing what it takes to preserve them.

60. Monumental Miniatures

A craft event where participants create small replicas of endangered monuments, fostering personal connections to heritage.

61. Heritage Storytelling Through Comics

Host workshops where participants create comic strips or graphic novels based on local legends, historical events, or endangered traditions, blending art with storytelling.

62. Heritage-themed Street Art

Organize a mural project where local artists paint walls or public spaces with images celebrating endangered heritage, traditional crafts, or historic events.

63. Digital Heritage Game Design

Engage youth in designing simple mobile or computer games inspired by local heritage sites, legends, or traditional crafts, making heritage fun and interactive.

64. Heritage Upcycling

A craft workshop where participants transform old, discarded heritage objects or materials into new art or practical items, promoting sustainability and creative reuse.

65. Augmented Reality Heritage Trails

Develop an AR app or event where users can see historical reconstructions or cultural stories overlaid onto current heritage sites using smartphones or tablets.

66. Heritage-Inspired Fashion

Collaborate with local designers to create a small fashion show or workshop featuring clothing and accessories inspired by traditional textiles, patterns, or symbols.

67. Oral History Podcast Series

Train community members to record, edit, and produce podcasts sharing personal stories, traditions, and memories linked to local heritage, making intangible heritage accessible digitally.

68. Heritage Film-Making Challenge

Organize a short film competition encouraging participants to create videos documenting endangered traditions, interviews with elders, or local crafts.

69. Interactive Heritage Quilt

Host a community sewing or crafting event where each participant contributes a patch representing a piece of local heritage, culminating in a large, collaborative quilt displayed publicly.

70. Heritage Light Projections

Arrange nighttime events projecting images or patterns inspired by local heritage onto buildings or landmarks, combining technology with cultural storytelling.



Resources

POTENTIAL LOCAL AND NATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

For European Heritage Days 2026, which explores the theme “Heritage at Risk”, a wide array of local and national collaborators can help interpret and showcase the diverse threats to our shared heritage – tangible and intangible. Cultural institutions, environmental groups, traditional craftspeople, migration heritage centres, and digital archives may all provide powerful contributions to events and exhibitions.

State heritage services and Ministries of Culture remain vital partners in identifying protected heritage sites and facilitating public access. However, partnerships should also extend to organizations working with local, minority, and vulnerable communities, whose heritage may be under-recognized and particularly at risk.

Local history societies, intangible heritage networks, community storytelling groups, and regional archives hold rich knowledge about customs, festivals, crafts, and oral histories that can be endangered through displacement, generational change, or digital neglect. Collaborating with these groups offers a chance to highlight living traditions and involve diverse voices.

Academic departments focused on climate science, migration studies, digital humanities, and anthropology can provide meaningful insights into the new pressures threatening heritage. Universities and schools are ideal venues for exhibitions, performances, and student-led initiatives that explore these themes.

Artisans working in traditional crafts – textiles, music, food, and ecological land management—can help raise awareness of the fragility and value of local heritage through demonstrations and storytelling. Their work offers a living connection to heritage and can be an engaging part of local events.

Environmental NGOs, urban planning groups, and sustainable development practitioners can illuminate how climate change, overdevelopment, and environmental degradation intersect with cultural heritage loss.

EUROPEAN NETWORKS WORKING ON HERITAGE AT RISK

A number of European and international networks and institutions are active in responding to the multiple risks facing heritage today. These may be valuable sources of content, local contacts, or partnership for EHD 2026 events.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND PARTNER INITIATIVES

- ▶ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) – <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities>
- ▶ Promotes the protection of cultural identity and participation in cultural life for minority communities. Roma Routes Project (archived) – <https://romaroutes.eu/>
- ▶ Promoted awareness and celebration of Roma cultural heritage across Europe. HEREIN – European Heritage Network – <https://www.coe.int/en/web/herein-system>
- ▶ A shared information system on national heritage policies and practices across Council of Europe states. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes>
- ▶ Provides access to thematic networks such as the Jewish Heritage Route, the Viking Route, and the Route of Historic Thermal Towns. European Heritage Label sites – <https://ehl-bureau.eu/en/ehl-sites/>
- ▶ The European Heritage Label is a community of heritage sites all over the European Union. The focus is on the promotion of the symbolic European values and the significant role these sites have played in the history and culture of Europe. Europa Nostra – Cultural Heritage at Risk Programme – <https://www.europanostra.org>

- ▶ Raises awareness of endangered heritage through the “7 Most Endangered” list and heritage advocacy. Europeana – <https://www.europeana.eu/>
- ▶ Europeana is the European digital platform providing access to millions of digitized cultural heritage items from museums, galleries, libraries, and archives across Europe, promoting open access to cultural knowledge and supporting heritage preservation.
- Wiki Loves Monuments and Wiki Loves Living Heritage – <https://www.wikilovesmonuments.org/> & <https://www.wikiloveslivingheritage.org/>
- ▶ These international photo contests engage the public in documenting and sharing both tangible and intangible heritage through crowdsourced photography, helping raise awareness and digitally preserve Europe’s rich cultural diversity.
- NEMO – Network of European Museum Organisations – <https://www.ne-mo.org/>
- ▶ Active in helping museums face digital transformation and promote sustainable practices.
- FRH – Future for Religious Heritage – <https://www.frh-europe.org/>
- ▶ Works across Europe to preserve religious buildings as cultural and community spaces.
- ICR – Intangible Cultural Heritage and Traditional Knowledge Network – <http://www.ichngoforum.org/>
- ▶ NGO Forum affiliated with UNESCO promoting safeguarding of living heritage.
- ▶ Digital Heritage Research Alliance (DHRA)
- ▶ Collaborative group fostering research into digital documentation and risks to virtual and born-digital heritage.
- Climate Heritage Network – <https://climateheritage.org/>
- ▶ Focuses on mobilizing the arts, culture and heritage sectors to support climate action.
- Open House Europe – <https://openhouseeurope.org>
- ▶ Collaborative initiative that connects Open House festivals across Europe to celebrate architecture and urban heritage. Each year, it focuses on a specific theme, such as sustainability, accessibility, inclusion, or future heritage, to explore how architecture shapes cities and societies.

FROM LOCAL ACTION TO EUROPEAN RECOGNITION

Join us in making the European Heritage Days (EHDs) a shared success! By submitting accurate and timely information about your events to your National Coordinator – often through national application forms or easy-to-use tools like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey – you help build a stronger and more visible European cultural programme. Event details, including location, accessibility, and planned activities, contribute to a rich mosaic of heritage experiences across Europe.

Once registered, your events are featured on the official [European Heritage Days website](#), making them visible to an international audience and helping to celebrate your efforts as part of a Europe-wide cultural celebration. Be sure to include the correct logos of participating institutions and remember that the official European Heritage Days logo is available for download in all official languages directly from the website.

Capture your event with high-quality photographs that show people in action—interacting, learning, and celebrating heritage. This visual storytelling is a powerful way to demonstrate the impact of your activities and helps share your success.

Don’t forget to promote your event on social media! Share updates, photos, and stories using the hashtag [#EuropeanHeritageDays](#) and engage with the official EHD channels on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Tag your posts and consider using additional relevant hashtags such as [#HeritageAtRisk](#), [#CulturalHeritage](#), or local language tags to help people find and connect with your events.

Finally, take part in the annual evaluation process by submitting your feedback, audience numbers, and event insights to your National Coordinator. Tracking participation, event types, and audience interest helps us improve the programme, attract new partners, and make the case for greater support. Together, we can ensure your local actions contribute to Europe’s collective celebration of heritage.

Your event is more than just a moment – it’s part of a movement. Share it, celebrate it, and let it inspire others.

NOTES

NOTES

NOTES

We hope that the ideas and examples in this brochure inspire you to bring Heritage at Risk: Revive, Resist, Reimagine to life in your 2026 events. We look forward to discovering your creative approaches, stories, and projects. Share your European Heritage Days moments using #EuropeanHeritageDays and join the conversation at:



@EHDays



@europeanheritagedays

The member states of the European Union have decided to link together their know-how, resources and destinies. Together, they have built a zone of stability, democracy and sustainable development whilst maintaining cultural diversity, tolerance and individual freedoms. The European Union is committed to sharing its achievements and its values with countries and peoples beyond its borders.

<http://europa.eu>

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

www.coe.int

Co-funded
by the European Union



Co-funded and implemented
by the Council of Europe